



STEVE NAGY/News-Democrat

Runners in the Belle-Scott Hash House Harrier's 8th Annual Red Dress Run on Saturday leave Friday's South bar on South Illinois Street in Belleville. The run features stops at local watering holes.

## Red dresses make running fun again for local 'hashers'

BY ALIANA RAMOS  
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BELLEVILLE — One man wears the same red dress every year, another bought his from a catalog and still another got his half-off at the Salvation Army.

The men aren't cross-dressers, they were participants Saturday in the Belle-Scott Hash House Harrier's 8th Annual Red Dress Run.

Throughout the year, men and women gather in different cities and countries around the world in their red dresses for the annual run, which dates back to the 1930s.

"It makes running fun again," said runner Mike Platt. "You're usually running to stay healthy and that's it. It re-

ally puts the fun back in when you're wearing a red dress."

About 20 male and female "hashers" or runners, gathered Saturday afternoon at Friday's South bar and restaurant, 624 S. Illinois in Belleville, to participate in what can best be described as a hybrid between a mile run and pub crawl.

Some runners wore dresses with fishnets, boots, flip-flops, or necklaces. One man even wore a red kimono.

Belle-Scott hashers start at a designated point and follow clues left by a 'hare' who leaves a flour mark, made by dipping a tennis ball in a bag of flour, at various points along a trail of his or her choosing.

The trail usually is interrupted by a stop at a bar, to give

the hashers a chance to be social, and then is picked up again.

The object of the run isn't who can finish first, but to find the clues left by the hare and to have fun.

Real names aren't even used. Each of the Belle-Scott hashers has a nickname given them by the group.

"Nicknames allow for more anonymity," said Sandy Thomas also known as "Pornogenic" by the hashers. "We're here to have fun and have a little exercise, not to talk about work or about my kids."

The Red Dress run, one of the annual events held by the running club, is based on the old English game "Hares and Hounds." The group also hosts

a few runs a week and a green dress run in downtown St. Louis for St. Patrick's Day.

The original club was founded in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia by Albert Stephen Ignatius Gisbert, an English accountant who was sent there. He gathered a group of fellow businessman and held the first run in December 1938.

Although most of the runners don't know why red dresses are used for the annual run, Anthony Rossetti, or "Halley's Comet," speculated that it was started after one woman led the run in a red dress and it caught on.

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