



Discount Warehouse

by Peter Fischetti

Owners John and Jeni Palmieri in front of their newly opened Discount Warehouse

Mention the word “Palmieri” in Corona and a lot of people will think of the pharmacy that Jim Palmieri opened in 1969 and owned until 2000, when he sold it to Kevin Pidgeon, a long-time employee pharmacist.

Over the years, lots of people have worked at Palmieri Pharmacy including one of Jim’s sons, John, who helped out his father while attending school. After graduating from UCR, John became an account rep for Bergen Brunswick (now AmerisourceBergen), a large pharmaceutical services company, and later for Bristol-Myers. At both jobs, he won several national awards for sales achievement.

But ultimately, John would find a different prescription for success in the business world. After cashing in some company stock for a large profit, John purchased a nearly-new car for his wife, Jeni, for about half the cost of a brand new one. “I thought that was a great deal,” he said, “so I bought three more and parked them outside my house with a ‘For Sale’ sign. They sold almost immediately, and I was hooked on cars.”

Ten years ago, Palmieri, now 42, opened Freeway Isuzu Trucks & Vans at Sixth and Yorba streets in Corona. About five years ago, he and Jeni purchased the 10 acres from Sixth Street to the

freeway, which included the Isuzu Commercial Truck dealership and many buildings.

Over the years, the warehouse had a number of tenants, including Habitat for Humanity and another liquidator, both of which did well, Jeni said, and then a furniture outlet which recently closed. Faced with a vacant building, she said, “I told my husband we should put something there. It’s a tough economy, and people need bargains. I know, with two girls in school, how expensive it is to feed them. Since we own the building, we must pay the rent anyway.”

John wasn’t sure, but Jeni was. She contacted the liquidators that previous tenants had used, signed new contracts, and two months ago opened Discount Warehouse where she runs the show. Almost all the products are familiar brands, and grocery and household items are the most popular, Jeni said. “We get those deliveries on Tuesdays, and people know that, so they’re lined up waiting to get in.”

You never know exactly what will be on the shelves, but the Palmieris try to stock basic household goods and groceries, along with clothing, furniture, electronics and sports equipment. “The way it works,” John said, “is that we buy a \$6 container of Downey’s for \$3, and sell it for \$4.”

A few weeks after Discount Warehouse opened, John expanded the Freeway dealership to include Sixth Street frontage on 1625 W. Sixth, selling pre-owned autos and commercial trucks. Also on site is a service center that does repairs on all makes of vehicles.

John stays pretty busy juggling his businesses. “I couldn’t do it without Jeni,” he said, but both make sure there’s time for their two daughters. Rachelle, 13, who attends Santiago High School, is Miss Corona Pre-Teen, and Sophia, 10, a fifth-grader at Corona Fundamental, has won awards for cheerleading.

When John and Jeni need advice on their next move, there’s always his father, Jim, now 81, who meets and greets on Fridays. Jim’s wife of 56 years, Kathleen, continues to stay active. Jim, Kathleen, John, Jeni and daughters just came back from Europe where they met with relatives in Ireland.

Discount Warehouse is open Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call (951) 531-8290 or visit www.discountwarehousecorona.com. For more information on purchasing trucks and autos at Freeway-Trucks & Vans, call (951) 278-3799 or visit their website at www.freewayisuzutrucks.com.