

# Mount Desert Islander

## Santa visit, sales set for Friday

*Written by Robert Levin*



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BAR HARBOR — The sound of sleigh bells will fill the air this Friday evening, as Santa makes his joyful, annual stop in the heart of downtown. The visit from St. Nick is slated for 5 p.m. at the Bar Harbor Village Green, and will kick off the eighth annual Village Holiday celebration and Midnight Madness sale.

An evening's worth of events is on tap, including an elegant holiday party at the Maine Seacoast Mission's Colket Center, free children's holiday festival at the MDI YMCA, train rides on the Polar Express, and sales galore in many downtown shops.

The Bar Harbor Fire Department will usher Santa to the center of town on one of its gleaming red trucks. After he arrives, Santa will ceremoniously light the town Christmas tree, placed on the gazebo in the middle of the village green.

Santa will then lead the crowd on a parade to the YMCA, where many children's activities, including personal visits with Santa, await. A number of lucky children, and some of their parents, will be able to ride the Polar Express train in the parade.

Those who can't get on the first train ride needn't worry, though. The Polar Express will run during the entire celebration at the YMCA, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Rides are free, as are the rest of the activities, and parents may accompany their children on the train.

While at the YMCA, children can write a letter to Santa, sit on Santa's lap and have their pictures taken, decorate an ornament, color by number, make a beaded necklace or bracelet, construct a paper crown, and have their faces painted. There also will be cookies and treats provided by the Bar Harbor Bed & Breakfast Association, and hot cocoa supplied by the Preceptor Phi Sorority of Bar Harbor.

Down on West Street, the Maine Sea Coast Mission will host its fifth annual Holiday Open House, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Guests can enjoy holiday treats and festive music by Somesville singer Jessie Holladay, accompanied by her husband John Kurgan.

Sea Coast Mission staff members and volunteers will offer tours of the gaily decorated Colket Center at 127 West Street. The stately mansion was constructed in 1903, one of Bar Harbor's original summer cottages. During the party, guests can sample a number of delicious hors d'oeuvres, along with wine, cider and non-alcoholic beverages.

Admission is by cash donation, all of which will go toward the mission's Christmas program, which annually provides more than 15,000 presents to about 3,000 children, families and elderly people in Downeast Maine and on coastal islands. The program, which has been in place for more than 80 years, supplies only new toys and clothing, and is supported by many volunteers.

The featured event of the evening for many will be the annual Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce Midnight Madness Sale, which kicks off at 8 p.m. and goes until midnight.

Many downtown shops will be open for the event, which will offer deep discounts, food, drink, raffle prizes, and giveaways.