

THE DAILY NEWS

SPORTS »  PIRATE SC OPENER FRIDAY » A8

BUOYED UP »

The grand opening of West Marine's renovated store says as much about a reversing economy as it does about the retailer's own success » B1



75 cents

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Thursday, May 10, 2012

Naked unicyclist arrested on Kemah bridge

Police: Clothes found at base of bridge; passer-by snaps photograph

» Inside

Police seize 216 pounds of marijuana in Dickinson and other police news » B3

By CHRIS PASCHENKO
The Daily News

» KEMAH

Police headquarters became flooded with calls Wednesday reporting a naked man riding a

unicycle across the state Highway 146 bridge from Kemah into Seabrook, authorities said.

A passer-by snapped a photograph of the man, who was

See unicyclist | A3



Joseph Farley was arrested for riding a unicycle naked over the state Highway 146 bridge in Kemah.

Overseas ballots being remailed

Wrong districts inputted causes delay in process

By T.J. AULDS
The Daily News

About 2,000 mail-in ballots for the approaching Democratic and Republican Party primary elections have yet to be mailed even as early voting starts Monday. Some of those ballots intended for military voters have to be remailed because of an error found after the ballots were mailed last month.

County Clerk Dwight

See ballots | A3



Hopefuls debate

Candidates make pitches for sheriff at Daily News forum

Candidates for Galveston County sheriff Joel Caldwell, from left, J.L. Campbell, Henry Trochesset, Ray Lease, Bill Young, John Pruitt and John Kinard take turns answering questions during The Daily News Galveston County Sheriff Candidate Forum on Wednesday evening at Barber Middle School in Dickinson. Photos by KEVIN M. COX/The Daily News

By CHRIS PASCHENKO
The Daily News

» DICKINSON



LEFT: Bill Young, right, takes his turn answering a question after Henry Trochesset and Ray Lease during the Galveston County Sheriff Candidate Forum

New city manager forgoes a contract



Nicolas Mataro and his sister man Nicolas' Island Squeeze lemonade stand Sunday at Past Perfect Antiques in Galveston. COURTESY PHOTO

his bank starts at \$20. You had to borrow money to pay for the stand and the supplies to sell lemonade, but I had worked, watching my neighbor's cat. He

saved without borrowing any. You also needed permission to put your stand up. There was a list of businesses that would let you. I chose Past Perfect Antiques.

we bought some lemons, and MawMaw gave us a recipe for lemonade. We started making test batches — even sugar free for diabetics

See lemonade | B4



Photos by KEVIN M. COX/The Daily News

Welcome change

West Marine unveils renovations at expanded LC location

By LAURA ELDER
The Daily News

» LEAGUE CITY

When West Marine officially unveiled its newly renovated store last week, the grand-opening celebration said as much about the righting of a listing economy as it did the retailer's own success.

At 25,000 square feet, the store devoted to boating supplies, accessories and apparel doubled in size.

That the specialty retailer chose to expand its store at 1401 Marina Bay Drive is remarkable in the context of a stubborn recession, coupled with layoffs of several thousand NASA employees and contractors last year after the 30-year-old shuttle program ended in July.

"We lost a lot of customers with NASA

changes — customers we had known for over 10 years," West Marine manager Nolan Vander-Haagen said. "Fortunately, new business had arrived and new opportunities had arrived."

Much of West Marine's success can be attributed to geography. Although the Clear Lake area's economy is tied to NASA, it also is anchored in the nautical. The north county and Clear Lake area are home to 17 marinas and more than 7,000 slips and boast the third largest concentrations of boats — only Miami and San Diego have more.

Although West Marine doesn't sell boats, its growth can be attributed to the passion for boats and the lower cost of storing them in the Clear Lake area.

See West Marine | B4

TOP: Manager Nolan Vander Haagen gives a tour of the recently expanded West Marine on Marina Bay Drive in League City on May 1. **LEFT:** The company's flagship Texas store now boasts 25,000 square feet of space, including an expanded fishing section, above, and the state's largest high-tech marine electronics selection, below.



\$1,521,240

March 2011

Cargo increases
(March 2012 vs. March 2011) — The port experienced a gain in bulk fertilizer, bulk liquids, general cargo, Ro-Ro cargo and livestock.

Cargo decreases
(March 2012 vs. March 2011) — The port experienced losses in bulk export grain, refrigerated bananas and fruit and incidental containers at various wharves.

Total cargo
(in short tons)

499,820

March 2012

974,765

March 2011

Cruise passenger activity

▲ 25.66%

(+33,388 passengers)
Year-to-date embarkations end March 2012 vs. end March 2011

▲ 25.55%

(+33,319 passengers)
Year-to-date disembarkations end March 2012 vs. end March 2011

Cruise passenger vehicle parking

▲ 29.50%

(+1,624 vehicles)
March 2012 vs. March 2011

SOURCE: Board of Trustees of the Galveston Wharves

BUSINESS IN BRIEF

» **SANTA FE**
The Bay Area Networking Group will meet at 7:30 a.m. Wednesdays at the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce office, 12408 state Highway 6.

Attendees are encouraged to take business cards.

Contact Fay Picard, faypicard@comcast.net or 409-925-8558.

» **TEXAS CITY**
The Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce will have its annual Hurricane Preparedness

Eastman completes startup of facility in Texas City



Up and going: In bright industry

and restart a long-idle plasticizer facility where employees had

which some believe disrupt the human endocrine system and

the Texas City facility, 201 Bay St. **Salvation sale?**

BUSINESS

WEST MARINE

Continued from Page B1

Along with its base of customers from all across Texas, the store is seeing a swell of people from Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico who keep their boats at marinas in the Clear Lake area because it's less expensive compared to marinas in California or Florida, he said.

National and international boat owners travel to the area and sail Galveston Bay for three or four days, helping the economy and boosting store sales.

The store, which never closed during renovations, also is seeing consumer confidence more on an even keel, he said.

"Sales of new boats are climbing," Vander-Haagen said.

Recreational boating is about a \$30 billion-a-year industry. U.S. sales of new boats, according to

reports, dropped 55 percent between 2007 and 2010, Thom Dammrich, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association, said earlier this year. But sales ticked back up about 5 percent last year and are expected to increase another 5 percent this year, Dammrich said.

When people buy boats, they buy accessories. And shoppers have had a brighter outlook lately, Vander-Haagen said.

"I've seen the economy changing in the last four months," he said. "I haven't heard as many customers voice concerns about the stock market or complaining about gas prices."

What's unusual about West Marine's flagship store is that it's not cookie-cutter. Watsonville, Calif.-based West Marine designed the store to reflect exactly what customers wanted, said Erik Rimblas, regional vice-presi-



Manager Nolan Vander Haagen shows off the rigging department at the recently expanded West Marine on Marina Bay Drive in League City on May 1. The company's flagship Texas store now boasts 25,000 square feet of space and held a grand opening last weekend. KEVIN M. COX/The Daily News

dent of West Marine.

"When we designed the store from the ground up, we used quite a bit of feedback from employees, wholesale and retail customers," Rimblas said.

Before the renova-

tions, the store didn't have much space devoted to fishing. But customer demand changed that. The expanded store features a 2,500-square-foot fishing section with a large array of reels, rods and tackle

and a fishing shack for local anglers. Reflecting local preferences, the focus is on saltwater.

The flagship Texas store also is among only six in the 310-store chain that features an on-site sailboat

rigging shop with an expanded sailboat hardware department, along with an engine parts counter staffed by specialists. The store also carries kayaks and inflatable boats and has a motor shop.

The store also boasts the largest high-tech marine electronics selection in Texas, along with a much expanded selection of casual and technical apparel and personal accessories, including sunglasses, waterproof watches and high-tech shoes.

Customer feedback has been positive, both Vander-Haagen and Rimblas say.

The store, which most people believe is in Kemah but actually pays sales taxes to League City, employs 30 people who combined have 330 years of experience boating, fishing and sailing and more than 50,000 nautical miles among them, West Marine officials say.

BIZ BUZZ

Continued from Page B1

the feasibility period.

The Salvation Army, which runs a homeless shelter and thrift store, earlier this year moved into a new shelter on the northwest corner of 51st Street and Winnie, near the south base of the Pelican Island Bridge.

The Salvation Army had been asking about \$999,500 for the three-story, 45,000-square-foot building originally home to Sears. No word on the prospective buyer or possible uses. Stay tuned.

Brush boom: If expansions and open-

ings are any indication, all signs paint a pretty picture of the island's art scene. First, artist, musician, playwright and screenwriter **George Douglas Lee** has opened **G. Lee Gallery**, 2215 Postoffice St., in the island's downtown.

The gallery will exhibit Lee's vivid acrylics and watercolors, some of which depict the beauty, atmosphere and nature of the island. The gallery also will offer giclée prints of Lee's original paintings and will stock a series of children's books he's written and illustrated, along with original music CDs and stationery with his de-

signs. Lee, among other pursuits, is the host of "Electric Theatre Radio Hour."

For information, call 409-370-7350 or visit www.georgedouglaslee.com.

"Business is great": Meanwhile, island artist **Jennifer Peck** has taken new studio space and expanded **PeckArts** into the west side of the 2208 Postoffice St. **Urban Lofts** building, where she opened a small studio and gallery in 2009. Peck will use the east side for exhibition space and the west side to house artwork for sale. The new space provides a larger studio for Peck.

"Business is great, and I needed the extra room to paint ..." Peck emailed.

Peck, whose bright, colorful paintings include birds, sunsets, flowers, cocktails and umbrellas, also is taking her island-inspired images outside of Galveston to show at galleries in Florida, including in Key West, Seaside and Sanibel.

Look for Peck's book, "Galveston Collaged," to hit local shops soon.

For information, call 409-621-1500 or visit www.peckarts.com.

West End story: Business also must be good for **West End Gallery &**

Decor, which in November opened in the **Jamaica Village Shopping Center**, 16708 San Luis Pass Road.

The shop, which offers island-inspired furniture, work from local and other artists, gifts and clothing has expanded, leasing space in the front of the center next to **Blue Water Grill**. The move makes **West End Gallery & Decor** more visible from FM 3005. The main store is a quick walk out the back door across the parking lot from the new space.

For information, visit www.westendgallerydecor.com or call **Eddie**

Kier, 713-202-8969.

Meanwhile, **Jamaica Village Shopping Center** plans its **West End Stroll** from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday. Along with merchandise and wares available for sale, there'll be a DJ for entertainment and refreshments.

Where's Alice? Looking for **Alice Whiteman Interiors**? One of the island's oldest upholstery shops has moved from its 5304 Ave. S, but owner **Alice Whiteman** wants everyone to know she's still in business and a phone call away. She offers her new address when patrons call to make appointments. Call 771-2719.

LEMONADE

Continued from Page B1

and people on diets.

Sunday was Lemonade Day. We had a slow start. It was harder to assemble the stand without all the people

Our mayor, Joe Jaworski, came by and bought lemonade. He said he had been to four stands already. He was going to try to go to all of them.

V.J. Tramonte came by. He liked the lemon pound cake we were

Gina Spagnola, who organized all the lemonade events, came by. She got a tattoo and showed us pictures of all the other stands.

I sold 183 cups for \$1.50 a cup, plus refills for 75 cents. I got \$82 in tips. And I sold all

charity — half to the humane society because I like animals and the other half to St. Jude's because they are really good at helping sick kids.

I am putting \$53 in my savings account. I am keeping some

BRIEFS

Continued from Page B1

935-1408.

» GALVESTON

The Galveston Chamber of Commerce will have its **Mind, Body and Spirit** conference celebration

www.galvestonchamber.com.

» CRYSTAL BEACH

The **Bolivar Chamber of Commerce** will meet at 2 p.m. or 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the **Joe Faggard Center**, 1750 State Highway 27. The next