



Red Hat Society, Inc.  
2012 Press Kit



Dear Member of the Media:

Thank you for your interest in the Red Hat Society®. The Red Hat Society® (RHS) is an international society made up of women of all ages. The Society, originally designed as a way for women over 50 to escape the pressures and demands placed on their everyday lives, has matured, growing deeper than “fun and friendship” and including women of all ages. The Red Hat Society® has become the international society dedicated to reshaping the way women approaching 50 and beyond are viewed in today’s culture. RHS™ supports and encourages women to pursue fun, friendship, freedom, fulfillment of lifelong dreams and fitness. It serves as the center point of all communications and opportunities for its Members offering tools, tips, discounts, services and events specifically with “Red Hatters” in mind. The Red Hat Society® has spent the last 13 years developing a strong online communication tool for Members assisting them in gaining new and exciting ways to enjoy life, sharing their unique and motivating stories and finding local hatters and activities they can participate in. Women over age 50 are known as “Red Hatters” while those under 50 are called “Pink Hatters.”

Our official website, [www.redhatsociety.com](http://www.redhatsociety.com), is the center point of communication between Chapters, Supporting Members 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 email Emily at [emily@redhatsociety.com](mailto:emily@redhatsociety.com).

Emily Yost  
Marketing Director  
The Red Hat Society, Inc.



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 80,000 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 80,000 Red Hatters each week through the Friday Broadcast, a personal e-mail updating members with news from Hatquarters 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 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 Penn State which revealed the positive impact on women in today's society.



# The “Red Hat Revolution”

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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

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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

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## **Exalted Queen Mother Sue Ellen Cooper Red Hat Society Founder**

Sue Ellen Cooper is the founder of the Red Hat Society, the world's premier social networking community for women. Begun in 1998, the Red Hat Society has more than 80,000 Members in all 50 states in the U.S. and more than 30 countries.

This grass roots social phenomenon encourages women to connect socially, emotionally and to support each other in the pursuit of vital, active living through middle age and beyond. The sisterhood hosts international and regional conventions and continues to grow and evolve. Soon after the first small group of Red Hatters began venturing out in public, unsought publicity prompted hundreds, then thousands, of women to ask how they too could join. By the end of 2000, what has been referred to as "the second women's movement" was growing like wildfire. The Red Hat Society chooses to emphasize those things that unite women--crossing boundaries of race, religion and even age--in the process.

Prior to founding the Red Hat Society, Sue Ellen devoted much of her adult life to her family, raising two children--son Shane and daughter Andrea-- with her husband, Allen. She enjoyed a part-time career as a commercial greeting card illustrator, and spent six years in a mural-painting business with two other artists.

Sue Ellen graduated from California State University, Fullerton in 1968 with a degree in Humanities and Social Sciences. 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 this year, joins the ranks of some very consummate CEOs, media personalities and authors whose achievements have greatly benefited the community.

In 2004, 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 recognition for entrepreneurship, a significant distinction considering the humble beginnings of the Red Hat Society.

Sue Ellen wrote two best-selling books, "The Red Hat Society: Friendship and Fun After Fifty" (Warner Books, April 2004) and "The Red Hat Society's Laugh Lines: Stories of Inspiration and Hattitude" (Warner Books, April 2005)." She has also contributed to several other books.





# Red Hat Society CEO

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## **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 to over 47,000 chapters worldwide 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 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 massive 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 mission 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 27 years and together they have two sons.





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



First article on RHS appears in Romantic Homes Magazine  
**July 2000**



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



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

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 2004**



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



RHS appears on QVC offering RHS merchandise  
**2005**



RHS appears for second time on Today Show  
**2008**



RHS spotlighted in a segment  
**January 2011**

**May 2011**



RHS is the season finale focus of CBS's Rules of Engagement (#2 in the ratings!)



RHS's first book is published in Korea



The First RHS Chapter formed  
**April 25 1998**



RHS Online Store launched  
**January 2001**



Pink Hatters lovingly introduced to the RHS  
**2000**

RHS grows to 40,000 chapters worldwide  
**2002**



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

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



RHS launches Platinum Mastercard Program  
**April 2005**



HATS! The RHS musical debuts  
**January 2006**



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



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



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 2010**

**April 2011**

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





# Contact the Red Hat Society

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