



Treasure hunt; Thrift store shopping provides bargains, hidden gems

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University of Colorado senior Caitlyn Brune browsed through racks of women's clothing at Savers, 695 S. Broadway, on Thursday. Brune's a veteran rack digger. She said she found quite the hidden gem at Denver's South Broadway Goodwill store three years ago -- an antique typewriter that's now worth "a lot" of money.

"I won't divulge how much," Brune said. "But let's just say I was shocked!"

Likewise, CU sophomores Spencer Pedigo, J.J. Busse, Pat Siddall and junior Jonathon Potthoff were cruising through the suits at Savers for a formal night they were planning to attend Saturday.

"Thrift store shopping is cheap," Pedigo said. "And it's not too bad a selection either.

"You can find a lot of good stuff here."

As the economy continues to falter, CU students are flocking to area thrift stores to find cheap clothing. Brian Sanchez, Savers' store manager, said come Thursday, Friday and Saturday, the store is full of college students looking for bargains for the weekend.

"Honestly, I know that the college kids aren't spending on an open checkbook," Sanchez said. "Truly you can find values here. The thrift shopper is somebody who is a savvy bargain hunter and value is what we really provide here."

Cathie Fenter, assistant manager at Salvation Army, 1701 33rd St., agreed. She said on Thursdays, the students start showing up, in search of vintage clothes.

Additionally, Tuesday is college day at Savers and Wednesday is college day at Salvation Army, with discounted items offered to students.

Good deeds

Thrift shopping isn't all about finding theme-party costumes.

Sanchez said a customer could find a pair of designer jeans for a fourth of the cost at Savers.

"With the rising food costs, fuel cost ... budgets are pretty tight right now," Sanchez said. "You can come through here and really put together a \$500-\$600 outfit for less than \$20."

While perusing picture frames at the Salvation Army, Boulder resident Krystle Smith said the economy has not drastically affected the way she shops, but, like many others, it has been on her mind.

"I would say I would be more inclined to shop at a thrift store for good bargains at this point," Smith said.

These good bargains also come hand-in-hand with helping others, said Sanchez and Fenter.

"You're recycling. You're helping people who are less fortunate by shopping at a nonprofit and you're also saving money," Fenter said.

Last year, the Boulder Savers alone recycled 1 million pounds of merchandise, Sanchez said.

The treasures

Boulder resident Jake Voss was rifling through the men's clothing at Salvation Army. He said he shops at thrift stores "all the time."

"You never know what you're going to find," Voss said. "Most of the things you do find are one-of-a-kind or original."

Smith agreed and said she prefers thrift stores to brand-name stores.

"I always find awesome, original unique items for cheap," Smith said. "It's kind of like treasure hunting. Everything in a thrift store has more personality."

Sanchez said the hunt is all part of the fun.

"It's a treasure hunt," Sanchez said. "Customers always say to me, 'Look at this treasure I found.' The word 'treasure' is a key word around here."