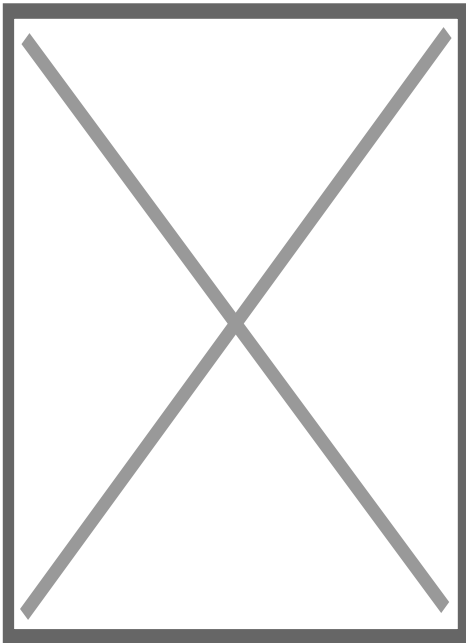


## Creating a beautiful Christmas

**During tough economy, thrift stores offer alternatives.**

*by Marlene Gerber and Suzi Woodruff Lacey –*



Lynn marcoe and her Christmas decorations [Photo by Suzi Woodruff Lacey].



This Christmas, many people wondered how to capture the warmth and joy of the holidays without all the spending and emphasis on the material goods. One San Diego woman found dozens of ways to capture the feelings of Christmas without extravagant spending or focusing on an abundance of “things.”

Lynn Marcoe was starting over, facing the holidays with not one Christmas ornament or even a piece of tinsel. With a very limited budget, this artist, art teacher and former department store window designer decided to see if she could create the kind of Christmas she loved as a child for under \$80.

Sticking to her goal, she turned her home into a place of warmth, joy and delight with treasures she found at local thrift stores with a few additions, such as ribbon, from Target and the dollar store. She

was amazed to find a 7? tree, the kind that cost around \$100 dollars retail, at a Salvation Army thrift store for \$30. She found ornaments, some whimsical, others elegant. She added twinkle lights, garlands, even hangings for her door and walls. The ornaments ranged in price from 75 cents to \$1.75.

Under the tree, Marcoe wrapped empty boxes with beautiful paper (the 99 cent store), and added stuffed animals to create a feeling of expectation, of good things waiting to be opened, of joy and childhood delights.

“The secret is in walking into the thrift store with a spirit of adventure and imagination,” said Marcoe.

Lynn Marcoe’s tiny home is a work of art, furnished entirely from thrift stores. She went on a treasure hunt to find her sofa and coffee table and everything else from china to artwork on the walls!

“I love what I’ve found more than if I had walked into a department store because everything is a treasure! It’s exciting because I find things that are beautiful, one of a kind. I never know what I will find next.

“One of the reasons I love to shop Salvation Army thrift stores is I know that not only is it a blessing for me, but the money I spend will help people in recovery. Then, when I donate goods to The Salvation Army, I am helping others decorate their homes and so I am part of this process of continuous giving, people helping people!”

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