

## Ripple Effect #86

### **Using Used**

by **Barbara Olive**

Some of you just may have seen me waving my arm – at an auction sale, that is. I came honestly to this habit of auction-sale going from a mother who was a canny buyer of items useful for our farm life in the 1940s and 50s and beyond. I still like the sound and rhythm of an auction sale and still seek them out when I am looking for special items.

It is only recently, with the help of an article on the Nature Conservancy website on “using used” that I connected my auction sale habit with water and land stewardship. When you think of it, water, typically a lot of it, is required for most manufacturing processes. And the land in the land “fills” that has to take in the many items we discard, including the plastic sacks used to bring them home from the store, speaks for itself.

So I thought I might share a number of things I have observed over my years of auction buying:

- Buying at auctions is typically far less expensive than going to a store. This fact has been a motivator for me from the beginning – my mother was forced to economize fiercely for many of her years on the farm, and this lesson got passed on!
- The items are there and waiting to be used – yard equipment, farm equipment; and, my specialty, home equipment -- pots and pans, dishes, furniture, even handmade linens or embroidered pillowcases – it’s all there, already made and waiting for a new user!
- The household items can give a home more character – think of the interest added to a room with an antique – though I have to admit that my definition of ‘antique’ has been, for the most part, simply used ‘a while back.’
- You can find better things at auctions: higher quality furniture than you might seek out in a store, more interesting books, exquisite dishes or decorations, even articles with values that will increase with time. Each item, after all, has passed the test of being chosen at least once already!

In acquiring used items, of course, you can employ your preferred method. Mine may be auctions, but antique stores and used clothing, book or CD stores not only work as well but can be fascinating places to explore over and over again. And, of course, whether we use local or larger websites, the Internet offers convenience and an awesome selection of used items in both auction and classified ad formats. As well as a place to offer some of our own unused stuff as new ‘used’ treasure to others.

Whatever format you may choose to 'use used,' by participating in this economy that requires fewer new resources, you are saving our REAL precious resources, whether trees or oil or air – or land and water.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at [www.redriverbasincommission.org](http://www.redriverbasincommission.org).

