Dear Members of the Media,

Thank you for your interest in The Red Hat Society. 2018 is a very special year for us. It’s our 20th Anniversary and we plan on making the most of our playtime. From our international convention in New Orleans to a worldwide Hoot (gathering of Hatters), there’s so much to get excited about.

The Red Hat Society, a playgroup for women approaching 50 and beyond, began as a result of a few women deciding to greet middle age with verve, humor and élan. The Society is committed to changing the traditional notions of aging women and has become its own women’s movement—not strident, not angry—with a strong emphasis on the positive aspects of life, stressing the importance of friendship and sisterhood, the value of play and a determination to find the good in life everywhere possible.

Queens and Members over the age of 50 wear red hats with purple clothing, while Queens and Members under the age of 50 wear pink hats and lavender clothing (more muted tones) until they “REDuate” into their “big girl colors.”

Women join the RHS for a multitude of reasons, but the one common denominator is to connect with kindred spirits who want to experience fun and friendship on a more fulfilling level. Queens and Members take part in a variety of activities designed to pamper, indulge and entertain; all while creating authentic relationships that support and encourage women to the most out of life.

Today, you’ll find The Red Hat Society and our Members organically infused in all areas of life. From novels to a sea of Red (and Pink) Hatters parading in events around the world, the Red Hat has forever changed the world’s view of women.

Our website, RedHatSociety.com is the center point of communication between Queens, Supporting Members, Subscribers and The Red Hat Society Hatquarters located in Fullerton, California USA. Please take a moment to visit our website and be sure to include our site address in your piece.

Should you need more information or wish to schedule an interview with our Founder and Exalted Queen Mother Sue Ellen Cooper, our CEO Debra Granich or a local Member of The Red Hat Society, please contact me at 714-888-8132 or Emily@RedHatSociety.com.

Emily Yost
Marketing Director
The Red Hat Society, Inc.
Red Hatters Matter!

– The RHS is dedicated to reshaping the way women approaching 50 and beyond are viewed in today's culture.

The Red Hat Society’s Membership is largely comprised of the fastest growing demographic worldwide – women of the baby boomer generation (those born between 1946 and 1964). Not only do boomer women have tremendous economic clout, but they know how to live life to the fullest. Our Members are powerhouse consumers and are passionate about the Society’s official sport—shopping! While dedicated to having fun together, they take care of themselves and, in many cases, their loved ones.

RHS has been the subject of many studies, including a Pennsylvania State University intensive study* that showed:

• Red Hat Society membership, and its freedom from role obligations, provides an opportunity for self-expression and loss of inhibitions.

• Masking, through wearing our signature regalia of red hats, purple outfits plays a central role in being able to “let your hair down.”

  • Wearing the regalia has been called the “equalizer.” Allowing women of all shapes and sizes to put those insecurities aside and focus on the fun of play, while allowing the women to express their purest form of having fun.

  • In public spaces, these women who traditionally would feel invisible to others, as a group purposefully display themselves in ways that bring about positive attention, and enable them to be playful in ways that bring about pleasure.

• There is a profound need for “play” in older women’s lives.

• Contrary to the belief that women should “age gracefully,” the study shows that many older women have no intention of aging the way society dictates.

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*I Did Not Have Time to Play Growing Up... So This is My Play Time. It’s the Best Thing I Have Ever Done for Myself*: What is Play to Older Women?
Careen Mackay Yarnal; Garry Chick; Deborah L. Kerstetter; Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management, The Pennsylvania State University, USA
Online Publication Date: 01 May 2008
The Red Hat Society is a playgroup for women created to connect like-minded women, make new friends and enrich lives through the power of fun and friendship.

**About Us**

**Why a play group for women?**

Most women give their all to family, career, and community. And they enjoy it. But, along the way, sometimes our existing bonds of friendship gradually diminish. Membership in the Red Hat Society is a rewarding vehicle for reconnecting old friends, making new friends and rediscovering the joy of getting together with other women for the express purpose of having FUN! We wholeheartedly promote periods of “recess” from the cares and duties of everyday life in which Hatters gather for no other purpose than to play.

**Who are the women of The Red Hat Society?**

Our Queens & Members are from all walks of life and have varied interests. As a result, each Chapter is unique. Unlike traditional clubs, RHS may have multiple Chapters in a given town. If a woman wants to be Queen of her own Chapter, then by all means... self appoint! Members who have attained the fabulous age of 50 wear red hats and purple clothing, while those under 50 wear pink hats and lavender clothing.

**What do Red Hat Society Members do?**

Our Queens & Members make friends online through our Members’ only website, RedHatSociety.com, and gather locally in groups, known as Chapters, simply for fun. The RHS website provides Members with an Event Calendar for posting and viewing local Chapter events, an online discussion forum where Sisters are up 24/7 ready to chat and a Chapter connection tool that allows any Member to communicate with Queens of local Chapters anywhere in the world! Some of our favorite activities are to go to lunch, shop, see movies, theater, weekend trips and RHS conventions. If an activity sounds fun, we grab our Hats and go!

**The Benefits of Being a Part of The Red Hat Society**

Yes, we are all about “play,” but we cannot discredit the deeper, more meaningful benefits of RHS Membership – powerful interpersonal connections and emotional support systems built among Sisters both online and offline. We support one another in every life stage from all corners of the globe! We are reshaping the way women are viewed in today’s culture by promoting, not only fun and friendship, but freedom from stereotypes and fulfillment of goals and dreams. Fitness is the foundation on which we base healthy, rewarding lives. Red Hat Society naturally promotes positive Hattitudes!
We are a global society of women that supports and encourages women in their pursuit of fun, friendship, freedom, fulfillment, and fitness.

**Fun** – we celebrate life at every age  
**Friendship** – we solidify and expand the bonds of sisterhood  
**Freedom** – we discover and explore new interests  
**Fulfillment** – we realize our personal potential  
**Fitness** – we embrace healthy, life-lengthening lifestyles

Red Hat Society offers a community for women to connect through experiences, services and social events, and instills in them a renewed sense of pride, confidence, and optimism. We are refining the traditional notions of aging.
• RHS is a dynamic women’s Member-based organization with nearly 50,000 Members in 30 countries. In addition, RHS proudly delivers communications to our Members and Fans who embrace our lifestyle giving the Society a current reach of over a quarter of a million.

• RHS™ Members wear full regalia that include distinctive red hats and purple outfits if you are 50 or older, pink hats and lavender outfits if you are under 50.

• Red Hat Society Day is celebrated April 25th by official Chapters worldwide.

• The Red Hat Society is made up of a diverse network of women including working women and retirees, grandmothers, golfers, aerospace engineers, attorneys, teachers, Olympians and entertainers.

• The Red Hat Society reaches more than 63,000 Members and those interested in our lifestyle bi-weekly through the Friday Broadcast, a personal email filled with news from Hatquarters, tips on having fun and escapades of Red Hat Society Members around the world.

• 2018 marks the 20th Anniversary of The Red Hat Society! Hatquarters marked the monumental year with the launch of a new RHS App providing Queens and Members making connecting even easier!

• November 2017, The Red Hat Society hosted a Hatter's Retreat in Tucson, Arizona, USA—home of the first red hat found in a thrift store there. This convergence of Hatters was the beginning of the RHS’s anniversary celebration.

• 2014, The Red Hat Society partnered with Procter & Gamble to launch their new product, Always Discreet. The brand kicked off the partnership at the RHS’s international convention in San Francisco, California by providing the event’s entertainment which included the “Empress of Soul,” Gladys Knight and comedian Dana Carvey (Saturday Night Live).

• In January 2011, CBS Evening News spotlighted the Red Hat Society in a segment.

• In April 2011, the first red hat and purple boa went on display at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History.

• In May 2011, the RHS’s first book was published in Korea.

• In May 2011, RHS was the season finale focus of the hit CBS show, Rules of Engagement. The episode was #2 in the ratings, only under American Idol!

• In May of 2010, actor/comedian Damon Wayans released his first novel, Red Hats, in which the Red Hat Society was featured. In his acknowledgments he writes, “Sue Ellen Cooper and the Red Hats, I salute you for being such a wonderful worldwide sisterhood. You have brought much joy to many lives. I’ve witnessed it firsthand, through my mother.”

• In 2008, The Red Hat Society receives the Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association’s national award for the significant influence the organization has had on the world.

• HATS! The Musical premiered Oct. 11, 2006 at The New Denver Civic Theatre and has since launched in its fifth market.

• The Red Hat Society truly reached pop culture status when it was the focus of America’s longest running animated series, The Simpsons in November of 2005.

• In November of 2004, The Red Hat Society appears as the focal point of an episode of the television sitcom, Still Standing.

• From 2003 to 2006, The Red Hat Society was the focus of a comprehensive study by Pennsylvania State University which revealed the positive impact on women in today’s society.
The Red Hat Society based in Fullerton, CA, began with the gift of a red hat and has grown into a universal symbol for women around the globe as they victoriously celebrate turning 50 and entering into the next phase of their lives.

The social message behind the first red hat has resonated with millions of women around the globe regardless of race, creed, occupation, age or socio-economic status. Today, it is commonplace to see Red Hat Society members out frolicking and embracing life to the fullest in their now famous symbol, the “red hat.”

How it Started
In the fall of 1997, on a trip to Tucson, AZ, Sue Ellen Cooper impulsively paid $7.50 for an old red fedora in a thrift shop. When a good friend was nearing a “fifty-ish” birthday, Sue Ellen cast about for an idea for an original gift. Inspired by a well-known poem, Warning, which begins “When I am an old woman, I shall wear purple, with a red hat which doesn’t go and doesn’t suit me. ” she wanted to encourage her friend to grow older in a playful manner. She gave her friend a red hat of her own suggesting that she keep it as a reminder to grow older playfully - on her terms.

The symbolism behind the red hat had a profound impact on women Sue Ellen encountered. Those women responded by donning their own red hats and entering a new women’s movement embracing a renewed outlook on life filled with fun and friendship, fulfilling lifelong dreams.

The Red Hat Society was born. No longer would maturing women be invisible to society. They simply are not done yet!

The Growth Explosion
The Red Hat Society membership exploded through word of mouth, the purest form of viral marketing, growing from 2 chapters in 1999 to over 40,000 chapters worldwide within five years. Women everywhere resonated with the positive ideas of fun and friendship promoted by the Red Hat Society, and they were not about to be left out!

The Society quickly became the focus of major publications, ten books (one of which reaching the New York Times Best Sellers list,) television and other media, in addition to having the Red Hat Society brand appear on a myriad of products. From Macy’s to Walmart, the Red Hat Society’s world famous brand was everywhere.

The Society was the focal point of the musical HATS! that was launched in 2006. They were recognized with an award by the Pop Culture Association and American Culture Association in 2008. Pop Culture status was truly achieved when the Red Hat Society was the focus of an episode on the longest running animated series, The Simpsons, in which Marge Simpson joins a local Red Hat Society chapter.
With chapters around the globe, the Red Hat Society stresses the things that all women have in common in relation to their life experiences. They reach out, with red-gloved hands, to invite all women to join with them on their march to (tongue-in-cheek) take over the world!

They have become their own women’s movement – not strident, not angry – with a strong emphasis on the positive aspects of life, stressing the importance of friendship and sisterhood, the value of play, and a determination to find the good in life everywhere possible. They promote respect for all and the value of good will and good humor. Although their original focus was on women of 50 or older, the Red Hat Society encourages women of any age to join (those under 50 wear pink hats until they “reduate”), emphasizing the value of cross-generational friendships and mentoring. They believe that their philosophy is ageless, and has universal appeal. They are always delighted to see mothers, their daughters and granddaughters creating their own “Red Hat Legacy” as they play together.

Today, you will find the Red Hat Society and its members organically infused in all areas of life. From novels to a sea of Red Hatters parading in events around the world, the Red Hat has forever changed the world’s view of women.
Sue Ellen Cooper was born in Sioux City, Iowa. Through her early childhood the family lived in New York and Massachusetts, settling in California, where Sue Ellen eventually completed her education with a B.A. in English from California State University, Fullerton. After graduation she married Allen Cooper, with whom she shares two adult children and two grandchildren. She was a homemaker during her children’s youth, but she continued to hone her artistic talent with lots of college art classes and eventually found part-time work as a freelance illustrator. Later she joined two other artists in forming a faux finish/mural-painting business called Altered Interiors. The trio spent six years doing decorative painting in businesses and private homes. In 1997, weary of climbing scaffolding, she retired from this venture.

In 1998, Sue Ellen gave a vintage red hat, along with a copy of a poem entitled “Warning” (in which the narrator threatens to wear a purple dress with a clashing red hat as she heads into old age) to a close friend for her 55th birthday. Over the next few months, other friends were given the same gift, and several of them, dressed in purple and wearing red hats, began going out together for tea, lunch, etc. Over the next year the group received lots of notice and women began to contact Sue Ellen to ask how they, too, could join the fun. She soon perceived that her own desire for play and renewal as she grew older was shared by countless other women, regardless of their circumstances or potential religious or political differences, and she sensed their need for some sort of leadership and/or unifying principles. So she sought expert help in building a supportive structure for what she christened The Red Hat Society. This grassroots social phenomenon connects women around the world, enabling them to build social and emotional bonds and support each other in the pursuit of vital, active living through middle age and beyond. She remains committed to the cause of unifying women and, through humor and good will, gently reminding society at large that women – regardless of age - have value and significance.

In 2004 she was honored by her alma mater with the distinguished alumni “Visions & Visionaries Award” for her accomplishments, which have impacted women worldwide. Cooper, one of just a handful of CSUF graduates recognized in this manner, joins the ranks of some very consummate CEOs, media personalities and authors whose achievements have greatly benefited the community. That same year, Sue Ellen made the city of Fullerton’s 25 Most Influential People List made up of a select number of top individuals who have made dynamic contributions in the areas of education, public service, business, entrepreneurship and community service. Her prominent success led to her 2008 recognition by the National Organization of Women Business Owners for entrepreneurship, a significant distinction considering the humble beginnings of the Red Hat Society.

Sue Ellen’s personal values include dedication to her Christian faith, close connections with family and friends (particularly cherishing time with her two young granddaughters) and a desire to make a positive difference in the world. Demonstrating her belief in practicing what you preach, she devotes her time to making art, supporting her church, reading and writing and maintaining personal fitness by daily walking. And she loves to remind people of the Red Hat Society belief that Red Hatters are not dead – and not done!
Debra Granich
Red Hat Society CEO

As the Chief Executive Officer of The Red Hat Society, Inc., Debra Granich has been instrumental in leading and growing the organization into a global operation. In the past ten years, Debra has helped build the Red Hat Society’s Membership while overseeing the organization’s product, event, and entertainment development. Passionate about changing traditional notions of aging for women in the social and business worlds, Debra is committed to helping the Red Hat Society make a positive difference for women approaching 50 and beyond.

Before joining the Red Hat Society, Debra held senior management positions for national retail store Contempo Casuals, then part of the Neiman Marcus Group. She subsequently transitioned into the Red Hat Society from the Walt Disney Company where she held human resources leadership roles in Consumer Products and Theme Parks divisions. Among her responsibilities was the Disneyland Resort expansion project leading to the successful launch of an additional theme park, hotel and downtown shopping area. Debra’s extensive experience in leadership and human resources has allowed her to build the necessary infrastructure to support the Red Hat Society’s rapid growth over the years.

Today, Debra works tirelessly to develop services and value for Red Hat Society Members through corporate partnerships and strategic collaborations. She claims that staying true to the organization’s core values, being creative, sourcing new opportunities and thinking big has helped her build the Red Hat Society into the social network it is today.

Once a Pink Hatter herself, Debra believes that older women have a lot to offer themselves, their families and friends, and their communities. She is passionate about women’s health, education and social issues, and abides by the values and passion of the Red Hat Society. Debra currently works closely with the American Heart Association (AHA), the AARP, and Penn State regarding women’s issues.

Debra earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University, Fullerton and continues to be active in many social and business groups associated with her alma mater. In her free time, Debra enjoys spending time with her family, going to the theater and working out. Debra and her husband Boris have been married for more than 30 years and together they have two adult sons.
Contact the Red Hat Society

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