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ST. JOSEPH COUNTY MSU EXTENSION

# US 12 Heritage Trail

## Editorial—Sally J. Carpenter

Here it is, the US 12 third seasonal promotion: **Michigan's Longest Garage Sale—August 22 & 23, 2003.**

This is the event everyone up and down the 209 mile corridor is waiting for. If local citizens are getting this excited about an upcoming event, as the US 12 Council heard when they met recently, then you had better be ready. Here is what the council heard about preparation already taking place. The village of White Pigeon has marquee advertising the sale. Coldwater will set up the town with booths. There will be no charge for a booth and following the sale a dumpster will be available for leftovers. Libraries along US 12 will be encouraged to participate in a used book sale.

Some communities have appointed one person to take on the leadership and be the contact person for assigning space.

Several communities are also including arts and crafts. Don't forget to inform churches, museums, civic groups, historical societies and antique shops, as they may be possible participants or volunteers for the garage sale.

Be sure to check local garage sale sign ordinances, follow them and inform others.

Encourage safe driving!

Remember all promotions were designed so that people like you can easily implement the promotion ideas. Please do your part by first participating in the garage sale and helping where you can by taking a leadership roll in local promotion, providing vendor space, being a point person for coordination information, making a map of local garage sale stops, informing the local media of photo opportunities, providing travel brochures for sale goers, arrange for local charity to pick up items after the sale or provide a dumpster for leftovers. Are there other duties that you could take on?

Working together, sharing the effort we can make MICHIGAN'S LONGEST GARAGE SALE a success.

I have included "*Helpful Hints for Holding a Garage Sale*" on the following pages. You may copy it and hand out to groups or individuals participating in your community sale.

Watch for US 12 Heritage Trail Citizen information meetings coming up this fall during the following dates:

St. Joseph and Branch Counties .....	September 24
Berrien and Cass Counties.....	September 25
Washtenaw and Wayne Counties.....	September 29
Hillsdale and Lenawee Counties.....	October 1

Locations will be announced at a later date.

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## *Helpful Hints for Holding a Garage Sale*

### **Be an Effective Seller ~**

- ☞ Make sure you have lots of small bills and change in your cash box or apron for the day of the sale. Keep track of your initial “float” so that you can get an accurate picture of your profits at the end of the sale.
- ☞ Display items other than clothing on tables and make sure the items are not crowded.
- ☞ During the sale, don’t follow your buyers around.
- ☞ Be prepared to slash prices as the sale nears its end.

### **Organizing for a Garage Sale ~**

- ☞ A dolly or wheelbarrow comes in handy when you have to move several items.
- ☞ Organize sale items by type. For example, keep women’s clothing in one area, cookware in another area.
- ☞ Label each item with the price. Be sure to list the size of articles of clothing.
- ☞ Attach jewelry and earrings to notecards listing the price.
- ☞ Consider setting up an “everything’s a dollar” table.
- ☞ Don’t make customers guess whether an electronic item works. Plug it in or install the batteries.
- ☞ For multi-family sales, color-code the price stickers. As each item sells, remove the sticker and place it in a logbook.
- ☞ Check the ordinances in your area to find out if you might need a permit to hold a garage sale. Also, find out if you can put up signs in the neighborhood to advertise your sale.
- ☞ Make use of free advertising bulletin boards in your community to publicize your sale. Also advertise in your local newspaper.
- ☞ Now—what to sell. You may be surprised that what you have no use for and in fact think is junk, someone else is thrilled with. The following list will give you some ideas of what you can sell:

appliances—large and small  
costume jewelry  
plants  
children’s toys  
baby equipment  
shoes / boots  
garden tools  
china / bric-a-brac  
pictures / frames

books—paperback and hard cover  
sports equipment  
linens / bedding  
flatware—silver and stainless steel  
records / tapes  
patio equipment  
kitchen utensils / gadgets  
clothing, especially children’s

- ☞ Now that you’ve decided just what you’re going to sell, the following tips will help make your day a success.

- ✦ Put a price tag on every item. Mark your prices clearly. This makes it easier for a customer to browse. Masking tape is excellent for price tags.
- ✦ Make sure your merchandise is very clean. Goods that are polished and in good condition will sell faster than old dusty items.
- ✦ Be ready to deal with customers promptly at opening time. Have everything ready and be wearing a smile.
- ✦ Be prepared to give your customers change by having coins and small bills on hand.
- ✦ Save your bags for a few weeks before your sale, so you can offer your customers some wrapping for their purchases.
- ✦ Be prepared to haggle with customers.

- ✦ After your sale, if you should have any leftovers, perhaps you would like to donate them to a local charity for a tax deduction. Or you can always save the leftovers for your next sale.
- ✦ Garage sales are a lot of fun. Plan yours properly and you'll be assured of a good time and a successful sale.

### **Tips & Ideas ~**

- ✦ If allowed, put a sign up about a week before at a major crossroads intersection in your community. Bargain hunters plan early in the week on where they will go. Gives great exposure.
- ✦ For linen, bundle the linen; i.e., bath towels, hand towels, etc. that match. For bedroom linen put the size on it; i.e., Queen. Put a ribbon around the bundle to make it look attractive and to prevent people from taking things apart.
- ✦ Rent or borrow tables to make it easier for people to view versus boxes on the floor that may be difficult for older people to sort through.
- ✦ Use your network of friends and business associates by sending them an e-mail of your impending sale. They will send it on to others as well who they may know are interested in purchasing items at a reduced cost.
- ✦ In addition to plastic bags, get small boxes of various sizes to give to people who buy more than two or three things. Makes it easier for them to continue browsing if they know they have something that they can cart their new purchases in.

