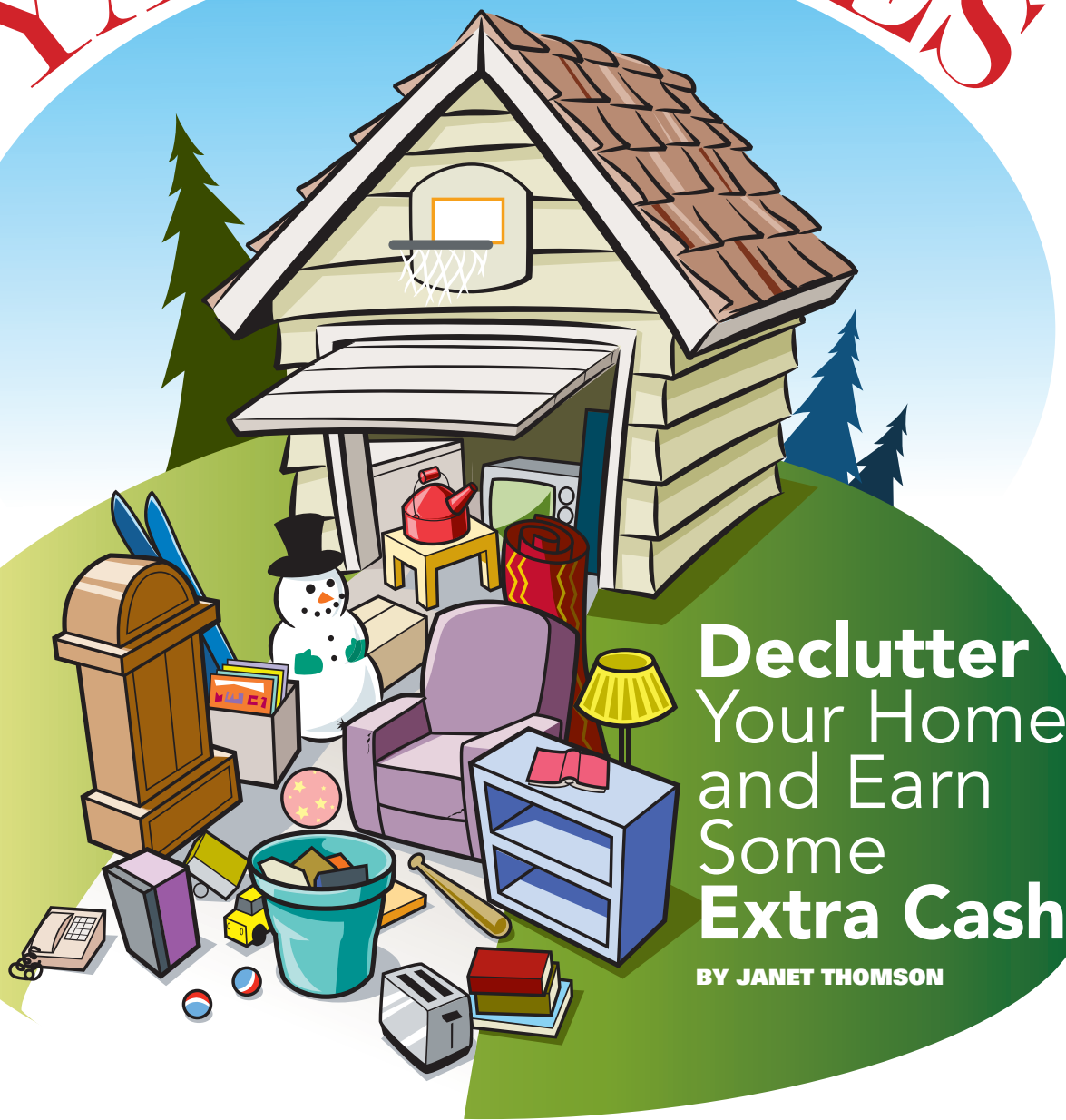


YARD SALES



Declutter Your Home and Earn Some Extra Cash

BY JANET THOMSON

space, not throwing things away that ends up in a landfill.”

Although earning money is your incentive and decluttering is your goal, many homeowners don't have a clear plan of what to do with items that don't sell. Kathryn McMillan of Clutter Conversions (www.clutter-conversions.com) says that she runs across this with many clients that she consults. Her advice is to donate all unsold items to a charity or donation place, like Goodwill. In many instances, you can have various organizations scheduled to pick up items at the end of the yard sale. If you don't have a follow through plan for unsold items, “it comes back into your home as clutter,” she adds.

Getting the Word Out

After determining what items you no longer use, need or want, it's time to let the community know that you are having a yard sale. According to McMillan, before investing too much time in planning a yard sale, you first want to check with your locality or district to determine whether there is a fee or restriction for posting signs around the neighborhood. When placing signs around the neighborhood, Bereika says to make sure to include the accrual date of the yard sale, and not that it's just on Saturday. Furthermore, you want to place signs at traffic lights and stop signs, making sure that they are visible and the writing is large enough to read. McMillan also suggests placing ads in free neighborhood publications, on Facebook and other social media platforms like Twitter, as well as online publications. In addition, Bereika advises using Craigslist or www.feecycle.com, an online website that allows you to advertise your yard sale provided you give a few items away for free.

In addition, Bereika suggests grouping with someone else so that you have a lot of items at the yard sale, making it more attractive to individuals. When you partner with others, you get the “most bang for your buck” because you are sharing the expense to advertise in the paper.” And, lastly, there is word-of-mouth or corporate bulletin boards.

Negotiating Pricing and Safeguarding Your Home

McMillan says that people coming to yard sales are looking for a deal, which is why you need to be flexible when negotiating price. In addition, having a clear goal about your outcome helps the process even more. You should ask, is your goal to declutter the house and get rid of unwanted items, or is your goal to make money? If your goal is to make money, then you may

According to a recent University of California (UCLA) study, U.S. households have more possessions per home than any society in all of global history. Furthermore, the study reveals that clutter attributes to increased levels of stress in many American households. In fact, cleaning up the litter in your home not only provides additional space, but it helps to clear your mind and makes it easier to focus on other important things like family time. If you didn't have the chance to do some serious spring cleaning, then here's an opportunity to plan a yard sale and clean up the clutter in your home, while lacing your pockets with some extra cash for the upcoming holidays.

Setting Goals And Ironing Out Details

Before deciding whether planning for a yard sale is right for you, you should first decide what your outcome is. Sara Bereika of Abundance Organizing (www.abundanceorganizing.com) says that before planning a yard sale, you should first assess whether your items will sell. You can achieve this with a little research. For example, you can check online or visit a consignment store, just to see what types of items they are taking in. Providing potential customers with desirable items will help your chances of selling them and yielding a financial profit. However, keep in mind that most people visiting consignment stores are not necessarily looking for items sold at yard sales,

but it will help homeowners determine whether certain items will likely sell.

According to Bereika, you also want a defined goal in order for your yard sale to be successful. You don't want to be indecisive because it will make the process extremely stressful. Approaching this venture with a realistic outcome and mindset will help alleviate stress about the process. You don't want the focus to be just on the monetary value of the yard sale, but rather on the space you will gain once your home is cleared of clutter. “Typically the goal isn't really the yard sale but the goal is to clean out your basement or attic,” says Bereika. “So, if you are going into it with the mindset of making money, it's probably not the best mindset to have...the mindset should be that I'm gaining



not be up for negotiating. Bereika typically tells her clients that yard sales will not necessarily yield a substantial profit. If you approach the process with the mindset that you are decluttering your home and gaining more space for items that you need, “then your negotiating will be a lot more pleasant, and you will get rid of more stuff.” Having strangers coming to your home can be alarming for some homeowners, which is why Bereika suggests that you keep cash on you, work the yard sale with other people, keep your doors locked, and place a sign that says no public restroom available.

Now that the leaves are changing, the days are getting shorter and the

nights are chillier marking the end of summer and the start of fall, take advantage of this time and plan a yard sale to get rid of the clutter in your home. Although having a yard sale could provide some monetary benefits, it should not be your primary goal. If you cultivate the mindset that you are reducing clutter, making space for new items, relieving stress, and keeping things out of a landfill, you can make this process rewarding and fun and end up with some extra cash for the upcoming holidays. ■

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