

Some selling prized possessions to get through tough times

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Will Dennis of Vallejo sold 20 records to the Rasputin Music store Tuesday. He made \$6. (Shauntel Lowe/Times-Herald)

The downward spiraling economy has sent many Vallejo residents into a wild spin of their own looking for means to pay their bills.

In that search, many find themselves selling prized possessions to collectors and pawn shops.

"People are hurting, so they are trying to do what they can to come up with some money," said Bob Morgan, co-owner of the Vallejo Coin Exchange on Tennessee Street.

What once was a magnet for coin collectors is now an emergency room for people on the verge of losing their homes and cars or having their lights turned off.

"It can be depressing to be down here during the day," said Shari Morgan, Bob's wife and co-owner of the business.

The Morgans buy rare coins and jewelry, which they sell to wholesalers and coin collectors. Instead of reselling jewelry, gold items, for instance, are melted down for their metal content.

Business has changed "extremely" as the economy has worsened, with more middle-class customers bringing in heirloom jewelry just hoping for a small return, the couple said.

"They're trying to get gas money for the day," Bob Morgan said.

Meanwhile, people of all classes have been coming into the Best Collateral pawn shop on Sonoma Boulevard, said shift supervisor Dave Schultz.

"There's been a little spike in business," Schultz said.

On the opposite side of town, Will Dennis brought more than 100 LPs to Rasputin Music, a CD and DVD buyback store on Admiral Callaghan Lane.