

The art of thrifting



By Nate Smelle

I first fell in love with the art of thrifting listening to Prince romanticize about the treasures one can find in a second hand store in his song Raspberry Beret. As a child I remember going on a treasure hunt with my family as we browsed the reusable merchandise on sale at thrift stores, garage and yard sales, antique stores and flea markets. As a teenager my passion for thrifting evolved when I discovered the music of the Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, Neil Young, Frank Zappa, Run DMC and the Dead Kennedys all-in-one box of used vinyl for \$.25 apiece.

Moving to Vancouver with only a backpack of books, three changes of clothes and my camera, I was able to furnish my apartment and replenish my wardrobe for less than \$200 thanks to a generous selection of thrift stores in the neighbourhood where I lived. Then again I came to appreciate the art of thrifting on another level when I first moved to L'Amable. Before I could unpack my own things I had to unload a house and garage full of stuff left behind by the previous owners. If it wasn't for the ReUse GreenTech centre that existed in Dugannon at the time I would have piled on more than a few truckloads of useful things at the local landfill.

Like Sherry Hayes, manager of the new SIRCH thrift warehouse soon opening in Bancroft suggested, buying and making use of second-hand things is good for a community on many levels. Obviously this practice is good for the environment because it diverts waste from our landfills, and prevents the wasting of resources in the production of new products. Socially, thrifting benefits the

community by providing consumers with affordable alternatives to purchasing expensive household items. Whether shopping for a sofa for the cottage or dropping off a bag of clothes or a box of toys to donate, thrift stores give community members a place to connect with one another.

Thrifting is also good for the economy. While it may not increase the bottom line for manufacturers and makers of new things, it does boost the bottom line of thrifty consumers. More money in their pockets means more money being spent in the community, more dinners out, better quality food from the grocery store, more trips to the Village Playhouse, and over all a better quality of life. Some might think this is a stretch, but when we buy second-hand clothes, furnishings, toys, appliances, etc., this allows us to better utilize the energy we spend extracting resources, and transforming them into goods we do not really need.

It again strengthens communities and economies by keeping the money residents and visitors spend in the community, rather than sending these limited dollars to a company located somewhere else. The SIRCH Thrift Warehouse in Bancroft is a welcome addition to the local business community that will bring with it a long list of benefits for residents and local shoppers for years to come. Once this new establishment puts down its roots and settles in among its new neighbours and partners these benefits will only multiply.