



# Party Store Report

## St. Patrick's Day and Easter Spark Healthy Sales for Party Stores

By Marilyn Nason

When it comes to two of the most traditional special holidays, none can top St. Patrick's Day and Easter. Easily recognized for its distinct heritage, familiar colors/styles and specific focus, both have been celebrated and honored for decades, even centuries, by adults and children alike while retaining each of its own very distinctive heritage theme.

For party stores nationwide, St. Patrick's Day and Easter both offer almost limitless business and promotional possibilities, even though tastes over the years may change, economies rise and/or falter and mobile societies mean transplanted consumers will be celebrating either or both days wherever they may live each year.

In surveying party stores on these two distinct, very different holidays, most acknowledged store business from bars, clubs, restaurants, community organizations and civic groups constitute the major share of their "given" business, while consumer purchases are never a certainty.

For Easter, quite often its actual calendar date along with Mardi Gras can often determine the degree of successful business a party store will enjoy. Here, too, retirement communities and other specific groups may also celebrate depending on the actual date.

If someone had to select a single item that best represents steady business for party stores for St. Pat's, it would be beads, lots and lots and lots of beads. For Easter, the answer would be plastic eggs, both filled and unfilled.

For party stores in business for several years, one of the sure-fire ways to maximize selling all



Staff members from P.J.'s Party Supply and Rental. Even retirement communities are purchasing merchandise and planning parties for St. Patrick's Day through the store.

inventory specifically designed for such dates as St. Pat's and Easter was reiterated by several stores. "Don't order anything with the actual name on it" is the way savvy retailers describe their ordering philosophy today. Eliminating the words St. Patrick's Day or Easter on an item means the green of St. Pat's and the yellows and spring-like pastels and florals of Easter can still be displayed and sold at full markup through-

out much of the year.

Over the nine years she has owned her 6,000-square-



The St. Patrick's Day display at P.J.'s Party Supply and Rental in Denton, Texas. Sales of merchandise and supplies for the holiday have grown over the years.

foot P.J.'s Party Supply and Rental in Denton, Texas, June Schiada has learned to have sufficient St. Patrick's Day merchandise on hand for the perennial last-minute customers. History of the growth of her business in St. Pat's merchandise has been "interesting, to say the least, since when I started I couldn't give it away, now it is very important to my store," she explained.

Asked why the changing interest, she feels it may re-

late to the United State's mobile society, which has seen more transplants come to her area from the East and West Coast areas where St. Pat's has always been an important holiday.

Today she does well with clubs who plan parties in-house, so all St. Pat's-related items sell well including beads, hats and more. Retirement communities have also begun

to plan small parties with her, she reported.

The look of Mardi Gras merchandise has become so important, Schiada maintains a small section of items for this celebration year-round.

With the exception of the ever-popular plastic decorated eggs for egg hunts, she acknowledged Easter is a relatively small holiday of limited interest to her customers.