

Red Hat Society News & Notes

Hats off to Adventure



SEPTEMBER • 2026

THEME OF THE MONTH: HATS OFF TO THE ADVENTURE

Adventure looks different for every wench. For some, it's a plane ticket 'n a packed suitcase. For others, it's startin' a new hobby, steppin' out o' a comfort zone, or allowin' yourself t' try somethin' jus' a wee bit darin'. Dis month's theme "Hats Off t' the Adventure" reminds us dat life be full o' journeys waitin' t' be taken.

Me favorite things about dis sisterhood be how often adventure looks like laughter, spontaneity, 'n a wee bit o' mischief. I've watched sisters who hadn't danced in twenty years jump up the moment a good shantey played. I've watched wenches who always said, "I can't," discover they absolutely can.

Our Society began wit' a simple poem 'n a bold hat 'n look how far dat wee spark has carried us. A movement, a community, a family. Wha' began as one wench's playful idea has become decades o' shared experiences.

Adventure be the bridge between where we've been 'n where we're goin' next.

Dis fall, I hope ye seek out an adventure dat fills yer spirit. Maybe it's a themed luncheon, a day trip, a workshop, a volunteer project, a costume challenge, or a new place t' eat. Maybe it's joinin' a Zoom event wit' sisters from other states or countries. Maybe it's simply rediscoverin' the parts o' yourself dat went dormant durin' busy years.

Yer adventure doesn't 'ave t' be big. It jus' has t' be yers. Every adventure leads t' memories. The kind ye tell o'er 'n o'er again 'til they become chapter legends.

Hats off to the women who try new things. Hats off to the women who show up.

Hats off to the women who laugh even when the plan goes sideways.

Hats off to the women who choose joy again and again.

Hats off to the adventure—and to the sisters who make it unforgettable.

Embrace the journey ahead. Wear yer hat boldly. 'n remember: the greatest adventures be the ones shared wit' scallywags.

We are Stronger Together. With Love,

Michelle

Michelle Lee, Queen Plumerix
Red Hat Society President



STATE OF THE SISTERHOOD

What's happening in our Sisterhood? Come find out!

Stay connected with your Red Hat sisters throughout the year! RHS hosts regular Zoom Gatherings where members can catch up, share ideas, hear what's happening at Hatquarters, and enjoy a little Red Hat fun from wherever they are. Choose the gathering that's right for you and register once to receive your Zoom link for the entire series.

To learn more, click [here](#) or go to RedHatSociety.com/zoom-registration

Virginia J. Ortega

AMBASSADOR QUEEN MUM GOLDEN HONEY
BLING QUEENS OF LOMPOC, CHAPTER #10312

Queen Mum Golden Honey Bee Ambassador Virginia J. Ortega believes in looking forward, staying positive, and finding plenty of reasons to laugh along the way. As Queen of the Bling Queens of Lompoc, she has created a welcoming sisterhood centered on friendship, fun, and the freedom to simply be yourself.

A California native, Virginia was born in Hanford and has called many parts of the state home, including San Diego, North Hollywood, Selma, Sacramento, Porterville, and Santa Barbara County. She graduated from high school in Sacramento and attended city college briefly before marrying. Throughout her life, she continued taking college courses whenever they could help her grow personally or professionally.

Virginia worked for the State of California for nearly 19 years, including nine years as a control cashier. She is also the mother of four daughters and, 14 years ago, expanded her family by adopting three sisters.

Creativity has always been an important part of Virginia's life. Sewing is her first

love, but basket weaving, beading, and just about every kind of crafting also make her happy.

Her first encounter with the Red Hat Society came years ago in Porterville, when she was invited to a luncheon. Although that first experience didn't lead anywhere, Virginia got another chance in 2019 after reconnecting with her dear friend Andrea Franklin, who introduced her to a Red Hat chapter in Santa Maria.

This time, it clicked. Virginia loved the friendships, the fun, and the freedom she found in the RHS. In 2023, she founded the Bling Queens of Lompoc with one goal: to create a chapter where everyone felt welcome. Today, she describes her Chapterettes as enthusiastic, open-minded women who laugh, take lots of photos, and genuinely enjoy being together.

One of Virginia's favorite Red Hat memories was attending her first



“Smile more.
You are worth it.”

- Virginia Ortega

“We are here for
each other. We are
stronger together.”

Mass Coronation in Texas. “That was so over the top for sure,” she recalls.

Her advice to other women is simple: Find a chapter near you, and if you don't find the right fit, start your own. Get involved, make friendships, and remember that it is never too late.

HATTER STORIES

A Summer of Sisterhood, Adventure and Big Hats

Submitted by Ann Dixon
Queen of Pizazz, Peaches with Pizazz

This summer took me from a new city to the Caribbean and finally to San Antonio, with plenty of laughter, adventure and sisterhood along the way.

My first adventure took me to St. Louis for the tenth anniversary of the Ladies in Red Funvention. Queen JoAnn Brown and her team put on a wonderful event filled with entertainment, giveaways and Red Hat sisterhood.

One highlight was a gathering for the Queens to dine together. Having been a Queen for only two years, I appreciated the opportunity to share ideas, talk about caring for our members and learn from one another. I returned to my chapter inspired.

The Funvention also brought an unexpected surprise. I won a silent auction for a beautiful piece of jewelry featuring my birthstone, emerald. I had been rather aggressive with my bidding because I really wanted it! I soon discovered my tablemate had been bidding on it, too. Even better, Bonnie Dixon of Illinois and I discovered we share the same birthday. I had found my birthday twin!

In July, I traded my Red Hat adventures for a mother-daughter cruise to the Caribbean, visiting the Dominican Republic and Bimini, Bahamas. It wasn't a Red Hat trip, but I did get to see my girl in a red hat, although hers should have been pink!

It was her first cruise, and I was especially grateful for our time together after some rough months. We traveled with women looking for fun and adventure. Come to think of it, that sounds a lot like Red Hatting!

My final trip brought me to San Antonio for the Boots, Bling, and Big Hats International Red Hat Society Convention. There was crafting, friendship, food, dancing, touring and even a trip to SeaWorld.

I especially enjoyed sharing my creations, gifting my resin craft to my mom and a painted glass creation to Ms. Vee of Body by Vee. I also made an inspirational card for a future Purple Alert package, sent to a sister Hatter who needs extra love and encouragement.



In a way, that perfectly describes what the Convention did for me. The friendship and joy truly lifted my spirits.

Summer may be ending, but this Queen's adventures certainly aren't!



Giggles, Grapes & a Whole Lot of Red Hats!

Submitted by Erin Mileur

Queen of Apple City Sisters #100013, Murphysboro, IL

Earlier this January, I was watching *CBS Sunday Morning* when they interviewed Dr. Robert Walinger, director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, about his book *The Good Life*, co-authored with Marc Schulz.

One message resonated with me: meaningful human relationships are among the strongest predictors of our health, happiness, and longevity.

As I listened, I thought, "Yes! That's exactly what I've been longing for." Like so many women, I realized I was craving genuine friendships as I grow older, especially with other women. I wanted a community of fun-loving, supportive sisters who celebrate life together.

That realization inspired me to take action. After several months of planning, I hosted *Giggles, Grapes & Good Friends!* at a local winery on July 30. Seven women joined me for an evening of laughter, games, conversation, and connection.

I shared my dream of starting a Red Hat Society

chapter in my hometown. One guest read Jenny Joseph's poem "Warning," and I told the story of Sue Ellen Cooper purchasing that first red hat for a friend, unknowingly beginning a worldwide movement celebrating women, friendship, and fun. I also introduced the Red Hat Society's Five F's: Fun, Friendship, Freedom, Fitness, and Fulfillment.

Each guest received information about the Society and a membership application, with no pressure to join. As a surprise, anyone who joined that evening could choose one of the red hats decorating the winery as my gift.

What happened next exceeded my expectations.

Before the evening ended, all but one guest had completed an application. Since then, that final guest has said she plans to join, too, and has invited four friends!

In one evening, a simple idea became something much bigger. A casual gathering over wine

became the beginning of new friendships and an official Red Hat Society chapter.

If you've thought about starting a chapter, don't overthink it. Invite a few women together. Share your heart, tell the Red Hat Society story, laugh, and enjoy one another's company.

You may discover women around you searching for the same thing: a place to belong, friendships to cherish, and a reason to celebrate life together.

"Sometimes all it takes is one invitation, one evening, and one red hat to change everything."



HATTER STORIES

Finding My People in Red Hats

Submitted by Ann Dixon

Queen of Pizazz, Peaches with Pizazz

For most of my life, I have been, and still am, a fairly solitary woman. Yet somehow, I found myself drawn to the Red Hat Society. I may not have realized it when I joined, but one of the greatest gifts waiting for me was friendship.

Some women join with a best friend already by their side. Others are lucky enough to find their Red Hat bestie along the way. While joining doesn't guarantee you'll find your perfect friend, it opens the door to meeting women who share your interests, sense of fun and outlook on life.

Friendships have always changed with the seasons of my life. My high school friendships faded when I left for college. College friends drifted away when I joined the military. A few military buddies remain very dear to me, and we reconnect at reunions, retirements and, sadly, even funerals. But these aren't necessarily the women I call when I want to go shopping, talk about a book or spend a day at the beach.

My Red Hat friends are different. They recognize something in me that they also see in themselves.

We enjoy the same things, laugh at the same jokes and share an enthusiasm for life's little adventures.

Maybe friendship is, in some ways, a wonderfully selfish thing, and I've decided that's perfectly okay. At this season in life, we understand the value of being selective with our time and choosing people who bring us joy.

When I feel like visiting the hobby store, there's a Red Hat friend ready to exchange creative ideas. When a thrift store calls, another is ready to hunt for treasures. And when it's time for a Red Hat Funvention, I'm checking which of my road-trippers is ready to put in some miles!

For a woman who has spent much of her life comfortable in her own company, finding this community has been an unexpected blessing. We make each other laugh, encourage one another to try something new and happily come along for the adventure.

Together, we enjoy one of the greatest gifts the Red Hat Society has given us: friendship.



Friendship makes the adventure brighter.

HATTER STORIES



Quirky Red Hatters at Miss Molly's

It was a Red Letter Day at Miss Molly's Tea Room in Medina, Ohio, as 10 Red Hatters gathered for a special celebration honoring Marilyn Minney's 25 years as a Red Hatter!

Queen Myrna McDougal and nine festively attired Red Hat Quirkies enjoyed tea, delicious quiche and

scones, the charm of the Victorian tea room, and a little shopping at the quaint shops around the square.

Congratulations to Marilyn on 25 fabulous years of fun, friendship and Red Hatting!



MEMBER PERK



Tea House Times

Tea House Times magazine is a special membership perk for our Hatters, offering a delightful mix of inspiring stories, tea traditions, entertaining ideas, recipes, travel inspiration and more. It's another fun way to celebrate friendship, connection and the joy of being part of our Sisterhood.

To read the latest issue, click [here](#) or go to <https://shorturl.at/Q5mMz>

FITNESS



Alzheimer's Talks: Answering Common Questions

New treatments are changing the landscape of Alzheimer's disease — and raising new questions. Who are these treatments for? How do they work? What should you consider when deciding if treatment is right for you? Join this Early-Stage Connections conversation with a person living with early-stage Alzheimer's and scientific staff from the Alzheimer's Association. We will discuss today's treatment options, promising approaches on the horizon, and common questions around new treatments.

September 24, 2026 | 3:00 PM CDT

To register, click [here](#) or go to <https://shorturl.at/XgRzU>

PODCAST



Watch the RHS Podcast

Catch the latest Red Hat Society Podcast for lively conversations, inspiring stories, and plenty of Red Hat spirit! Meet fellow Hatters, hear their stories, and see what's happening throughout our colorful community.

Click [here](#) to watch or go to <https://www.youtube.com/@RHSFridayPodcast>



I had the best time catching up with old friends, putting faces to names, and meeting so many hatters I'd only known online. I came home feeling energized and inspired by the women I met.

So many of you shared photos from San Antonio, and together they tell the story of an unforgettable few days. Pour yourself a cup of tea (or coffee...or a margarita!), settle in, and take a look. You may just spot yourself, an old friend, or a new one!

To see the pictures, click [here](https://app.iconmoments.com/gallery/view/35161345344/ad7a034f5da6858ebecd038d72f1) or go to

<https://app.iconmoments.com/gallery/view/35161345344/ad7a034f5da6858ebecd038d72f1>



Tune in to our Convention recap podcast episodes and catch all the highlights, laughs, and memorable moments from Convention.

YOU SAID IT



Recharged in San Antonio

Submitted by Ambassador QueenB

and the many chapters of which she is a member. Again, thank you, Debra, for your years as CEO and all you did for us.

The RHS was sold last year to our new leader, Queen Plumerix Michelle Lee, President. She jumped right in to help make the event the success it was. She held a fabulous all-day Queen's Retreat in addition to planning many things for us and presiding over the Convention.

Both ladies actively participated in every activity, from early morning until well after midnight. I'm not sure they actually got any sleep! Somehow, they remained energetic and smiling, stopping for hugs and photos every time members asked.

Ladies who were not able to join in the fun missed a splendid opportunity to visit with Queen Plumerix Michelle Lee, President and Owner of the Red Hat Society, and LadyBug Debra, one of its former owners and CEO. I am both blessed and honored to feel like I actually know and am a friend to both of these incredible women.

I had been feeling discouraged the past few years, constantly seeing negative posts by members, falling membership numbers, ladies playing but not paying, etc.

I left this Convention recharged with my love for the Red Hat Society and my Red and Pink Hat sisters. I met and visited with so many incredible and interesting women. I laughed, danced, and enjoyed every minute. I feel renewed and greatly look forward to the future of our beloved

sisterhood as we regrow our Red Hat Society together.

Not just to what was once its former glory, but beyond. We may find ourselves moaning at the necessary growing pains, but like the Phoenix, we resilient, strong, capable women will rise above the struggles and leave our footprint on a bright legacy for those sisters who come after us.

At my age, it does take a lot to impress me, and I honestly couldn't be more impressed than I am with Queen Plumerix and her vision to grow the Red Hat Society. She truly is an amazing, caring, highly qualified woman.

Debra Granich chose very well, leaving the RHS in the most capable hands possible. She couldn't have found a more qualified woman to continue the legacy that our Exalted Queen Mother, Sue Ellen Cooper, founded.

Long live the Red Hat Society, and God bless Queen Plumerix Michelle Lee. To those who believe in the power of prayer, let us lift her up and cover her in our prayers.

And sisters, if you have never gotten to experience a larger event, start saving now and try to make a Funvention, Regional, and/or International Convention if you are able. I'm not able to make as many as some do, but I'm already saving for my next big recess!

In the meantime, I certainly enjoy looking at the photos posted by our sisters.

I want to give a BIG shoutout and thank two very special ladies, Michelle Lee and Debra Granich. Thank you so very much for all you two did to make the 2026 International Convention an over-the-top experience for those of us who were able to attend. Also, huge thanks to the San Antonio ladies, Queen Do Re Mi, and all who volunteered their time and talents.

Former CEO and one of the prior owners of the RHS, LadyBug Debra, started planning our first post-pandemic convention well over a year ago and saw it through. She started by hiring the travel agency and reserving the Hill Country Hyatt Resort in San Antonio.

Now she can step back and enjoy being a Queen

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