Date:  
To:  Vicki Crosby, News-Miner, 459-7572 (wk), people@newsminer.com, cmroden@alaska.edu, news@deltawindonline.com, cesweb@alaska.edu  
From:  Roxie Rodgers Dinstel via Debbie Carter, 474-5406, dscarter@alaska.edu  
Re:  Pinching Pennies to run Monday, Aug. 17  

Have you visited a thrift store recently? Today is the day to do it because Aug. 17 is Thrift Store Day. The idea behind this celebration is to remind folks to save money and live more economically by shopping at thrift stores.

We are blessed with several high-quality thrift stores and lots of resale shops here in Fairbanks. They are great places to buy secondhand, reusable items at a bargain price.

So what items make sense to buy at the thrift store? There are a few staples that you should always buy secondhand.

Clothing is a great buy at thrift stores. I was admiring something a friend was wearing recently and she was quick to tell me it was designer clothing from the thrift store. Take your discerning eye and be sure to try on the garment before you leave the store. Our local consignment shops are brimming with inventory. Check the stores often, particularly if you are hard to fit. Be sure to wash garments before wearing.

Children’s clothing is always available at our local stores. I know everyone wants to dress their little ones in the latest designer fashions, but remember that children are growing at an astonishing rate. That $60 garment may have only be worn a few times before it is outgrown. Simply because children grow so fast, good quality, lightly-used garments are often available. Check closely for stains, missing buttons or malfunctioning fasteners before purchasing.

Books are available in our thrift stores for as little as 10 percent of the original price. About once a month, I go to our local book thrift store, Forget-Me-Not Books, which is run by the Literacy Council. I buy paperback books for about $2, read them and then return them to the store for resale. What a great way to support this worthy organization, indulge in my reading habit and get rid of the books I’ve already read.
Kids have a short attention span when it comes to toys. Make sure they have a constant supply of new toys by purchasing them at the thrift store. Make sure the toys are age appropriate and in good repair before you purchase.

Sports equipment can be pricy. If you are trying out a new sport, don’t go out and buy the best equipment right off the shelf. Buy from the thrift store, from an individual or Play It Again Sports before you commit to the expense of new equipment. This is particularly important when it comes to kids’ sports equipment. See if they are going to be the next Tiger Woods before you purchase those expensive golf clubs.

Furniture is often featured at the thrift store as well as at garage sales and on Craigslist. Look for solid wood pieces that can be cleaned up, painted or refinished for a new look.

There are a few things you should never buy at a thrift store. Bike helmets and children’s car seats should never be purchased used. Both should be retired when they have had one forceful accident. When you buy it secondhand, you don’t know what kind of treatment it previously had. Software and computers are another risky purchase. If you want secondhand, buy a refurbished item from a dealer.

Buying secondhand can save you money. Go to the thrift store today.

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