

## **Brockton High students don Santa hats to kick off holiday parade**

**Brockton High hat day promotes holiday parade - By Elaine Allegrini- can be reached at**

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**BROCKTON —**

Even teenagers believe in Santa Claus.

They will prove it Friday when more than 1,000 students at Brockton High School don Santa hats in a tribute to Brockton's **James Edgar, the first department store Santa**, and to help promote the city's annual holiday parade.

"Generally, we have a no-hat rule," said Principal Susan Szachowicz. "But we're waiving the hat rule for Santa Claus."

The red hats are being distributed throughout the campus on a first-come, first-served basis. But if you take one, you must wear it, according to Szachowicz.

Students are encouraged to bring their own Santa hats, too.

"It's whimsical, it's fun and it's a wonderful kickoff to the parade," said Szachowicz.

At the end of the school day, about 2 p.m., students who wear the hats will gather on the steps of the fine arts building for a photograph — as the city continues a tradition started last year, when 500 people donned hats and gathered in downtown Brockton for the unveiling of the James Edgar plaque.

Hats are also being donated to several other schools in town.

**The parade, set for 11 a.m. on Nov. 28**, has become a tradition of the city and the region.

John Merian, a downtown business owner and president of the Downtown Brockton Association, and his committee are putting together a week of activities that will culminate with the parade.

Merian is redesigning a front section of his Main Street business to honor Edgar, who in 1890 donned a custom-made red suit, bringing to life the Thomas Nast drawing of Santa Claus.

The window will also have a Lionel train set, donated and built by Billy Hogan, who owns Hoagie's Trains in Wareham.

Edgar, owner of a Main Street dry goods store, had worn many costumes through the years to delight the children he loved and he entertained at annual outings and in his shop.

A bronze plaque, measuring 2 by 3 feet, now sits on the Main Street parking garage, the site of Edgar's first store.

Merian is gathering thousands of memories of Brocktonians who shopped at Edgar's store.

People can visit the Web site **[www.1stdepartmentstoresanta.com](http://www.1stdepartmentstoresanta.com)** and click on "Memories" to send photographs or written recollections to Merian.

Also, an ornament dedicated to Edgar is now available at the Web site.

For the Nov. 28 parade, the library on Main Street will be open at 9 a.m. for those who want to decorate Santa Claus hats beforehand, and a craft bazaar will begin at City Hall at 11 a.m., the same time the parade kicks off, and continue through 4 p.m.

Merian is counting on the Santa believers from Brockton High School to join the crowd, all wearing Santa hats, as they celebrate the season with more than 100 marching units, 15 bands and holiday floats.

"Edgar brought Santa to downtown Brockton originally," said Merian. "Now, with all this going on, we're going to bring him back — and keep him and his spirit here all year long"



*Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise*  
A youngster peers at the train in the window of Tuxedos By Merian



*Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise*  
The Lionel Electric Train is part of Brockton's Christmas celebration



*Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise*  
The Lionel Electric Train is in the front window at Tuxedos By Merian in Brockton. WITH STORY BY ELAINE



Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise  
The Lionel Electric Train is in the front window of Tuxedos by Merian in Brockton.



Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise  
Bill Hogan sets up a Lionel Electric Train.



Marc Vasconcellos/The Enterprise  
Bill Hogan, left, sets up a Lionel Electric Train on a track in front window at Tuxedos By Merian.  
Right is store co-owner John Merian.