

Santa hats record sought in Brockton Hundreds wear Santa hats to city parade to honor first department store Santa Claus

BROCKTON — By Vicki-Ann Downing-ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER -Posted Nov 30, 2009 @ 03:18 AM



Tierney Gantt, 5, of Brockton waves while on the Raymond School float during Saturday's annual Brockton holiday parade

If the city didn't establish a new world record on Saturday for the most people wearing Santa Claus hats in one place, don't blame Rosemary Garland. Garland, 47, attended the 23rd annual Downtown Brockton Holiday Parade for the first time with her 13-year-old son, Patrick. Both wore red Santa hats.

"I've never done it before, but my neighbors told me about the attempt to break the record," said Garland.

She stood along Main Street with an entourage. There were her friends Bill and Alice Mackin and their children, Ryan, 10, Courtney, 7, and Kasey, 4, along with Mary Coutts and her children, Evan, 13, and Anna, 10, and their friend, Dylan Pike, 9. That's 11 people, all in Santa hats. But it turns out that it may take a bit more than that to break the record, said John Merian, president of the Downtown Brockton Association. The world-record keepers consider Santa hats in the same category as Santa Clauses, Merian said. The world record for the most Santa Clauses in one place at single time is about 17,000, set in Copenhagen, Denmark, he said.

"But everybody coming to the parade is supposed to wear a Santa hat, and if they do, that's 10,000," said Merian.

There was no official count on Saturday, but a lot of people did wear their Santa hats to the parade, many of them because of Merian's encouragement. One was Kenneth Bowman, 53, of Easton, whose Santa hat was unusual, a red coil spring instead of the traditional long stocking. "I am a semiprofessional Santa," said Bowman, who also carried jingle bells.

Bowman has a collection of Santa hats that he wears all season, said Sarah McCracken, 59, also of Easton. The coil hat is known as a "sproing" hat from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," Bowman said. "As soon as you see Santa in the Macy's parade, it's OK to wear your Santa hat, because that's the real Santa," said Bowman. "The rest of us are helpers."

Bowman and McCracken said they came to the Brockton parade for the first time because they heard about the record attempt. The hats were worn in honor of James Edgar, who dressed as the first department store Santa in downtown Brockton in 1890. A plaque on the parking garage at Main and Crescent streets commemorates Edgar, and many red-hat wearers gathered there on Saturday.



Ariel Eloi, 13, of Brockton and a student at Trinity Catholic Academy, plays her saxophone during Saturday's annual Brockton holiday parade

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