

Tea Talk

By Joyce A. Whitaker, owner of the Painted Lady Tea Room

This week we were fortunate to entertain four Red Hat Society chapters from Columbus, Mansfield, Marion and Delaware. All totaled, we usually serve between 100 to 200 of these colorful ladies each month. I believe these women, who must be age 50 or more to join the organization, are on to something because their only purpose is to have fun and spend time together enjoying social activities. They have no dues and no agenda and have grown nationally from one small group to thousands in just two years. Almost every community has a chapter; some larger ones have two or three.

My take on this incredible phenomenon is that they have discovered the key to not only longevity but to living life to the fullest. These jovial ladies come wearing every imaginable design in red hats and purple outfits. They sport red hat clothes, pins, shoes, purses and feather boas. We began selling “Red Hat” designs last year with great success. We buy our hats from a California designer and take orders from our customers who want something special. Many of the more creative red hatters make their own hats ranging from sequined ball caps to glorious Victorian millinery concoctions. It is always fun to witness these ladies as they stream into the tea room from, buses, vans and cars.

This month we catered to 35 special women on our deck. These Columbus **Buckeye Crimson Cardinals** as they called themselves had even designed a mascot, which was an elegant adult doll dressed in Red Hat garb. The “Queen Mother” of their chapter was a sight with a crown on her red hat, numerous pins, a feather boa and a long, Victorian style purple dress, all topped off with a red satin parasol trimmed with purple fringe. She had ordered a Red Hat cake to celebrate their first anniversary. They laughed from the time they arrived until their departure. Our staff was in stitches because these ladies are infectious with their fun-loving ways.

They come for proper tea for the most part and are not shy about ordering a variety of brews. These adventurous ladies will try new blends such as Chai and Suchong, both having a distinct flavor as we have discussed before. They love the elegance of the three-tiered stands and beautiful china tea service. They visit every room in our tea house discovering its architecture, finery and uniqueness. These modern day explorers are a great addition to our business and leave a lasting memory.

If you are interested in this group, you can even join if you are under 50 years old. They have “Red Hatters in Training,” those under 50 who wear pink hats and lavender costumes. Should you want more information visit their website at [www.red hat society.com](http://www.redhat.society.com) to find the nearest group to you.

One thing for sure, they will give you a boost in energy and teach you that life is for enjoyment and doing things together, something that many of us forget in our fast-paced daily lives.

Should you have questions regarding tea, stop by the Painted Lady, 327 E. Fifth,
Marysville or contact Joyce through her Email: www.jwhitaker@A-TEA-ROOM.com
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