

Garage Sale Gal

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC



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The race for dropped clothing

Lynda Hammond

I ran the P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll ½ Marathon a few weeks ago. Now, normally I wouldn't be writing about my exercise regime or the quasi athlete in me. But at the start of the race it became clear this was also of interest to me—the Garage Sale Gal.

Picture this: the temperature 30 degrees, the participants—about 37,000 of them—dressed in multiple layers. And they're off...folks are running and the clothes are flying. That's right, as the runners heat up many take off some of their clothing and drop it on the ground knowing they'll never see it again. For someone who loves a bargain, man this was hard to watch!

There was clothing everywhere along the first few miles of the course.

The runner in me kept on moving while the Garage Sale Gal in me cringed at each name-brand oversized sweatshirt I passed. "Wow, that would be comfy and cozy on a rainy day" I'd think to myself as I passed a wonderful, thick, nicely faded red sweatshirt. And that thought would go through my mind over and over again as I passed earmuffs, gloves, hats, socks (socks?), shirts, coats and even matching sweat suits that had been abandoned.

Jennifer Quandt of North Phoenix ran the ½ marathon, too. She'd planned on throwing away a few items during the race but she never quite warmed up to the idea. "I tried to take stuff off but I was cold. It was just too cold to give anything up." Jennifer, 26, admits it wouldn't have bothered her in the least if she did shed some clothing. After all it goes to a good cause.

Turns out all that clothing is picked up by volunteers and given to Goodwill so it can be sold in some of the 33 Goodwill retail stores in the Valley.

Katrina Thurman is vice president of communications & development for Goodwill of Central Arizona. She says volunteers picked up about 12,000 lbs. of clothing. That's expected to translate into about \$40,000 for the charity. "The race is a great opportunity for us because it's a huge donation in just one day."

This was my first ½ marathon so I was really in the dark about this "clothing drive" —hence the reason I was so amazed at the sight. But I am extremely thankful I didn't give in to the temptation to pick up some of those high-quality items. However, I just might hit the Goodwill Stores in search of that red sweatshirt I passed at about mile two!

By the way, I didn't shed any clothing. Like Jennifer, I was just too cold! I did take off a few things *before* the race started but I checked the items and picked them up afterwards. That was before I knew about the clothing going to charity. Now, I know better. Next year, I just might shake loose and throw a piece of my clothing on the ground. I'm sure it would feel quite exhilarating, liberating and certainly, charitable.

MY FAVORITE FIND

Goodwill Industries of Central Arizona got a lot of "favorite finds" recently thanks to the P.F. Chang's Rock 'n' Roll Marathon & ½ Marathon. This is a picture from around mile two of the ½ marathon on January 14 where runners shed some of their clothing after they warmed up. Volunteers picked up the clothes and

turned everything over to the charity. About 12,000 lbs. of blankets, shirts, pants, gloves and more were collected.



John Donnelly, a spectator at the ½ marathon, snapped this picture for me. I didn't have my camera so I enlisted the help of a kind stranger.

Do you have a garage sale find you love? Something that makes you smile when you look at it? Share it with us. Send us your picture. Tell us a little bit about it. Include your name, email address and phone number and email it to: Lynda@GarageSaleGal.com. Watch for the story of *your* treasure in this column!

Lynda Hammond is a former television anchor who runs the website www.GarageSaleGal.com

You can list and look for garage sales on-line. Contact her at

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Lynda also does garage sale segments on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona, KPNX, KSAZ and KNXV in Phoenix.