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A 'paws-itive' influence



L-R: Kristin Valdez, Mama Dog, and Jennifer Lout

Every dog may have its day, but not every dog has an official title at a specialty construction company.

That's where "Mama Dog" separates herself from the pack. The beloved mutt is celebrating her fifth year with New Caney company **J.M. Maly Inc.**, which thinks highly enough of her to give her the title "office dog," and include her on the "Our Team" page of its website.

Don't confuse this for a tale about a company adopting a dog. **Autumn Dickerson** says that really, it was the other way around.

"When we moved into our new building, we were the first company to move into this industrial park," says Dick-

erson, who handles architectural sales, promotion and marketing for the company. "We noticed these two feral dogs – a mama dog and a papa dog. We decided to put out food for them to see if they would come a bit closer. They did, but would wait until you would leave to come eat."

The two dogs were content largely to fend for themselves – Dickerson recalled once seeing Mama Dog walking proudly up the road with a deer antler in her mouth – but the tables turned for the canine couple when **Papa Dog** was hit and killed by a parcel delivery truck.

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A concrete family



L-R: Administrative Vice President Kellie Vazquez, Vice President of Construction Pat Stepanski, CEO Susan Hollingsworth and President Darlene East.

Holes Incorporated in Houston has been a family affair since its creation 40 years ago by **Susan Hollingsworth** and her late husband, **Ken Major**.

Today, Hollingsworth still presides as CEO with her daughter, **Darlene East**, running the show as president and chief operating officer.

However, as the old Beatles song goes, East and the concrete-cutting company get by with a little help from their friends.

"I just have to say it's our employees," East explains. "We're very fortunate to have employees that have been with us for a long time. Many of our people have

been here for over 20 years.

"It just makes a difference when you have that kind of loyalty. We have such hard-working and dedicated people."

Both East and her sister, Administrative Vice President **Kellie Vazquez**, have been involved with the company since they were tykes.

"My mom didn't believe in leaving us at home to get into trouble, so we came in to work," East said. "I started working here as an adult about 22 years ago."

Vazquez and Vice President of Construction **Pat Stepanski** manage operations and take care of the company's clients.

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Moving forward

The Harris County Flood Control District recently launched the final construction phase of a 150-acre stormwater detention basin project in northwest Harris County.

According to **Heather Saucier**, Harris County Flood Control District spokeswoman, the general contractor for the project is **N & Z Contracting Inc.** and the majority of the stormwater detention basin was excavated by **Sprint, Sand & Clay LLC**.

"The Sprint, Sand & Clay crew excavated and removed the soil from the site," Saucier said. "We are currently working on the final phases of the project, which will complete the excavation and ensure that the stormwater detention basin is fully operational."

The basin is located at the upstream end of Horsepen Creek, approximately 0.5 miles east of Barker-Cypress Road, she said.



An aerial view of the Horsepen Creek stormwater detention basin

The project manager for the basin is **Naser Salem** with **N & Z Contracting**. He says the company is installing new drainage pipes and the weir structure.

"The weir structure serves as a spillway whereby stormwater rising in a channel, in this case, Horsepen Creek – can spill into the detention basin during times of heavy rain where it will be temporarily stored and slowly released back into the creek," he said.

"After construction of the weir structure and regrading of the detention basin's slopes, the basin will retain approximately 360 million gallons of stormwater that otherwise might flood homes and businesses. In addition, the basin will help reduce flooding risks for those who live downstream along the creek's banks."

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Going international

International Stoneworks opened its doors in 1982 and is celebrating 30 years in business in March.

President **Rawi Tabbah** says he began his business by introducing one product to maintain natural stone without wax.

"After I was given the opportunity to restore one marble bathroom floor with this new technique in a major Houston hotel, I expanded the business by performing stone restoration, maintenance work and selling various stone care products," he said.

"It is quite an accomplishment for any company to successfully stay in business for 30 years and I am very proud of International Stoneworks and its employees. I am always looking for ways for our business to improve and grow and I enjoy teaching my daughter, **Jacqueline**, who joined us in 2009, about the services provided by our company. I look forward to celebrating another 30 years!"

Tabbah says at Christmas time, the company has any annual party for employees and their families. Everyone cooks and brings in a dish to share.

"My hobbies today are listening to music and traveling with my wife," he said. "We enjoy exploring places that we have never been to before. We have seen the Pyramids in Egypt and ancient buildings in Turkey."



Rawi Tabbah says he is grateful for his dedicated employees and clientele.

Tabbah says the company now sells its products nationally and internationally.

"While typically we perform stone and tile restoration in residences and major buildings in Texas, we have traveled as far as California, Florida and New Jersey."

International Stoneworks is a natural stone restoration and maintenance business. -ab

ON THE SPOT What's your favorite lunchtime restaurant?

Las Carretas and I eat the steak ala Mexicana. Absolutely! Since I left San Antonio, I really miss it. In Houston, it's Miyako Sushi Bar, right next door to our office. They do a rib eye sushi roll. It has crab and onion and it's wrapped in a really rare steak and you just can't beat it. It's just perfect.

Joshua Meyer, Builders Exchange Houston

One of my favorite restaurants is Pappadeaux's. I like their pan-grilled Tilapia.

Debbie Wadlington, Briggs Equipment

My favorite restaurant is Pappas and I like their lump crab and shrimp salad.

Mark Johnson, Briggs Equipment

My favorite lunchtime restaurant is the Red Onion Café and my favorite entree is the Mayan Chicken. It's very good.

Valerie Delafosse, Women Contractors Association

Java Java on 11th street has fantastic chicken salad. I love it. That's my favorite.

Lenora Sorola-Pohlman, Navarro Insurance

My favorite place to eat during lunch would be Pappadeaux's. I always get their specialty salad. It's a great salad!

Chrysanthie Pappas, Triangle Reproductions

My favorite place would be Jimmy Johns because they deliver.

Becky Manzel, Energy Waterproofing and Roofing Systems

My favorite place for lunch in the Houston metro area is Mel's Country Café in Tomball. My favorite meal there is the hamburger steak. A close second to that would be their fried mushrooms. Mel's Country Café is absolutely the No. 1 restaurant in the state of Texas. In fact, they have a lot of construction people that meet there for lunch.

Dan Rowlen, Triangle Reproductions

There are so many good restaurants, but I would have to say Ouisie's on San Felipe St. I love their shrimp and grits. Also Kiran's Indian Restaurant in Highland Village. I eat the combo plate. It has several different foods that represent well.

Janice Peters, Build Houston

Veronas Flying Pizza and I get the babe ziti with Italian sausage. It's fantastic!

Amber Hobbs, HG Fire Systems

My favorite lunchtime spot is Which Wich. I like the chicken pesto sandwich.

Sandi Hinson, Northstar Fire Protection

Koto Japanese Restaurant and it is their Sushi special.

Amber Mavridis, Northstar Fire Protection

My favorite lunch is at Panera Bread and I do their pick two: soup and sandwich.

Cindy Wade, Simplex Grinnell

My favorite place for business clients is Houston's on Kirby Drive.

Cathy McDow, RLI Insurance

Construction News ON LOCATION

Take two



L-R: **Devin Flato** and **Doug Lowe** are friendly surveyors at **Halff Associates Inc.**, a full-service engineering, surveying and architecture firm. -ab

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