

My love of Tonka Toys

Yard sale sellers can be all over the map when pricing their stuff. Some set their prices based on what they originally paid for an item. If they paid a lot, then they think they can sell it for a lot. Other sellers are under the delusion that certain items are highly collectible and jack up their price accordingly. A few consistent examples I've found are; Hess Trucks, Barbie "collectible" dolls, comic books and baseball cards. What sellers don't realize is this mass produced stuff can be found at many garage sales. Hess trucks and Barbie collectible dolls are a dime a dozen around my town. When it comes to modern baseball cards, the market is saturated. There are way too many cards for too few buyers. But good luck trying to explain this to some yard sale sellers.



Not every Tonka is worth big \$\$\$!

I came across a lady with this high-priced mind set at a recent yard sale. Only in her case, it wasn't Barbie dolls or Hess trucks. Instead, it was an overpriced Tonka truck. Not every Tonka is worth big money, particularly the newer versions. It's the older Tonka toys that fetch the high dollars. How can you tell if they're old? Look for all metal parts on the toy. New Tonka trucks use more plastic, particularly in the under chassis. In the case of the lady's Tonka, I found plenty of plastic parts, so I knew it was fairly new. But even though it was newer, I was still interested at the right price. I asked the lady what she wanted for the Tonka? But before she gave me a price, she stated the obvious, informing me it was a Tonka truck.

Now don't get me wrong, I appreciate a teachable moment as much as the next guy. But I already knew it was a Tonka truck...even though I am not a seasoned garage sale picker. No, it was actually the famous yellow paint and the large letters spelling out "Tonka" on the side of the truck that pretty much gave it away! But having now informed me of what I had in my hands, I waited for the seller to whack me with a high price. That's a consistent trait with sellers who feel the need to announce the name of the item back to you. That's exactly what this lady did, proudly stating she wanted thirty bucks for the Tonka. But since plastic Tonka trucks are barely worth half that, I just nodded and quietly put the overpriced Tonka back on the table. I continued to look around her table hoping to find something she didn't overprice. Soon enough, I found it.



Fisher Price Western Town

As I turned away from the table, I practically tripped over a brightly colored Fisher Price box sitting on the ground. I picked up the box and checked it out. It was a vintage Fisher Price "Western Town" set. I've made some nice money on Fisher Price sets, mostly flipping the more commonly found family house, the school and parking garage sets. Since the Western set is much harder to find, I had a hunch it might do well on eBay. The set contained a jail, cowboys and indians, horses, wagon and a stage coach. The box was a little damp from being outside, but other than that, it was in pretty nice condition. I decided to work the damp box to my advantage. Picking up the box, I asked the seller what she wanted for the set? I added that even though the box was wet, I was still interested in it anyway. She pondered the damp box for a moment. More importantly, unlike the Tonka, she did **not** announce the name of the toy back to me! Instead, she quoted me a price of only three bills...much more reasonable than her Tonka toy prices! I handed her three dollars and grabbed the (slightly damp) Fisher Price set.

The wet box turned out to be a non-issue and was practically dry by the time I arrived back home. A few hours sitting in the back of my truck on a warm spring day will do that. After a little dusting, I scoured the internet and found the worth was around \$75.

That's what I mean about sellers and their prices-all over the map! In the case of my Tonka lady, she way overpriced the Tonka truck and **waaaaay** underpriced the slightly damp Fisher Price set. You gotta love those type of yard sale sellers...inconsistent and unpredictable!



