

WET SOX



Rain causes delays, but Lester picks up win. p.9

WEATHER



COOPER FIORE

Today: Irene strikes the region, bringing rain and high winds. Details, p.2

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WESTERLY, R.I. SUNDAY, August 28, 2011

HOME DELIVERY \$4.75 PER WEEK \$1.75

'BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY'

Locals head for higher ground

Westerly, Stonington residents begin evacuations, hoping for the best but taking no chances.

By LESLIE ROVETTI Sun Staff Writer

Lou Fusaro was complying with the town's order to evacuate his Misquamicut home Saturday, but his motivation lay largely in 57-year-old memories of another hurricane.

"I floated around in the '54 hurricane, and I'm not going to do it again," he said. "I'm not going to be traumatized again."

Standing outside his Lawton Road home, getting ready to evacuate to Massachusetts, he told the tale of his 11-year-old self heading over to his uncle's establishment, Ed's Bar and Grill, now Maria's Seaside Café, to wait for his uncle to evacuate him and others ahead of the storm.

But when his uncle waited too long and discovered that his 1948 Packard was floating, the group took refuge in an attic.

Fusaro was overcome with emotion as he recalled how the bottom of the house was washed away, and the attic and its nine refugees found themselves afloat. Luckily, it returned to dry land with everyone safe and sound.

With that memory still fresh, he had his house built on cement piers. To prepare for Irene, he moved some of his belongings out of the house, lashed other items down, and headed off to Massachusetts.

"Hurricanes are unpredictable," he said.

Fusaro and his wife are two of about 2,000 Westerly residents who have been given an order to evacuate, according to Town Man-

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Generators, propane cans in demand

By CHRIS KEEGAN Sun Staff Writer

WESTERLY — Phil Adams scoured the area for propane cans on Saturday, visiting as many as nine stores between Hope Valley and Westerly. He finally found them, three hours later, in Benny's at Dunn's Corners.

"I live in the woods," the Charlestown resident said, mulling their use for lamp lights and a camp grill in the event of downed power lines. "If a tree falls, I've got to have something."

The denuding of storm supplies from the shelves of local merchants was in full-view Saturday afternoon, as a downgraded Hurricane Irene barreled towards the Northeast. While most agreed the storm's bark had lost its bite over the North Carolina coast,

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MIKE SOUZA / The Sun



DAVID TRANCHIDA / The Sun



CHRISTINE CORRIGAN / The Sun



GINA LAUDONE / The Sun



CHRISTINE CORRIGAN / The Sun

Saturday scenes, clockwise from top: Rebecca Fargo puts the finishing touches on Ramblin' Rose Antiques in Charlestown. Frank Alessio and Shane Fiore remove the ice cream machine from Little Mermaids in Misquamicut. Westerly Police Reserve Officer John Hanesak mans a checkpoint on Watch Hill Road. The Stonington Fire Department announces by loudspeaker the mandatory evacuation of Stonington Borough. Bill and Jackie Bassell, who drove from Wethersfield, Conn., to watch the surf, relax in Weekapaug. Fred Bogue boards up the windows of his Bogue's Alley deli in Pawcatuck, with help from Brehan Brady.

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CHRISTINE CORRIGAN / The Sun

Charlestown evacuation an orderly exit

By MICHAEL SOUZA Sun Staff Writer

CHARLESTOWN — In the final 24 hours before Hurricane Irene crashes into the Rhode Island shore, residents prepared for the storm in a variety of ways. Some ways were to be expected, while others were unique.

At Ramblin' Rose Antiques on Route 1, the mood was decidedly festive as staff moved their wares away from windows and off the floor.

"We thought it would be better to be safe than sorry," said Grace Klinger. "It's been a good season so far, but Irene is killing us."

They had been preparing for the hurricane all day Friday and by 11 a.m. Saturday, the plywood was up and the building secured. All that remained was for proprietor Rebecca Fargo to find a working can of spray paint and decide what graffiti should welcome the storm. Friends, staff and family shunned "Good night, Irene" for being too obvious. It the end, "Thar she blows" was the unanimous choice.

On West Beach Road, Sgt. Philip Gingerella ran the evacuation checkpoint. Residents were allowed through, while sightseers were told to turn around. At 5 p.m., the road would be closed to all. According to Gingerella, everyone was friendly and cooperative.

"A lot of people think that the storm is not that big a deal," Gingerella said. "What we are trying to stress to people is that if they're in an emergency in these

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ANCHORS AWEIGH: Seaport braces for hurricane

By IAN HOLLIDAY Sun Staff Writer

MYSTIC — The scene at Mystic Seaport Saturday morning was a roughly once-in-a-decade occurrence.

All hands were on deck, sometimes literally, as the museum braced itself for the impending arrival of Hurricane Irene.

Everything small enough to be picked up by the wind has either been moved indoors or weighted down, often with one of the seaport's many anchors, and most of the more than 500 boats the museum owns have been hauled out and secured on shore.

"We've got little boats all over the place," said Dan McFadden, director of communications for the Seaport. "I never knew we had so many anchors until we brought them all out to start weighing things down."

The more than two million artifacts the museum owns must be accounted for as well. Anything on loan from another institution or of

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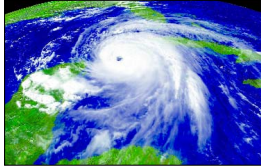
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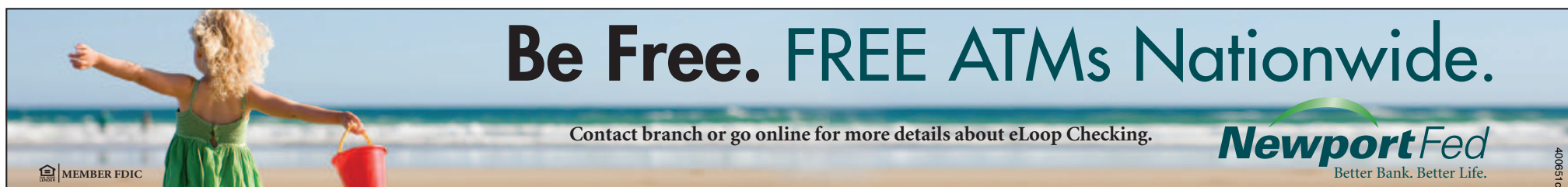


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GINA LAUDONE / The Sun

Rich LaFaille, Misquamicut Fire District beach manager, creates berms on Saturday to hold back the tide.

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## ★ Seaport

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considerable value has been removed from the museum's exhibits, and the items that remain are being secured at a level higher than the highest predicted storm surge.

Seaport staff members are also boarding up windows and putting sandbags in doorways in preparation for the storm.

The museum's larger vessels are being carefully secured in the water to ride out the storm.

The 1841 whaleship Charles W. Morgan is already on shore in the museum's shipyard undergoing a multi-year restoration effort. The vessel is secured and fastened down in a special cradle designed to help her maintain her

shape and resist movement, and several telephone-pole-sized braces have been added for extra stability.

"In many ways, the Morgan is in the best place we could have her," said Dana Hewson, vice president for Watercraft Curation. "Hurricane planning was a factor when we designed the setup. She is well above the high-tide mark and her cradle should minimize movement."

A team of security, curatorial and facilities personnel will remain at the museum during the storm to provide security and address any urgent developments.

The decision on when to reopen the museum will be made after any storm damage has been assessed.

McFadden said he sus-

pects it will be easier to put things back where they belong than it has been to decide where to put them during the storm. Because of this, he said, it's possible that the museum could partially reopen on Monday, after the damage has been assessed.

Hurricane preparation is a complicated process for the Seaport, McFadden said. He said the direct path Irene has taken up the coast helped the museum make its decision to prepare extensively for the storm.

"Hopefully we've done just the right amount of work," McFadden said. "We don't want to do too much work, but we definitely don't want to do too little."

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## ★ Demand

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they weren't taking chances.

At the Westerly Home Depot, a pallet of nine, 7,500-watt generators disappeared in under 2 minutes; each unit cost \$979. A garden department employee noted that 32 generators had sold Friday in just 20 minutes, while an earlier shipment of 42 sold within a half-hour.

"As quick as you could imagine, they're just flying out of here," said assistant manager Rose Donner, noting two units were sold to customers who needed them to keep respirators running.

Ray Sylvestre, a plumber and father of five, scored a generator to run his fridge, freezer and television at his home in Westerly.

"It's for whatever we need to weather the storm," he said, as flashlights, batteries and water coolers disappeared from nearby stockpiles.

Donner said Home Depot would be open 24 hours as a courtesy to area residents.

"We're here to support the community get the products they need as quickly as possible," she said.

At Shaw's, store manager Bill Rose said the supermarket had sold an entire trailer of bottled water since mid-week; one-gallon bottles and six-packs were in short supply on the store shelves. Bread and cold cuts were also in high demand.

"I would think people put them in a cooler for sandwiches in case there's no way to cook," Rose said.

Outside, Wanda Lewis of Pawcatuck said she was

out hunting for the perfect carton of milk.

"I'm still looking for a quart of no- or low-fat milk," she said. "I came here last night and they said they'd have more today. They just have gallons and half-gallons."

She called Hurricane Irene "the most prepared-for storm I've ever seen."

"You never know, they're tricky things these storms," Lewis said. "You always get a little uptight."

With tropical storm conditions expected today, Taylor Hallisey of Westerly was taking the weather in stride.

"It's only a Category 1 now," he said, pushing a cart of groceries and two gallons of water. "I don't think it's going to be too severe."

Still, he took air conditioners out of windows at home as a precaution, and he hoped to leave work at Mohegan Sun casino early

Saturday night to get home to his family.

At Ocean State Liquors, employees said business was booming on Friday, with 30-packs of beer hitting the registers in bulk.

"Beer and a lot of red wine," said receiver Scott Rathgaber. "Wine, you can drink at room temperature."

Chris Ellsmore of Charlestown, a groundskeeper at the Shelter Harbor Golf Club, said he planned to hunker down at a club cottage with a few cold ones.

"We're probably going to see some strong winds, but I don't think it's going to be anything too crazy," he said, with 6-pack of Cottrell Brewing Company beer in hand. "It's a time to hang out with friends, sit back, play games, wait it out and see what happens."

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