

STORE CLOSINGS & GIFT CARDS

by Helen Frydrych

By the end of December 2008, if you have gift cards, hurry up and use them!

These stores announced closings.

- **Ann Taylor** is closing 117 stores nationwide. A company spokeswoman said the company hasn't revealed which stores will be shuttered. It will let the stores that will close this fiscal year know over the next month.
- **Eddie Bauer** to close more stores. Eddie Bauer has already closed 27 shops in the first quarter and plans to close up to two more outlet stores by the end of the year.
- **Cache** announced that it is closing 20 to 23 women's apparel stores this year.
- **Lane Bryant, Fashion Bug, CatherinesPlus Sizes** will close about 150 under-performing stores this year. The company hasn't provided a list of specific store closures and can't say when it will offer that info, spokeswoman Brooke Perry said today.
- **Talbots** and **J Jill** are closing stores. About a month ago, Talbots announced that it will be shuttering all 78 of its kids and men's stores. Now the company says it will close another 22 underperforming stores. The 22 stores will be a mix of Talbots women's and J Jill, another chain it owns. The closures will occur this fiscal year, according to a company press release.
- **Gap Inc.** Is closing 85 stores in addition to its namesake chain, Gap also owns **Old Navy** and **Banana Republic**. The company said the closures — all planned for fiscal 2008 — will be weighted toward the Gap brand.
- **Foot Locker** to close 140 stores. In the company press release and during its conference call with analysts today, it did not specify where the future store closures — all planned in fiscal 2008 — will be. The company could not be immediately reached for comment.
- **Wickes Furniture** is going out of business and closing all of its stores. Wickes, a 37-year-old retailer that targets middle-income customers, filed for bankruptcy protection last month.
- **Levitz/Bombay** is closed already. The furniture retailer, which is going out of business. Levitz first announced it was going out of business and closing all 76 of its stores in December. The retailer dates back to 1910 when Richard

Levitz opened his first furniture store in Lebanon, PA. In the 1960s, the warehouse/showroom concept brought Levitz to the forefront of the furniture industry. The local Levitz closures will follow the shutdown of Bombay.

➤ **Zales** and **Piercing Pagoda** are closing stores. The owner of Zales and Piercing Pagoda previously said it plans to close 82 stores by July 31. Today, it announced that it is closing another 23 underperforming stores. The company said it's not providing a list of specific store closures. Of the 105 locations planned for closure, 50 are kiosks and 55 are stores.

➤ **Disney Store** owner has the right to close 98 stores — The Walt Disney Company announced it acquired about 220 Disney Stores from subsidiaries of **The Children's Place** Retail Stores. The exact number of stores acquired will depend on negotiations with landlords. Those subsidiaries of Children's Place filed for bankruptcy protection in late March. In the news release, Disney said it has also obtained the right to close about 98 Disney Stores in the U.S. The press release didn't list those stores.

➤ **Home Depot** stores closings. Nearly 7+ months after its chief executive said there were no plans to cut the number of its core retail stores, The Home Depot Inc. announced Thursday that it is shuttering 15 of them amid a slumping US. economy and housing market. The move will affect 1,300 employees. It is the first time the world's largest home improvement store chain has ever closed a flagship store for performance reasons. Its shares rose almost 5 percent. The Atlanta-based company said the underperforming U.S. stores being closed represent less than 1 percent of its existing stores. They will be shuttered within the next two months.

➤ **CompUSA** clarifies details on store closings. Any extended warranties purchased for products through CompUSA will be honored by a third-party provider, Assurant Solutions. Gift cards, rain checks, and rebates purchased prior to December 12 can be redeemed at any time during the final sale. For those who have a gadget currently in for service with CompUSA, the repair will be completed and the gadget will be returned to owners.

➤ **Macy's** is closing 9 stores.

➤ **Movie Gallery** is closing 160 stores as part of reorganization plan to exit bankruptcy. The video rental company plans to close 400 of 3,500 Movie Gallery and **Hollywood Video** stores in addition to the 520 locations the video rental chain closed last fall.

➤ **Pep Boys** is closing 33 stores.

- **Sprint Nextel** is closing 125 retail locations. New Sprint Nextel CEO Dan Hesse appears to have inherited a company bleeding subscribers by the thousands, and will now officially be dropping the axe on 4,000 employees and 125 retail locations. Amid the loss of 639,000 postpaid customers in the fourth quarter, Sprint will be cutting a total of 6.7% of its work force (following the 5,000 layoffs last year) and 8% of company-owned brick-and-mortar stores, while remaining mute on other rumors that it will consolidate its headquarters in Kansas. Sprint Nextel shares are down \$2.89, or nearly 25%, at the time of this writing.
- **J. C. Penney** is cutting back.
- **Lowe's** is scaling back.
- **Office Depot** is scaling back.
- **Ethan Allen Interiors** announced plans to close 12 of 300+ stores in an effort to cut costs.
- **Wilsons, the Leather Experts**, is closing 158 stores
- **Pacific Sunwear** will close its 154 Demo stores after a review of strategic alternatives for the urban-apparel brand, Seventy-four underperforming Demo stores closed last May.
- **Sharper Image** recently filed for bankruptcy protection and announced that 90 of its 184 stores are closing. The retailer will still operate 94 stores to pay off debts, but 90 of these stores have performed poorly and also may close.
- **Bombay Company** unveiled plans to close all 384 U.S.-based Bombay Company stores. The company's online storefront has discontinued operations.
- **KB Toys** posted a list of 356 stores that it is closing around the United States as part of its bankruptcy reorganization. To see the list of store closings, go to the KB Toys Information website, and click on Press Information.
- **Dillard's** will close more stores. It said it will continue to focus on closing underperforming stores, reducing expenses and improving its merchandise in 2008. At the company's annual shareholder meeting, CEO William Dillard II said the company will close another six underperforming stores this year.