

WHIDBEY NEWS-TIMES

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2012 | Vol. 113, No. 100 | WWW.WHIDBEYNEWTIMES.COM | 75¢



INSIDE:
Christmas looks hopeful for needy children

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Nathan Whalen/Whidbey News-Times

Workers clear West Beach Road. The stretch of West Beach Road between Swantown and Even Down Way was shut down most of Monday.

Storm slams West Beach Road

By **NATHAN WHALEN**
Staff reporter

The high tides and severe winds that battered Whidbey Island Monday cost an Oak Harbor man his home.

Alex Thierry, who moved to Whidbey Island in August to take a position as a pottery teacher and swim coach at Oak Harbor High School, was renting a home on West Beach Road when the severe storm Monday caused the bulkhead behind the house to fail.

"I only have what I took to work," Thierry said.

He said the bulkhead was fine when he left for work at 6:30 a.m. He noted that waves were crashing over the wall and water was standing in the backyard. Thierry, who is from St. Louis, said someone told him the bulk-

head failed a couple of hours later. His landlord called him around 10 a.m. telling him the structure had been damaged. It wasn't until classes were finished that he was able to see the damage.

By Monday afternoon, the seaside wall had washed away and the house was leaning toward the water.

Eric Brooks, deputy director for the Island County Department of Emergency Management, said he red tagged the house Monday morning, meaning that the house is unsafe to enter. Brooks said neither of the neighboring structures are in danger and he is monitoring the situation along with county building officials.

A neighboring house and a garage bookending the damaged home was yellow tagged as a precautionary



Photo contributed by Zack Hammond

The bulkhead behind a house on West Beach Road broke Monday, sending waves crashing into the home.

measure. That allows residents to enter and remove belongings, but recommends they shouldn't stay in the house.

The low-lying area of West Beach Road that is wedged between the

shoreline and Swan Lake was covered with driftwood and other debris. County officials closed the road early Monday morning and road crews were busy filling dump trucks to

SEE STORM, A2

Langley mayor sentenced to jail

By **JESSIE STENSLAND**
Staff reporter

Langley Mayor Larry Kwargsick will have to spend more than two weeks in jail and will likely resign from office after pleading guilty to a gross misdemeanor charge for falsifying a city record.

Island County Superior Court Judge Vickie Churchill shocked many in the courtroom Monday by sentencing Kwargsick to 15 days in jail after both the prosecutor and defense recommended that he serve no jail time. In fact, several of Kwargsick's supporters were noticeably outraged.

Churchill scolded Kwargsick for breaking the public trust after a 40-year career as a public servant. In addition to being a popular mayor, Kwargsick is currently the planning director

in Coupeville and previously worked as the planning director in Langley and Island County.

"What you did was to betray that public confidence," Churchill said. "I'm sorry, I don't think anyone who does that should remain in office."

Kwargsick pleaded guilty to one count of false report of a public official for falsifying a document when he was Langley's contracted community planning director in 2011. He admitted to backdating a document related to his stepdaughter's home construction project to make it look like his predecessor wrote it, then filing it with the city.

The document, which Kwargsick wrote on his home

SEE JAIL, A34

Loose dogs caught at Fort Ebey State Park

By **JESSIE STENSLAND**
Staff reporter

Fort Ebey State Park on Central Whidbey was reopened this weekend when two aggressive dogs were finally caught after running loose in the area for five days.

Carol Barnes, the Island County animal control officer, is now asking for the public's help in identifying the person who abandoned the dogs at the park. She encourages anyone who knows who may own the

dogs to call the dispatch center at 679-9567 and request to contact animal control.

Barnes said a resident of the Pebble Beach area north of the park called her Saturday morning to say the dogs were in his yard.

SEE DOGS, A34



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STORM

CONTINUED FROM A1

clear the road.

"A lot of the houses sustained some kind of damage," Brooks said of the homes on West Beach Road. He added the high winds and high tide, which peaked at 14 feet, 5 inches for Seattle and 11 feet, 3 inches for Port Townsend, contributed to the damage.

Wind gusts reaching 56 miles per hour and sustained winds of 45 miles per hour were recorded at the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, according to information provided by base spokesman Tony Popp.

Dick Eigenraam, who lives off Swantown overlooking West Beach Road, said the waves Monday morning were higher than the two-story homes.

"It was as high as the telephone poles," Eigenraam said. His home escaped any damage. The severe weather did spook his dog, Rex, who

broke free from his kennel. A good Samaritan found his dog near Walmart in Oak Harbor and called the number on the dog's collar.

While workers were clearing the road, curious onlookers stopped by to witness the swells and waves hitting the shoreline. Some people would park up the hill and then walk down to the overlook.

Other areas on Whidbey and Camano islands sustained damage as the result of the storm. Most of the areas affected by the storm were also in low-lying areas.

Brooks noted flooding took place on Shore Drive on Camano Island, Woodard Road near Freeland, Utsalady Drive and Maple Grove.

In Coupeville, one business owner felt the winds and the waves hit his building.

"We took some real heavy wave hits this morning. It felt like an earthquake every 30 seconds," said William Bell, owner of Local Grown that operates in the building



Nathan Whalen/Whidbey News-Times

Dump trucks and excavators were needed to remove debris from West Beach Road after a storm blew through the area Monday.

at the end of the Coupeville Wharf.

He said the water flowed underneath his truck while it was parked on the pier and the waves would spray over the walkway.

Despite the high winds, emergency services

appeared to have a quiet day Monday.

North Whidbey firefighters responded to a tree that fell on top of a car and Central Whidbey firefighters responded to a couple of trees that fell over the road and a chimney fire.

County officials closed several roads Monday because of flooding. Those roads include West Beach Road between Even Down Way and Swantown Road, part of Hill Road at Ebey's Landing and several roads on the south end of the

island.

The weather prompted ferry officials to cancel several sailings on the Port Townsend-to-Coupeville route. Even after returning to service, departures were delayed due to inclement weather.

Several Whidbey residents also lost power Monday. Roger Thompson, spokesman for Puget Sound Energy, said at the highest, 265 power customers lost power and most of those were in the Greenbank area. He said damage was repaired later that day.

While roads were cleared and power was restored, Thierry will continue his job while he looks for a new place to live. He is staying with a co-worker and he took Tuesday off to buy new clothes. He intends to resume his work Wednesday teaching at the high school and coaching the swim team.

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