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*Birdbaths & yard sculptures(left);  
Antique glass door knobs (above)  
photos by Chris Fritchie*

provides both residential and commercial building salvage, explains the majority of his inventory comes from homes and office building demolitions or deconstructions in the upper Midwest and east coast regions of the U.S.

“There is a huge demand for old doors, many are in excess of a hundred or more years old,” said Mr. Christensen. “These doors are being primarily reused in the interiors of both newly built homes and those being renovated. A lot of people are revamping these doors for use as grand entrances to libraries or studies. We get a large number of requests for stained glass doors that individuals are planning to use as entries to bathrooms they’ve just remodeled.”

Salvage may be old by some standards, but it’s the newest trend in decorating. There’s style in salvage, hidden treasure amidst the junk. Vintage materials aged and seasoned in other eras indeed have a place in contemporary decorating styles, according to Mr. Christensen.

An aged and rusted wrought iron gate morphs into a headboard. Water-stained birdbaths that once allotted grandma plenty of quiet time in her garden are being regenerated into family room coffee tables by adding beveled glass tops. Weathered shutters are reformatted into shelving units and old doors become paneled screens or partitions.

Architectural details such as columns, lighting, wainscoting, glass door knobs, flooring, fireplace mantels, windows, shutters, stairwell banisters, doors and old tile and china are being utilized in and around homes in an effort to save

## What’s Old is New Again

By Kathleen Noble

**YOUNG SCARLET O’HARA**, accustomed to a life of luxury and desperate to save face in 1860s Civil War ravaged Atlanta in the award-winning epic *Gone with the Wind*, knew what to do with a pair of old and tattered green drapes.

Imagine if you will, picking clean the framework of some stately Georgian plantation such as the fictional Tara or browsing through the Stardust Casino just prior to its implosion last March for some scrap or remnant that would look perfect as a piece of art for your living

room wall.

Mary Poppins can even be seen pulling antique glass doorknobs from her bottomless carpetbag, suggesting to her charges Jane and Michael Banks that these common household items are indeed diamonds in disguise.

According to Dave Christensen, owner of One of a Kind, a storefront salvage warehouse in downtown McKinney, there is a natural market in turning the old to new.

Mr. Christensen, whose business

what's in line for destruction from the past into present-day style.

Salvage warehouses, old attics and basements, antique malls, auctions, flea markets, garage sales and historic old buildings set for destruction offer up many priceless olden day treasures.

Frisco residents Tom and Heather Hirosky, who are currently in the process of building a new home in Frisco and the owners of the 20,000 square foot Discount Home Warehouse in Dallas, have been providing interior and exterior architectural salvage and home design surplus to the public since 1994.

Discount Home Warehouse was established to repurpose reusable building materials recovered from renovated, pre-demolished homes from upscale Dallas neighborhoods.

"We accumulate most of our materials from the Lakewood, Highland Park, Preston Hollow, University Park and Lower Greenville, "M" Streets areas of Dallas," said Mr. Hirosky.

The Dallas warehouse also provides architectural salvage pieces to many local antique malls like the ones shoppers may find in downtown McKinney. Items such as marble and granite vanities, claw foot bathtubs, mirrors, stained glass windows and doors, antique hardware, glass doorknobs, kitchen cabinets, old ceiling tin, shelving centers, interior and exterior doors, yards of shutters and other character pieces are set aside for reuse.

According to Mr. Hirosky people are looking for any imaginable item depending on their own personal theme or style. They may be looking for period pieces from the 1920s or 1940s to accentuate their living room. For the exterior it may be statuary materials such as cherubs or fountains.

"We have contact with homeowners,



*Stained glass doors (top) photo by Chris Fritchie;  
Stained glass windows (bottom) photo by Kathleen Noble*

developers and builders who give us notice of properties available for salvage. We may do as many as three to five homes weekly," said Ms. Hirosky.

"Any valuable salvage is integrated into new building or design projects rather than being hauled to our already overflowing landfills," she added.

The Hirosky's, who will be relocating to their new home soon, have chosen to take their work home with them by using Newcastle Custom Homes, one of the area's fully "green" homebuilders and by integrating some of their warehouse pieces into their home.

"We plan to use a circa 1850 etched glass pantry door, old ceiling tins and a Viking stove in the kitchen area and several antique vanities in the bathrooms," added Ms. Hirosky.

They say it is possible to spend between 25 and 90 percent less by shopping salvage than purchasing new items. As an example to purchase an interior door at a home improvement center a 30" solid pine six-panel door sells for about \$80. The same salvaged door that is 'pre-hung' ready to go is \$30.

Mr. Hirosky continued his example with hardwood flooring.

"Our hardwood flooring is 2.25" wide and 3/4" thick solid oak plank and runs \$1.57 per square foot – ready to install & finish. At the home improvement store a similar product will run on average \$4.50 - \$5.50 per square foot," he continued. "I say a similar product because our flooring boards are longer lengths than what you can get at the home improvement stores unless you special order which we know costs more money. And our flooring comes from older homes which means the actual oak itself came from older, slow growth trees as opposed to the rapid growth lumber that is used today. So, not only are

you re-purposing and building green, but you are getting a better quality product as well as a better price!"

### THE ART OF RECYCLING

The recycling craze as we know it began in the early 1970s with the practice of picking up soda pop bottles for a five cent return or aluminum cans along the roadside for cash. Recycling gained momentum with the onset of choosing paper or plastic in an effort to save a tree.

Recycling has increased in gigantic proportions with the birth of

deconstruction and demolition salvages where usage of salvaged items has evolved into the massive concept of “green” building.

Each year, Earth Day, April 22, marks the anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement of 1970. Troubled that environmental issues were absent in the political arena spurred then U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson to implement a nationwide grassroots demonstration concerning the environment and has evolved into a worldwide effort to protect the planet and its inhabitants.

“People just don’t realize how much salvage and deconstruction materials can be used in the new home construction process,” said Mr. Hirosky.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Solid Waste Department, deconstruction is the orderly dismantling of building components for reuse and recycling. Statistics show that choosing the deconstruction process to salvage common building materials such as brick, concrete, flooring, lumber, windows, doors and fixtures rather than the total demolition process could divert hundreds of tons of landfill debris yearly.

Reuse and recycling of construction and demolition materials is one component of the newer but larger practice of “green” building. By definition the term “green” building is increasing a building’s efficiency by how it uses resources such as energy, water and other materials, which will reduce the negative impact on human health and the environment.

On a smaller scale, natural building focuses on the use of natural materials that are available locally. Individuals interested in investigating deconstruction and demolition policies in their own neighborhood are encouraged to contact their city’s environmental waste departments.

Richard Hargrove and his mother, Joanne Horne, owners of Alston’s Homestead Antiques in the old downtown Garland area have been in the business of architectural salvage for a number of years. Mr. Hargrove frequents antique fairs in the Austin and San Antonio areas scouting primarily for hard-to-find pieces such as chandeliers,

doors and old windows.

“Most anything has an interested buyer,” reports Mr. Hargrove. It’s not only home pieces that find new owners but also barns and old farmstead building materials are in high demand.”

Thetis and Marvin Alston, Mr. Hargrove’s grandparents and Ms. Horne’s parents, began their fledgling business, Alston’s Homestead Antiques, out of their family home in 1943 selling furniture and antique clocks.

“We even cleaned old stoves for resale,” said Ms. Horne.

The thriving business continued until the early 1970s. When Thetis passed away in 1981 and Marvin followed in 1988 the homestead went on the market for possible sale. When the sale of the property looked bleak a persevering Ms. Horne remade the business into a shopper’s paradise for antique and architectural building materials; 52 years after its initial opening.

Lying on the floors or propped on shelves of salvage warehouses, these worn and weathered pieces may look like little more than junk. But on the right wall or nestled in just the right corner of any home, it’s easy to see their historical value or to imagine the stories behind the item.

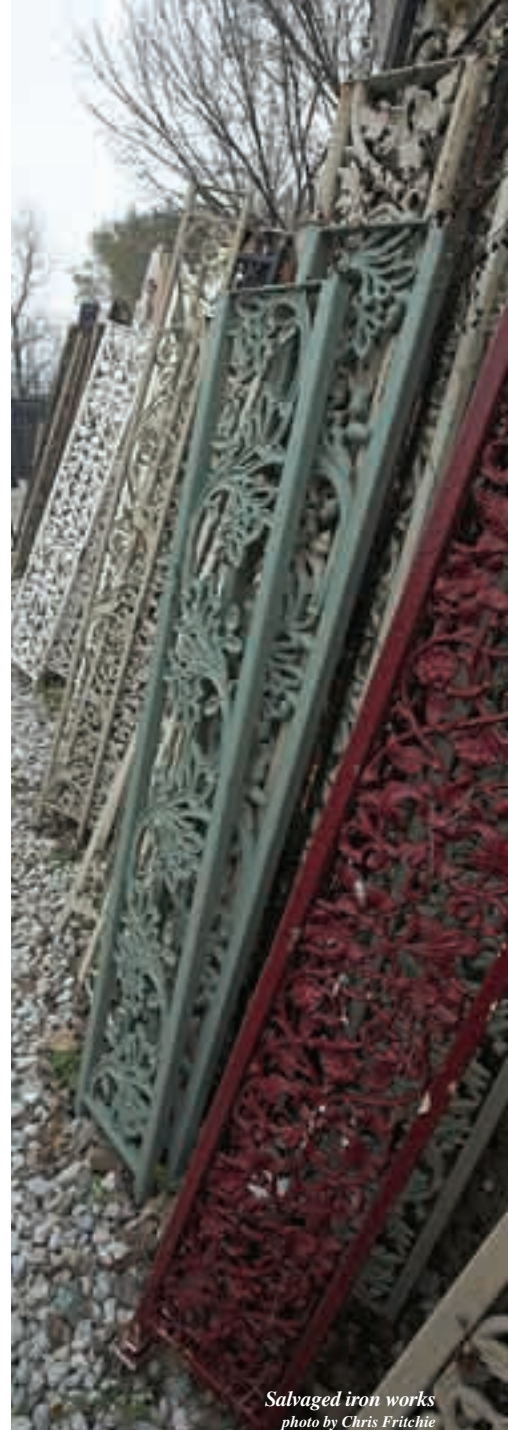
In today’s era of televised home decorating channels, there is a connected path from old to new and how things from the past can easily find new life in the future. Items of yesterday are clearly capable of becoming today’s most sought after home decorating artwork, complete with a pedigree.

According to salvage warehouse owners it takes little more than vision to create practical, useful and beautiful decorative additions from items headed to neighborhood landfills.

So whether you’re in the market to create a rustic look of days gone by in your new home, renovating an older home or making an impact by preventing additions to the landfill, a creative imagination and a little digging during a walk through an architectural salvage surplus collection will provide a gallery of options for your home décor while saving money and the environment.

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*Kathleen Noble is a freelance writer living in Wylie.*



*Salvaged iron works  
photo by Chris Fritchie*

## Frisco Goes Green

In May 2001, Frisco became the first city in the United States to adopt a mandatory Residential Green Building Program. Visit [www.ci.frisco.tx.us](http://www.ci.frisco.tx.us) for more information on the city’s Residential Green Building Program minimum standards. Additionally, a list of “green” homebuilders in the North Texas area is available at [www.greenbuiltnorthtexas.com](http://www.greenbuiltnorthtexas.com).