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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Texas Tortilla Queens to Add Mucho Zaniness to Already-wacky  
First Ever Eighth Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade**

HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK, Arkansas – Green tortillas will be flying through the air like tiny flying saucers when the First Ever Eighth Annual World's Shortest St. Patrick's Day Parade moves down the World's Shortest Street in Everyday Use on March 17 in downtown Hot Springs.

The Texas Tortilla Queens will be a new addition to the annual exercise in fun, joining some 40 other new and traditional entries and actor John Corbett as celebrity grand marshal, Elvis, the King of the Coonhounds, an Austin Powers look-alike and plenty of holiday fun.

The parade begins at 6 p.m. and goes until the last leprechaun leaps. Following will be a free concert by the John Corbett Band on Bridge Street.

The Texas Tortilla Queens are a group of fun-loving Dallas women ranging in age from 30 to 50. All are professional women and they've been taking part in parades since 2002.

Their theme is derived from Texas beauty pageants of the 1960s – big hair, tulle dresses, jeweled tiaras, big sashes and, of course, cowboy boots.

Shelby Vincent, the nominal leader of the bunch, said there are only two rules for being a Tortilla Queen: "A queen must not smoke while wearing her tiara and must not drink boxed wine."

"These people promise to be a hoot," said Leysa Lowery, who coordinates the entries for the parade. "They've been in numerous parades and contacted us and said they wanted to be part of the Hot Springs parade, which has been named The Wackiest St. Patrick's Parade on Earth by Smithsonian Magazine. The Queens will fit right in."

Among the other 39 official parade entries will be old favorites, The Marching Irish Pickles and the International Order of the Irish Elvi.

Also, The O'Harleys, a troupe of Irish motorcycles and Johnny Shamrock's Lucky Librarians, a library-cart drill team "that will put the Pub in Public Library."

The Dancing Druids of Dublin consist of a troupe of druids, in appropriate costume, who shed their robes to perform a routine to "YMCA." The Shamrocks, Sheep and Shenanigans Flying Circus troupe promises sheep-jumping and sheep-branding, Irish style.

The parade will be preceded at 4:30 p.m. by the traditional Romancing the Stone contest, in which competitors see who can deliver the most "romantic" smooching of the Arkansas Blarney Stone, located in front of the Convention Center a half-block from the parade route. A cash prize will be awarded. There is no entry fee and no registration is required; just show up and pucker.

On Monday, March 14, at 2 p.m., there will be a more serious aspect of St. Paddy's week in Hot Springs. A ceremony at Calvary Cemetery at Third Street and Greenwood Avenue will honor John King, one of only 19 people who have received two Congressional Medals of Honor. King, an Irish immigrant who served in the U.S. Navy, died at the Army & Navy General Hospital in 1938 and was buried at Calvary.

On Tuesday, March 15, at 1:30 p.m., will be the authentication of a home run hit by Babe Ruth on St. Patrick's Day, 1918, during spring training in Hot Springs.

The towering shot, which traveled from home plate at Whittington Park into the second gator pit at the Arkansas Alligator Farm, has been called "The Day That Changed Baseball Forever." The ceremony will be held in the Weyerhaeuser parking lot on Whittington Avenue.

For more information about the parade and associated events call Steve Arrison and 501-321-2027.

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