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 Previews and Inspection: Tuesday, July 9th 12pm-4pm



**BURLINGTON COUNTY BRIDGE COMMISSION SURPLUS VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT AUCTION**  
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**HOLLENBACH HOME CENTER LIQUIDATION AUCTION – BOYERTOWN, PA**  
**ONLINE BIDDING CLOSSES MONDAY, JULY 15TH AT 6:00PM**  
 Location: 174 Holly Road Gilbertsville, PA 19525  
 Previews and Inspection: Monday, July 15th 4pm-6pm

For details go to <https://geyerauctions.com/upcoming-auctions/>

# THE RISE OF VINTAGE



## OPINION

By Barry Cassidy

While in London for the Phillies game, my wife and I had a little bit of free time to shop and dine out. In Chelsea, we visited the John Lewis Department Store. It was a full-blown department store with electronics and appliance departments. I think it was six floors packed with goods. In the ladies' clothing section, I took a seat while my wife browsed the English fashions.

As I sat in the chair, I faced what appeared to be a pop-up store with women's fashions. This installation was by the escalator, so it received a lot of foot traffic. It was a prime spot. The pop-up was called "A Sign of the Times". I did not think much of it until the young lady working the pop-up came over to say hi. We chatted about how she was a model helping out a friend trying to establish a business.

The business was high-end women's clothes. These clothes cost a lot, but they are used by someone who probably overpaid them initially. I related to her

that while in Haight Asbury a few weeks before, I saw a lot of vintage stores and people concentrating on used clothing. Then she asked, "Is it high-end designer clothes like ours?" and I answered, "Some of them."

Then, I wondered what the name of the pop-up meant. It meant that things were getting to the point where people were selling their high-end personal clothing because of the downturn in economic conditions. It is a sign of the times, literally.

We are certainly in turbulent times, and inflation is most likely straining family budgets. The internet has allowed people to sign up to be fast food delivery personnel or on-call chauffeurs instead of having a fixed-location job to survive in this economy. Vintage stores may be a symptom of people selling their possessions to stay alive.

I did see some higher-end vintage stores along the way. There were a few bridal stores that concentrated on used bridal dresses and, in some cases, were the window dressing for a higher-end vintage store.

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## OPINION

(Continued from page 40)

In most cases, there was a lot of junk in the vintage store, but nostalgic junk. I did not classify them as a thrift store unless they advertised as a thrift store. Most thrift stores are non-profit-related income-producing by selling donated merchandise.

But then I started thinking about what this means. Does it mean that people are affected by the economy or just a desire to associate with something from the past? I thought of a song by Gil Scott Heron that could offer a different perspective...

*The idea concerns the fact that this country wants nostalgia  
 They want to go back as far as they can -  
 even if it's only as far as last week  
 Not to face now or tomorrow,  
 but to face backwards*

*And yesterday was the day of our cinema heroes  
 riding to the rescue at the last possible moment  
 The day of the man in the white hat or the man  
 on the white horse - or the man who always  
 came to save America at the last moment -  
 someone always came to save America at  
 the last moment - especially in  
 "B" movies*

So, I reflected on whether we want to return to how things were. Could it be true that the rise of vintage stores does not reflect the desperation of people dealing with an economy that sees the cost of

goods spiral upward? Instead, it is about people wanting to associate with an idealized past, which does not seem like an option at this point. So who is going to save America?

Later in the song Heron describes the kind of person we need to save us from this nonsense...

*Marine tough the man is  
 Bogart tough the man is  
 Cagney tough the man is  
 Hollywood tough the man is  
 Cheap steak tough*

I am sure we all have experienced tough cheap steak, and at \$9.99 a pound, it is no longer a bargain. It is now expensive and there really is no real resale market for used cheap steak in the vintage stores. Plus, in San Francisco, you can get it for a fee on the sidewalk.

It is also a "sign of the times" that the Canadian Prime Minister is concerned about civil war in the United States. I asked friends on both ends of the political spectrum, and no one seemed ready to take up arms. This kind of rhetoric makes me think maybe Gil was right, maybe we are living in a "B" Movie.

*Barry Cassidy is a freelance grant and economic development consultant. He can be reached at [barrycassidy@comcast.net](mailto:barrycassidy@comcast.net).*