

Sustainability Division—Energy & Computing Management

One Person's Trash is Another's Treasure

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In our April edition on spring cleaning, we recommended setting aside unwanted items for sale or donation. If you have a collection of such items, summer is the perfect time to decide what to do with them. Are your discards in good condition, free from damage and excessive wear? Then why not give someone else a chance to buy them at a fraction of the original price—and put a little cash back in your own pocket? This is another opportunity to make a simple and sustainable choice that benefits you, your community, and the environment. You'll keep waste out of the landfill or incinerator and perhaps even defer the need to expend energy resources on processing recyclables. Below are a few of my favorite ways to turn clutter into cash.

Hold a garage sale - Invite the public to your garage or yard to inspect the items you want to sell. Many people coordinate with neighbors to create a larger sale that attracts more buyers. It takes effort to set up and run a sale, but if you have time, and especially if you also have numerous or bulky items to sell, a garage sale may be the perfect choice for you. Price everything to sell and aim to have as little as possible left over. Items that do not sell can be donated to charity. Need planning tips? Try this article from *Organized Home*: <http://organizedhome.com/garage-sale-tips-clear-clutter-yard-sale>.

Consider consignment - A consignment shop is a business that charges a small fee to sell your gently used items. Generally, consignment shops take either a percentage of the sale or a specific dollar amount that you negotiate in advance. Quite a few shops in the Syracuse area sell on the consignment model: you can find them listed under "consignment" in the yellow pages. Most sell clothing, but it is also possible to consign items like toys and antiques. If you are looking forward to making a few dollars without much effort, this may be the choice for you. Don't forget to research each shop to make sure you are getting the best deal. One of my favorites is The Key (Cazenovia).



Think thrift stores -A thrift store accepts donations and sells them to benefit a charity or other nonprofit. In return for your donated items, you receive a certificate to keep with your records when you list the donation on your tax return. If you are hoping to increase your donations for tax benefits, then a thrift store may be the best alternative for you. [Salvation Army](#) and [Rescue Mission](#) run well-known local thrift stores. Another example is the [Encore Thrift Shop](#) (Fayetteville), which benefits the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra.

I found this dress at The Key and couldn't pass it up for \$15. It will be perfect for a wedding I am attending in July.



This is my \$75.00 Craigslist find. I was looking for wicker furniture for my front porch. All it needed was a fresh coat of paint and now we enjoy sitting on our front porch in style.

Create a classified ad - You can sell almost anything in one of our many local newspapers, such as [The Post Standard](#), [Swap Sheet](#), and [Eagle Bulletin](#). Papers charge for classified ads by word count (as in [The Post Standard](#)) or cost of the item being sold (as in [Swap Sheet](#)). Be prepared to answer your phone and respond to customer inquiries.

Sell it online - There are many options for selling online: two popular choices are [Craigslist](#) and [eBay](#). With fewer people taking the newspaper, you may find that you reach a broader demographic online. Another benefit of online sales is that you can often post several detailed pictures of the item to help customers decide whether or not they are interested. If you decide to sell online, be sure to read the site's policies on safety and privacy.