

GARAGE SALES

Saving Quilts and Afghans

Bedding — even the carefully and lovingly homemade kind — often ends up tossed in the donation pile or the garage sale when colors fade or decorations change.

But now, with fewer and fewer quilts and blankets being handmade, there are some people out to save these treasures.

ANITA SHACKELFORD

Anita Shackelford has been quilting since 1967 and, in addition to television shows and teaching clinics, Shackelford maintains a website.

On that website, she talks about her passion for collecting antique quilts.

“Simple scrappy quilts can add charm to an antique or country-style decorating scheme,” she writes. “For others, quilts are a trendy decorator item, displayed on the wall as any other piece of fine art would be. Antique quilts come in a great variety of patterns and colors; with a little searching, you should be able to find one to suit your style.” Shackelford recommends



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looking for unfinished quilt tops, particularly if you have an interest in becoming a quilter yourself.

“There are several good arguments in favor of finishing antique tops,” she writes. “Quilting will make the quilt

top stronger. A finished quilt will be enjoyed while an unfinished top is usually hidden away. Our grandmothers meant for them to be finished.”

However, she says that some antique tops should not

be quilted if the top is historically significant or of museum quality, a rare sample of a style or technique, or if the fabrics are particularly fragile. Appraisers, museums and other local experts will be able to explain more.

UPCYCLING AN AFGHAN

Afghans are crocheted blankets made of yarn. They can take many hours to complete and represent a true labor of love. If you find afghans in a garage sale and don't want to use them as a blanket, you can always get creative and turn them into something else.

Here are some ideas:

- Cut out a swatch and stitch it to the back of a denim shirt, jacket or vest for a pop of color and texture.

- Cut it into a cardigan and sew the edges. Look for afghans with a border design for a particularly finished look.

- Turn it into a robe with just a few cuts and a bit of sewing.

- Use it as a wall hanging to add color and texture to a room.

TURN TO THE PROS

If you have a quilt that has special meaning or find a quilt that means something to you, don't be afraid to ask questions of some professionals to keep it looking its best. Drop by the local quilt or sewing shop to talk to the people there about how to care for your quilt and even to get repair estimates. With good care and a little handiwork, most quilts can last for generations.

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SELLER'S TIP

Give Extra Quilts and Afghans to Charity

If you have quilts and afghans and are looking for a place for them to land, consider sending them to organizations who will sell them or raffle them off to benefit their causes. This is a great idea for extending the life (and the love) of these beautiful handmade pieces.

AD SPACE