

# Loss of a Legend

by Joseph Beam

**O**n the Saturday before her 57th birthday, Donna Rhinehart (Lady In Red) passed away in Phoenix. Everyone who knew her loved her. She was a kind, generous friend to every hasher she met, including me. She made a huge impact on hashing through her campaign to make red dress runs the signature event of the Hash House Harriers, and to convince kennels to contribute money raised from red dress runs to charities in our communities. I don't think she'll ever be forgotten. She'll certainly be missed.

There is no higher calling than to make a positive impact on society with the time we are allotted in this world. In other words, is the world a better place because you were here? I believe that all the people that knew Donna would be in resounding agreement YES! We are blessed and the world is a better place for her having graced us with her presence during the short time she was here.

Most will look at her participation as the motivation for a run that nearly all Hash kennels in the world do (Red Dress Run). Those of us that had the privilege of knowing her personally would consider being the motivation for, and a founder of, the Red Dress run one of her lesser achievements, although it will be what she is most remembered for.



I will spend a lot of time talking about the Red Dress Run with a personal explanation of when, what, where, and how, and use a blog Donna wrote to set the facts straight and educate novices on why there is a Red Dress Run.

We will touch on the marvelous contributions to charities, better understanding between people, and one hell of a good time the Red Dress Run has come to represent, but first I want to speak of the woman.

The essence of the real person is not what is done in the limelight but what is done when no one is looking. I will start here.

Let's begin with something Donna was proud of but which would not necessarily be accepted in polite company. She was a Playboy Bunny with access to the Playboy Mansion. Remember that this was in the early 1970s when she made her appearance in photo and print. I can see less



Getting our orders for the day. I'm the Red Bunny (I started as)

tolerant and even judgmental people taking this personally enough that it could close doors and damage her reputation. She was also a model and the money was a good source of income.

She regaled my oldest son (Dudmuffin) with stories of what it was like and she even gave him a pair of bunny ears, a pair of gloves, and a fluffy bunny tail. As a young adult the advice she gave him about

what women want was priceless and he still practices her directions even today. I think most

would admit that he has had more than his share of luck with the fairer sex. He is now married with two beautiful boys.

Donna married Richard and had three children of her own. After her divorce she supported herself and children in various ways as a writer of mystery novels, illustrator and caterer. She was also a Boy Scout leader, PTA mom, and involved in the Scottsdale School District's Master Art Program. Her three children grew up to be good citizens, contributing in their chosen endeavors. Donna then adopted four children that needed the love and guidance that only she could provide. Being a foster parent is a selfless act in itself, but Donna actually adopted these four children.



***The Hash House Harriers qualify as the world's largest running club. Despite their size and having been founded in 1938, their Red Dress Run may be the only completely original idea they have ever had. And it happened nearly by accident.***

The tradition of the Hash House Harriers Red Dress Run quickly spread to every corner of the globe, including Beijing, Montreal, Ho Chi Minh City, Helsinki, Moscow, Tokyo, Washington DC, Hobart (Australia) and countless other locations. Over the years, the Red Dress Run has been very successful in raising millions of dollars for a wide variety of local charities. The New Orleans Hash House Harriers attracted 7,000 participants to their Red Dress Run in 2010, raising more than \$200,000 for 50 local charities.

Today the Red Dress Run is an integral part of the Hash House Harriers' heritage and is as iconic as the Royal Selangor Club where the Hash House Harriers was born, and as sacred to them as founder A.S. Gispert's (man credited with founding the Hash House Harriers in 1938) drinking vessel. It's a tradition born before few organizations turned to running events as a way to raise money and long before anyone ran in a dress of any color.

The title was threatened by the American Heart Association's claim to the name "Red Dress Run" for one of its fundraising events. Sadly this was proposed by a former hasher. If the AHA is allowed to own the name, then every kennel that uses the term Red Dress Run will owe the American Heart Association for the use of the name. Lady In Red fought to retain the name claiming that



***MOST HASHERS KNOW THAT THE SAN DIEGO HHH STARTED THE ANNUAL RED DRESS RUN TRADITION.***

**THE RED DRESS RUN**

IN HONOR OF SHERI DATE FRIEND FROM SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

**HARES: BUMPS, GOULASH AND PRIMO-DONNA**

IF YOU WERE AT THAT PARTY LIKE WE WERE AT THAT PARTY  
OR IF YOU WEREN'T AT THAT PARTY THAT WE WERE AT  
YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS \*\*\* EVENT

**WHEN: FRIDAY, AUGUST 12TH**

**WHERE: EDEN GARDENS PARK IN DEL MAR**  
TAKE I-5 TO VIA DE LA VALLE AND HEAD WEST THEN  
TAKE A RIGHT ONTO VALLEY AVE AND  
**LOOK FOR THE RED DRESSES** ⊕⊕⊕⊕

COST IS \$4 BUT BELIEVE ME ITS WORTH IT!  
BAND, BEER AND MORE BEER UNLIMITED  
AND THEN MORE FOOD, BEER AND MORE BEER PROVIDED

**HARES OFF AT 6:30 PM**  
LATE COMERS WELCOME

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 12TH**

PLEASE DRESS TO IMPRESS

REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR SWIMSUIT AND DANCING SHOES

ON ON TO FOLLOW AT DIEGO'S MORE LIKELY



***THE LADY IN RED, FLYING BOOGER TUCSON, ARIZONA, JUNE 2004***



legally the Hash House Harriers enjoy common law protection of the phrase “Red Dress Run”. Additional protections are in place and still more legal protections are pending. Paying the AHA for the use

of the name could add considerable expense to every run with less going to the chosen charities.

As mentioned above, many kennels are making a difference in their communities. Lady in Red’s campaign took her to as many kennels as she could visit across the United States, to prove that the term “Red Dress Run” preexisted in places the American Heart Association could not possibly have known about. She was truly a national figure, if not global. All this helps to substantiate the Hash House Harriers’ claim to protections from preexistence on a worldwide scale for common-law protection of the phrase “Red Dress Run”.

I have participated in over 200 Red Dress Runs all over the world and some of the stories associated with the Lady In Red are reprehensible. Being Hashers we immediately go to the gutter when we try to explain things we really don’t know anything about. Lady

in Red explained the events of the creation of the first Red Dress Run on her web page and I feel it worthy of setting the record straight using her own words:

**Red Dress Real HHistory:**  
***The Lady in Red Speaks: How It All Started***

Ah, where to begin the tale of the legend of The Lady in Red and the original run? Well, way back in 1987, a friend that I had known since high school days convinced me to come to Long Beach, California for a “visit, some beers, and to meet a few friends.” I needed a break and it sounded relaxing, so I packed a toothbrush and not much more as I grabbed a flight to the Coast for the visit.

I arrived early in the afternoon. After we left the airport, we stopped for cold beers and to catch up a bit on personal events in our lives. As we were finishing the last of our beers, J. moved on to something that I could tell he was anxious to talk about. Explaining, J. said that he was leading a double life of sorts, one as an upstanding business individual named “J. T.” and the other “hashing” as “3M.” “Drugs?” I asked in surprise.

He glanced around and lowered his voice to explain that it had begun quite innocently when he had first moved to California and had not made many friends yet. A guy from work invited him to go for a run and a few beers after with some friends. J. said that he went and found a great group of guys to hang with. At first it was just once every couple of weeks, then once a week, plus special runs and road trips up and down the Coast until he was a full fledged hasher, hare, and eventually brewmeister!



I didn't know what to say. I was stunned. J. was my best friend. He was like my brother! He looked into my eyes and said, "Please come with me on a run tonight. You'll see and understand. Oh, and there will be lots of beer." I know that even though I hadn't run since high school when I had to outrun a group of faculty after a practical joke.

We left the pub and headed for the hashers' meeting point. As I got out of his truck, I looked around. Little groups of two and three people were all smiling and talking with each other. They looked like a mismatched group out for a field trip to the zoo. J. yelled out to the group, "Listen up everyone! I've got a virgin here that we need to make into a new recruit, so make her feel the Hash welcome!"

I'm outgoing and trusted J. fully, but this I didn't know about. I was far from home with no ID or means to leave but by J. and now this motley crew was descending upon me! Here I stood in nothing but a red summer dress with buttons all the way down the front, nylon stockings, red spike heels, and a red ribbon tying back my blonde curls. I felt, to say the least, like a lamb before Easter!

I was dragged over to a semi-official-looking person with a clipboard, who handed me a stapled pile of papers that he quickly flipped through and told me it didn't matter. He told me to just fill out the parts about my "mortal name" and next of kin information. My hands began to sweat, my heart pounded, and my mouth became dry. What was I getting myself into? I wondered: was this some kind of strange cult; was I to become a human sacrifice; could I

still trust J.; had this group warped his mind? As I pondered the papers and the scene before me a guy with horns on his head and a bugle strung around his neck asked me if I had talked to the "hares" yet (talking rabbits?), and wanted to know what kind of beer I liked. Beer? Yes, J. had told me that there would be beer! The other guy reappeared, took my scribbled "release from harm" forms, gave me a whistle ("Here, you'll need this when you get lost") and a huge chunk of chalk that looked like it had been a part of someone's wall shortly before this.

As I stood there dazed and confused, J. slipped back beside me and, smiling, told me that I was going to love this. He explained about the talking rabbits, horns, terms, "rules," and odd hieroglyphic signs drawn on the ground with chalk and flour. He gave me a drink of water, patted my shoulder and trotted off to what he called "the pack" to talk to a bunch of guys with really strange names. I took a deep breath, reminded myself that I always believed that life was meant to be an adventure; that I would try anything once (twice if it didn't kill me the first time). Smiling, I joined a group stretching to warm up and pretended that I knew what I was doing. I had no clue!

The "G.M." appeared, and speaking only to 3M as if I wasn't there, emphatically told him that women just didn't do such a thing (hash!). I spoke up and asked, "Why? Is there a rule against it? Will a giant bolt of lightning strike us all dead? Will the Earth cease to exist?" I told him that if he had no proof that any of this was true and if there was beer, then I was running. The G.M. spoke slowly as if to a child as he explained that I was not dressed properly

for the run and that I should “just wait in the truck until 3M returned.”

Several hashers volunteered to lend this damsel proper attire, but their attempts were quickly rebuffed by the G.M. and other hashers. 3M looked at me and smiled. He knew that I didn't like to be spoken to in a condescending manner and didn't take “no” for an answer.

I watched the start of the run from the edge of the group. There was horn blowing, yelling, whistles blowing, and in an instant they were all gone, leaving me to watch the cloud of dust settle. I stood there looking at the chalk still in my hand. I had signed the forms, had been promised beer, and I was going to run. So, in a red dress and heels, I did just that.

.I won't bore you with all the details of the run, but it was supposed to be an easy three miles and on flat ground. It ended up with a lot of people calling “hash shit.” It was a trail of six miles over brush covered steep hills, barrio areas, and the last mile was on sandy beach!

At one point I began to wish that I'd thought this through a bit more! I did get a bit lost, but a large woman with curlers in her hair, hanging out of a second story tenement building, pointed out that my “lily white ass looked like it don't belong around here” and that I should catch up to “those crazy other folk running four blocks down.” I would have thanked her, but my dry tongue was stuck to the roof of my mouth and I was busy trying to keep my liver from moving further up into my chest where my heart was



One tired "Lady in Red" at the end of 2006 PH3 Red Dress Run



threatening to explode. I ran past a taco stand where I stole a cup of Coke off a guy's tray as I took a short cut through the fast food parking lot. As I did this I thought, "Great, now this group has turned me into a thief! What's next?"

I also, while on the same, very bad, side of town, upon hearing a bugle blowing and thinking that the group must be inside, burst through the door of a stranger's house and yelled "Where the hell's the beer?" A huge black man who seemed to fill all of the living room answered my question. He was standing next to his small son, who'd been practicing on his horn. The man told me that he didn't allow beer, foul language, or seductively dressed women into his house. As I backed out of the door, I apologized profusely and ran out quickly, renewed by fear.

I finally crawled my way down the beach to join the entire group, which had arrived well before me (the pack included a five-year-old boy and a senior citizen recovering from triple-bypass surgery). I had hoped to make a graceful entrance but now all I could think of was that I survived and I wanted beer! I drank my first down-down in record setting speed and demanded a refill that went down just as fast! As I started my third tankard, I debated whether to hit or hug 3M.

We eventually moved the on-on-on to a bar where we were thrown out before I got the food I'd ordered. This pattern continued through three bars where I continued to drink, learn limericks and pub songs . . . and teach a few too!

As for the story about the hot tub and me, I didn't know that it too became a part of history until one of my sons



came home from a bar and told me a limerick about a lady in red in a hot tub! I smiled and told him that I knew her well!

From the last bar we moved to someone's apartment where we spent the night hot tubbing. Everyone in the know had brought a bathing suit or at least had underwear. I was not prepared. Not one of the guys offered anything for me to use. I suspected that they wanted to test how interesting things could get since there was only one female besides myself there at the time (other females did show up soon after when word got out that there was a blonde in the hot tub with all the guys). Everyone watched how I would handle having nothing to change into for the hot tub: after I was given the invitation. I looked over at 3M, who smiled back knowing that I would somehow end up putting the hashers on the spot. I told them it was not a problem, slipped off my heels, unfastened my stockings, took them off, and jumped into the hot tub wearing only the famous red dress and a smile.

I hadn't eaten all day, since we were thrown out of all the bars before my orders arrived. During the evening, I explained that hops in beer was not food and that I was still hungry. The hashers obliged by turning a garbage can lid into a serving plate full of chips and floating it my way in the hot tub. Zulu Boy realized that I needed more than that and was kind enough to pick me up out of the hot tub, dripping wet, and take me inside to find something for me.

The rest of the details of the evening are shared by those who were there, told in limerick and song, and if we meet and you buy me a beer, perhaps I'll tell you. Zulu Boy did

say of the event, in Sports Illustrated Magazine, that he “was still in awe,” and “would never forget The Lady in Red.”

That weekend, I begged 3M to find more hash runs. I went on three more. The last on-on-on he had to drag me from under protest in order to get me to the airport on time. During that weekend, three combined hash groups deemed me “The Lady in Red.”

The following year I had moved to Houston, Texas, where the San Diego Hash House Harriers tracked me down, sent me plane tickets, and demanded that I attend the first annual Red Dress Run being held in my honor! Word had spread up and down the Coast and hashers from all over California attended. Men and women alike were required to wear red dresses. I was later told that hundreds attended. California newspapers and TV news serviced covered the event.

I was and still am overwhelmed at the notoriety and response! At the crowning ceremony for me at that very first Red Dress Run, I, in my acceptance speech, suggested the one thing that would make me most pleased for the annual event: I suggested that a portion of the proceeds go to worthwhile charities to benefit others and to help build a bit of a positive image for hashers . . . if that were ever possible! Now, every time I see a Red Dress Run on a calendar and read of the charity it is for, I can't help but smile and wonder what fun I'll have in the same red dress and heels when I attend!

On-On!  
The Lady in Red

*The Lady in Red Speaks ©2005 by The Lady in Red for the Half-Mind Catalog*



Joseph Beam

About Me:

*I began hashing in Seoul while in the military and from there I hashed around the world literally. My passions are skinny dipping, motorcycles, classic Volkswagens, sailing, water sports, scuba diving, bicycling, karaoke, playing my guitar, beer and fine wines. After retiring from civil service in 2005, I started writing military fiction novels and attending as many sporting events as possible. I am a huge fan of Jimmy Buffett and Toby Keith. I am a “Cultural Infidel” but you know “Who’s Your Daddy” even though “I Shoulda Been a Cowboy”, so “why don’t we get drunk and screw”. I cofounded and hared the first Howlin’ H3 and Jhavelina H3 runs. ON ON*

