

Ed Hogan to lead Ventura County St. Patrick's Day Parade

Parade's new grand marshal in step with holiday

By Mark Storer

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Ed Hogan remembers World War II well, but not as much as he remembers the aftermath.

"I was in the Army Air Corps and when the war ended, a lot of us went to work for the airlines," said Hogan, now 83 and a resident of Thousand Oaks. "There were so many of us, though, that I never made it above co-pilot. That's when I went into sales."

It's the career that earned him the title of "Mr. Tourism" from the state of Hawaii in 1986.

Hogan, grand marshal of this year's Ventura County St. Patrick's Day Parade, is the former owner of Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays, a company synonymous with Hawaiian tours and vacations. Hogan sold the company to the Automobile Club of Southern California in the 1990s. The company still operates out of its Westlake Village offices.

"In those postwar days, the government regulated the airlines and didn't allow all of them to go to Hawaii," Hogan said. "It was United Airlines that eventually got permission to go."

Hogan said his company was born out of learning the ropes in the airline tour business. "I sold 83 different groups in one year to go to Hawaii," he said.

Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays started as Pleasant Travel Services in New Jersey. Eventually, Hogan was lured back to California, where Pleasant Hawaiian Holidays began to bloom.

"Over the years, I sent more than 6 million people to Hawaii," Hogan said.

These days, Hogan and his wife, Lynn, oversee the Hogan Family Foundation, which provides underprivileged families with necessary medical emergency travel, animal therapy for children, rescue for abandoned and abused dogs and other services.

"We started 12 years ago and since then we've given away more than \$72 million," Hogan said. "It's a way for us to give back and we love to do it," he said.

The Hogans have four grown children: Brian, Christine and twins Gary and Glenn. Each is involved in the foundation. The Hogans have four grandchildren as well.

"We couldn't think of anyone more Irish," said Ventura Councilman Jim Monahan, chairman of the St. Patrick's Day Parade.

"It's really a celebration of Irish culture, dance and music," Monahan said. "Originally we wanted to be a showcase for nonprofit organizations, a place to let them show off. And we wanted it to be a lot of fun, too."

Hogan will ride in an Amish cart behind two mules. One of his horse trainers will ride ahead of the cart.

"His name is Jose Crespo, and he is an amazing roper and lariat swinger," Hogan said.

His wife and daughter will follow in a car. "We'll also hand out small chocolate gold coins. It's going to be a lot of fun."

The St. Patrick's Day Parade will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday near Mission San Buenaventura on Main Street in downtown Ventura.



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