



Red Hat Society[®], Inc.
2014 Press Kit



Dear Member of the Media:

The Red Hat Society began as a result of a few women deciding to greet middle age with verve, humor and élan. The RHS passion is to promote just that.

Initially started as a social organization for women age 50 and over, The Red Hat Society now attracts women in all age demographics through both the “Red Hat” (those over 50) and the “Pink Hat” designations (those under 50). Queens and Members believe having fun is not only the comedy relief of life, it has been proven to have a multitude of health benefits as well! Research has shown that having fun on a regular basis promotes a happy life! And, since we are all growing older day by day, we might as well join red-gloved hands and go for the gusto together.

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.

This celebration of women of all ages results in activities designed to pamper, indulge and entertain; all while creating authentic relationships that support and encourage women to get the most out of life. The team at Hatquarters is passionate about connecting, empowering and transforming the lives of women through the power of fun and friendship.

Our official website, www.redhatsociety.com, is the center point of communication between Chapters, Supporting Members, Enthusiasts (individuals who enjoy the lifestyle RHS offers) and the Red Hat Society Hatquarters located in Fullerton, California. Please take a moment to visit our web site 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, 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**.

*“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



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 over 70,000 Members in 30 countries. In addition, RHS proudly delivers communications to our 'Subscribers' and 'Enthusiasts' 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.
- Exalted Queen Mother Sue Ellen Cooper reaches more than 89,000 Hatters and Enthusiasts (those who enjoy our lifestyle) each week through the Friday Broadcast, a personal e-mail filled with news from Hatquarters, tips on having fun and escapades of Red Hat Society Members around the world.
- Sue Ellen Cooper also sends a personal monthly broadcast to all Queens entitled Queen To Queen. This is a communiqué for all Queens to share ideas and plans and to ask questions.
- In June 2014, Warner Brothers Studios worked with RHS to provide a "Hometown Screening" experience for one lucky RHS Member and 50 of her closest friends!
- In April 2013, the RHS celebrated our milestone 15th Anniversary.
- 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 June of 2010, The Red Hat Society partnered with River City Productions to form a television and film production company providing quality content for women of all ages.
- 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 Revolution”

One of the premier women’s social organizations in the world, 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 and continues to be performed today. 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.



The Red Hat Society Moving Forward

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.

The Hat that Started the Revolution





Red Hat Society Founder

Exalted Queen Mother Sue Ellen Cooper Red Hat Society Founder

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.

She has written two best-selling books: *The Red Hat Society: Fun and Friendship After Fifty* and *Laugh Lines, Stories of Inspiration and Hattitude* and posts weekly online messages to the Red Hat Society membership. She



remains an integral part of the RHS, continuing to preside over international conventions and participate enthusiastically in her original chapter.

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!



Red Hat Society CEO

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.

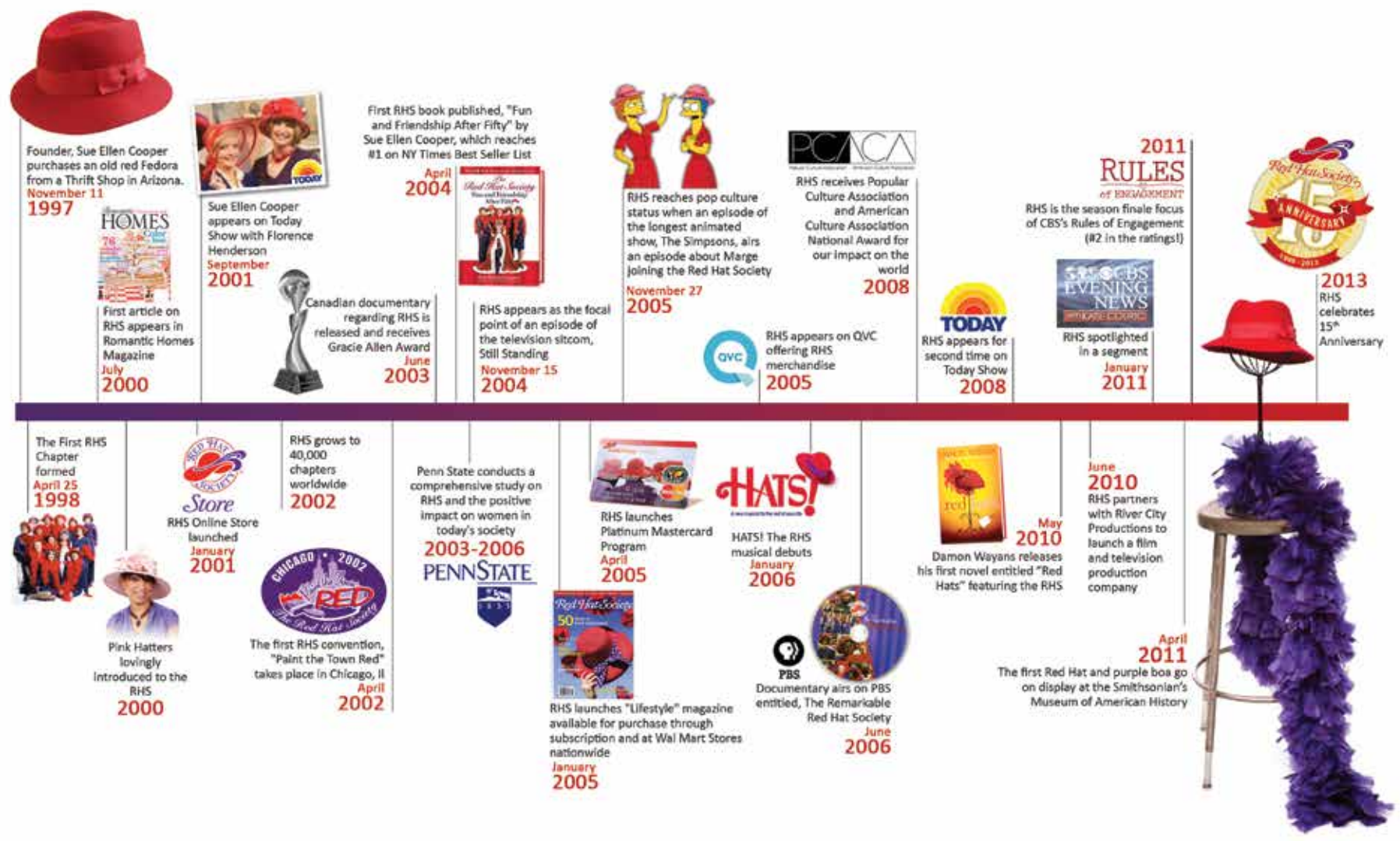
Today, Debra works tirelessly to develop services and value for Red Hat Society Members through corporate partnerships and strategic collaborations. She claims that staying true to the organization's core values, being creative, sourcing new opportunities and thinking big has helped her build the Red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



1997
 Founder, Sue Ellen Cooper purchases an old red Fedora from a Thrift Shop in Arizona.
 November 11

2000
 First article on RHS appears in Romantic Homes Magazine
 July

2001
 Sue Ellen Cooper appears on Today Show with Florence Henderson
 September

2003
 Canadian documentary regarding RHS is released and receives Gracie Allen Award
 June

2004
 First RHS book published, "Fun and Friendship After Fifty" by Sue Ellen Cooper, which reaches #1 on NY Times Best Seller List
 April

2004
 RHS appears as the focal point of an episode of the television sitcom, Still Standing
 November 15

2005
 RHS reaches pop culture status when an episode of the longest animated show, The Simpsons, airs an episode about Marge joining the Red Hat Society
 November 27

2005
 RHS appears on QVC offering RHS merchandise
 2005

2008
 RHS receives Popular Culture Association and American Culture Association National Award for our impact on the world
 2008

2008
 RHS appears for second time on Today Show
 2008

2011
 RHS is the season finale focus of CBS's Rules of Engagement (#2 in the ratings!)
 RHS spotlighted in a segment
 January

2013
 RHS celebrates 15th Anniversary

1998
 The First RHS Chapter formed
 April 25

2001
 RHS Online Store launched
 January

2002
 RHS grows to 40,000 chapters worldwide
 2002

2002
 The first RHS convention, "Paint the Town Red" takes place in Chicago, IL
 April

2003-2006
 Penn State conducts a comprehensive study on RHS and the positive impact on women in today's society
 PENN STATE

2005
 RHS launches Platinum Mastercard Program
 April

2005
 RHS launches "Lifestyle" magazine available for purchase through subscription and at Wal Mart Stores nationwide
 January

2006
 HATS! The RHS musical debuts
 January

2006
 PBS Documentary airs on PBS entitled, The Remarkable Red Hat Society
 June

2010
 Damon Wayans releases his first novel entitled "Red Hats" featuring the RHS
 May

2010
 RHS partners with River City Productions to launch a film and television production company
 June

2011
 The first Red Hat and purple boa go on display at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History
 April



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