



## HERE COMES THE BRIDE

Fighting breast cancer with their gowns

For just a few moments before 9 a.m. on February 23, the Hilton San Diego Resort on Mission Bay was quiet. In the main ballroom, rack after rack of fluffy white gowns hung, filling near six thousand square feet with organza and lace.

And then the brides descended.

Hundreds of eager women plowed through the racks, examining hems, critiquing necklines, and most of all, gawking at price tags. In the din of their chatter, very few words could be caught, but the reason for their excitement was obvious: this was major wedding dress sale.

The ladies were enjoying the dress sale of Brides Against Breast Cancer, an organization under the auspices of the Making Memories Foundation. Brides-to-be across the country have the opportunity to buy

designer gowns, at rock-bottom prices, and enjoy knowing that every penny then goes to make wishes come true for women (and men) with stage 4 terminal breast cancer.

"This entire experience has been a true example of "ask and you shall receive" because given there is not any budget money to plan the event, I must rely on everything being donated," said local chairperson Nicole Matthews. And from the hotel space to food at fundraisers to the gowns themselves, not a penny was spent.

The gowns for sale ranged from \$49 to \$1200, and came in sizes 4 to 44. In the days leading up to the event, publicists from BERKMAN, working pro bono, arranged television spots to publicize the event. *Here Comes the Bride*, a designer wedding boutique in Mission Valley, donat-

ed several of their own gowns to be showcased on the morning news. Boutique owner Rebecca Martinez took time out of jam-packed schedule to supervise the fittings herself.

"I got involved with Making Memories Breast Cancer Foundation about a year ago, when I was introduced to the charity through an article I was reading about a wish they had granted. I was immediately taken by the work they were doing because I come from a family that absolutely cherishes family experiences," said Matthews. "I hope these women can find the same joy in the wishes we help to grant as my family does in our experiences together. I don't need any other motivation than that!" ☆