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Wal-Mart Pledges to 'Win in Every Business'

BY JENNIFER MARKS

BENTONVILLE, ARK. — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. broke through the \$400 billion sales mark for the year, despite posting a profit decline in the fourth quarter.

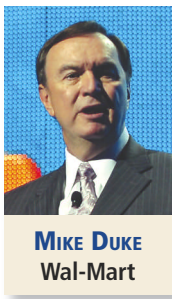
In recorded remarks released in mid-February, execs asserted that the company is well positioned to continue gaining share as its markets work through the global recession.

"We will push ourselves and play offense where appropriate," said Mike Duke, who took the

reins as corporate president and ceo four weeks ago. "And we will win in every business that we operate around the world."

As for Walmart US: "We're going to do all the right things to continue our momentum and to widen the gap between the competition and us," he said.

In the fourth quarter ended Jan. 31, Walmart US stores grew sales by 6.0% to \$71.5 billion, recording comps of 2.8% over the previous year's Q4 comps of 1.6%. Operating income rose 2.2% to \$5.4 billion.

SEE **WAL-MART** PAGE 12

MIKE DUKE
Wal-Mart

JCPenney Has Hopes for Home

48% Profit Drop Closes Book on 2008

BY CECILE B. CORRAL

PLANO, TEXAS — The home category was singled out as a "bright spot," helped by the demise of two category rivals, in an overall tough fourth quarter, JCPenney said during its earnings conference call last Friday.

Ken Hicks, president and chief merchandising officer, said the home business "has experienced stability over the last few months." And yet, JCP listed the

home segment among its weaker categories, after fine jewelry, in the fourth quarter. Still, the mid-tier department store retailer said it had reasons to believe in future improvement.

"We're seeing a little bit of life in the home business as we move into the spring season," said Mike Ullman, chairman and ceo. "I think that may be the bottoming effect of home furnishings over the last two to

SEE **JCPENNEY** PAGE 12

Vendors Upbeat in Vegas

New Distribution Channels Beckon

BY CAROLE SLOAN

LAS VEGAS — Despite apprehension about traffic and results going into the Las Vegas market, many home textiles exhibitors were surprisingly pleased with their results.

Attendance was admittedly down, and the old cliché "the buyers that were here were buying" was stated over and over again, there were good vibes going through the buildings.

For a number of exhibitors, Tuesday ranked as the strongest day — both in traffic and order writing. Orders, most exhibitors noted, while comforting, were nonetheless for small quantities — enough to bring newness to retail floors rather than future inventory buys.

Tuesday was the big day for numbers of customers and order writing at Home Source, said

Keith Sorgeloos, ceo. But overall, he pointed out, "Of all the business we did, 60% was with new customers. This market was by far a huge hit for us — we doubled our summer '08 business, and broke January '08 by 20%."

Interestingly, Sorgeloos remarked that the absence of West Coast retailers from the Dallas, Atlanta and New York shows brought them to Vegas, along with some merchants from Latin America and western Canada.

"Without a doubt, furniture retailers and dotcoms led the way. Furniture stores are trying to create new business opportunities and the dotcoms are coming out of the woodwork — but many of them don't get it [in terms of what is needed to succeed]."

Activity and order writing was good at Rizzy Home, with Tuesday especially strong, said Mark Ferullo, vice president. Overall, he said, "I'd say it was OK."

For Richard Downing, svp, consumer products division, Leggett & Platt, "We were pleased" SEE **VEGAS** PAGE 21

CHF to Intro Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Domestics

BY CAROLE SLOAN

CHF Industries.

NEW YORK — In an unusual alliance, furniture and home décor designer firm Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams will launch a decorative bedding and accessories collection with

The collection will debut in April during the High Point Market at the MG + BW showroom. The initial retail debut in August will be at Bloomingdale's, which will carry the bedding collection in all

stores that have home textiles departments, according to Joe Laneve, svp, home. In Bloomingdale's units with furniture departments, the bedding will be cross-merchandised in both departments, Laneve added.

Distribution beyond Bloomingdale's for the first round launch will be confined to the network of MG + BW retail stores, as well as to the approximately 100 independent retail furniture dealers carrying the MG + BW furniture line. There currently are 20 MG + BW stores, including three that are company owned. The company expects to add another three dedicated stores this year. Mitchell Gold, co-owner and co-ceo told *HTT*.

An important part of the distribution for the bedding program will be interior designers, already a focus group for SEE **CHF** PAGE 21



Left to right: Designers Bob Williams and Mitchell Gold with CHF's Joan Karron and Frank Foley.

Retail Briefs

Macy's Buys Back \$686M Debt Notes

Declaring it had successfully completed its cash tender offer for two issues of senior debt notes that are to come due later this year, Macy's Inc. said the "aggregate consideration for the notes accepted for purchase, plus accrued and unpaid interest" was about \$685.7 million. Prior to the offer, the total aggregate principal outstanding on the two sets of notes was \$950 million. Macy's said retiring these notes early (the transaction took place on Feb. 11) will cut about \$7.0 million in interest expense during 2009.

Exciting Windows Adds Retailer Group

Seven retailers of window fashions with combined sales of \$40 million have banded as a co-op group under the Exciting Windows national design and merchandising business, which already has some 70 member retailers. "We've attracted seven large dealers, whose annual sales figures range from \$3 to \$6 million, to come together and be more competitive and dominant in their markets by continuing to work under their existing name and control their company's operations, but adding the Exciting Windows brand of service," said Steven Bursten, ceo of Exciting Windows.

Carl Movrich of Drapery Connection in Downers Grove, Ill.; Bruce Heyman of Metropolitan Window Fashions in North Plainfield, N.J.; Steve & Cheri Roellchen of One-Stop Decorating in Kansas City, Mo.; Will Bathke of Aero Drapery in Minneapolis; Jeff Kaplan of Innu Window in Natick, Mass.; Ken McWilliams of ABC Blinds in Austin, Texas; and Mike O'Daniel of Arizona Blinds in Peoria, Ariz. are the new Exciting Windows members.

Lowe's 2008 Net Down, 2009 Tough

Home improvement retailer Lowe's Companies, Inc. recorded a 60.3% profit decline, to \$162 million for the fourth quarter. Diluted EPS of 11 cents was down 60.7%. For the full fiscal year ended January 30, Lowe's saw a 21.9% earnings fall off, to \$2.20 billion, with EPS down 19.9% to \$1.49. Sales in Q4 fell 3.8% to \$9.98 billion, with full year sales off just 0.1% to \$48.2 billion. The comp story: down 9.9% in the quarter, down 7.2% for all of 2008.

Robert Niblock, chairman and ceo, acknowledged that comps in the quarter fell below expectations and hurt earnings. "However," he stated, "in this challenging sales environment and throughout this prolonged industry downturn, we are continuing to capture market share, which is evidence of our compelling product offering and commitment to customer service."

Lowe's plans to open up to 70 new stores in 2009, and projected EPS of \$1.04 to \$1.20 for the year.

Dollar General Eyes Home Goods Growth

BY CECILE B. CORRAL

GOODLETTSVILLE, TENN. — After ramping up its consumable business over the past year, Dollar General is now turning its attention to the non-consumable business — including home — to fix its flaws by yearend, when executives hope the economy will begin to improve.

"We're obviously making these changes in an environment that is much tougher than it would have been a year or year-and-a-half ago," said Richard Dreiling, chairman and ceo, during the discount chain's presentation at the Goldman Sachs Second Annual Consumer/Retail Leveraged Finance Conference prior to reporting its fiscal results.

"But the changes we are making will take about nine or 10 months for everyone to see," he continued. "As we make those changes, that's where we believe ultimately we can get some more gross [margin dollar] enhancement."

Apparel is one component of this business, and already the retailer said it is seeing some improvements, resulting from improved focus on trend shifts. "We're getting closer to those fashion windows without sticking our necks out on something that could be a little controversial

with regards to its appeal," Dreiling said.

Heading this effort for Dollar General is the recently appointed Jeff Elliott as svp and gmm of apparel, home and seasonal. He reports to Todd Vasos, evp, division president and chief merchandising officer. Elliott was most recently at multiple nameplate apparel retail group Charming Shoppes Inc., where he served as president of Charming Outlets.

"He is very masterful in his understanding of the non-consumable side of our business," Dreiling said. "And we're now beginning the journey of really fixing that side of the business."

Dreiling added that Dollar General — which operates 8,362 stores in 35 states — intends to "make some very major changes in our soft goods presentation, home décor. We are committed to drive the non-consumable side as hard as we are driving the consumable side."

Store count is also slated for expansion. Planned for 2009 are 450 new units and 400 relocations and/or remodels — all of them concentrated in the chain's current 35 states. During fiscal 2008, the company opened 207 new stores, relocated or remodeled 404 units, and closed 39.

Dreiling said in spite of this hefty push for new doors, Dollar

General "is and always will be a same-store-sales story. We believe that the box has to always be productive. And the secret of success is not going out and opening a bunch of new stores.... We are focused on all of our stores and making them all productive."

Dollar General also recently hired a "sourcing executive," he added, and is growing that team. The retailer already operates a global sourcing office in Hong Kong.

In advance of the Goldman Sachs conference, the company released its preliminary Q4 and full fiscal year results, which will officially be reported in March.

It came as no surprise that consumables continued to be the driving force, where fourth-quarter sales jumped 11.2% to \$2.85 billion compared to the same period in 2008, and comps rose 9.4%.

Dollar General reported full-year 2008 sales of \$10.46 billion, up 10.1% from \$9.50 billion on year ago, with comps up 9%.

But not all the news was good — sales of the neighborhood discount chain's seasonal merchandise and other discretionary items were impacted "by the weak economy as well as a shorter holiday selling season," Dollar General stated. Included among those was the home products category, with Q4 sales of \$231.4 million, down 5% from the year-ago period.

By contrast, the consumables category was up by 18%, to \$1.9 billion. **HTT**

Family Dollar Thrives on Promotions, Private Label

BY CECILE B. CORRAL

MATTHEWS, N.C. — As its shoppers' habits shift with the economy, Family Dollar is actively altering its product mix to focus more on consumables and less on discretionary items.

During the company's presentation at Deutsche Bank's Small and Mid Cap Conference this month, Family Dollar chairman and ceo Howard Levine said the 6,600-plus unit neighborhood discount chain is "working to increase our relevancy to the customer" by reinforcing its more promotionally priced offerings and expanding its assortment of "key consumables," such as food.

Family Dollar's customers — typically women in their 40s who

have established families and live on less than \$30,000 annually — since last year have been increasingly "looking for great value on the basic items they use everyday...[and] they've been more sensitive to promotional events and have often traded down to private label and less expensive items," he continued.

Family Dollar's recent related efforts have paid off. Selectively investing "while constraining overall purchases in more discretionary categories" has resulted in better returns on inventory investment and increased profitability, Levine explained.

New strategies include the revamping of Family Dollar's point-of-sale technologies for quicker check-out customer ser-

vice as well as the addition of food stamp and credit card payment options at many of its stores.

To increase store traffic, Family Dollar is also "leveraging the synergies" between its coolers, food and food stamps, he said.

Levine said that while the current economic conditions have worked in Family Dollar's favor, the retailer "prefers good times" over recessionary periods. "Often people come to me and say, 'Boy, you must be real happy that the economy is in the toilet and things are awful out there.' But that is not the case at all," he said. "We prefer good times, strong employment and full employment. We feel we are nicely positioned to compete not only in tough times when people really need us." **HTT**

New York March 2009 Market

HTT Market Kick-Off Party

Sunday, March 8 Penthouse, 230 Fifth Ave.

New York Home Fashions Market

Monday, March 9 – Friday, March 13 In the showrooms HFPA members at the following locations: 1 & 386 Park Ave., 11 E. 26th, 28 E. 28th., 7 W. 34th., 58, 104 & 111 W. 40th St., 230, 261, 295, & 350 Fifth Avenue, 79 Madison Ave., and 1071 & 1211 Avenue of the Americas



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JCP.com in Wamsutta-Disney Exclusive

FORT MILL, S.C. — The Disney Resort Collection by Wamsutta, announced in March 2008, is launching at retail as an exclusive for JCPenney.com.

The Wamsutta brand, produced by Springs Global, is the exclusive linens provider for Deluxe Walt Disney World Resorts and Disney Deluxe Villa Resorts.

The retail collection is designed to reflect themes from Disney's Animal Kingdom Lodge, Grand Floridian Resort & Spa, Polynesian Resort and Yacht Club Resorts. King and queen comforter sets include comforter, shams and bed skirts with retails ranging from \$350 to \$450. The line also includes coordinating dec pillows, Euros and window

treatments.

Kuba Stripe features an animal print in warm earth tones. Garden View is a soft floral on fresh yellow. Fuji employs hues of sand, green, aqua and blue along with a crewel embroidered detail. Harborside evokes a nautical motif with sea foam embroidered accents on a white pique reversible comforter.

To market the launch of the collection, Springs Global has created the Wamsutta Vacation Celebration Sweepstakes. The winner will receive a five day/four night vacation for four to Walt Disney World Resort, including airfare, accommodations, ground transportation and five-day Magic Your Way tickets with a Park Hopper option. **HTT**



Harborside



A Garden View

Raksha Bella Growing, Adds Custom Offering

BERKELEY, CALIF. — Raksha Bella Organic Textiles, now in its second year of business, is expanding its reach this year.

The fashion bedding company has hired a New York sales rep to extend distribution to the East Coast, following its first outing at the New York International Gift Fair in the At Home section last month.

Raksha Bella is designed by owner and ceo Carrie Peters and produced at a cut and sew facility in Pune, India that employs 300 independent women contractors participat-

"We're working on new bedding prints that are a little more edgy than the India prints — although we will keep the India prints in the line."

—**CARRIE PETERS,**
Raksha Bella Organic Textiles

Direct Home Bows 'American Lifestyles'

BY CECILE B. CORRAL

ATLANTA — Direct Home Textiles Group is looking to fill a void it sees in the retail landscape with a new line of American-specific handmade area rugs.

"We looked at the retail market and saw that the world is flooded with Persian rugs and flooded with contemporary rugs," said John Azzolino, managing partner/ceo. "So we came up with transitional, floral and all-around American looks designed specifically for American homes and American furniture."

Eighteen months in the making, this collection comprises handmade and carved rugs of New Zealand wool and viscose. Direct Home calls its new brand "American Lifestyles."

Direct Home partnered with two other parties to create American Lifestyles rugs. For the production, the company joined forces with an India-based rug manufacturer "who I have known for 23 years," Azzolino said, and for the designs Direct Home went to art and pattern source Kim Designs, which is operated

by Kim Weisgerber Craig.

Of the original 184 patterns, 19 were selected for American Lifestyles' launch — slated for early March during the New York Home Fashions market. Included are florals, botanicals, traditional damasks, American quilt and contemporary looks — each available in a variety of colorways.

"All of the patterns we use were designed, colored and inspired by American artists," Azzolino said.

Sizes range from 4-foot-by-6-foot through 8-foot-by-10-foot, plus runners.

A 6-foot-by-9-foot is set to retail for \$599, "even though I've been told these rugs should really retail for \$1,000," Azzolino said.

Aside from Azzolino, Direct Home Textiles Group is operated by John McLeod, president, and John Thornton.

The company, founded by McLeod and Azzolino in fall 2005, offers an assortment of soft floor coverings, including area, accent and bath rugs in a variety of constructions and styles.

Its showroom is in suite 808 at 230 Fifth Ave. in New York City. **HTT**

Avanti Calls for International Sales Effort

BY JENNIFER MARKS

NEW YORK — Avanti Linens is leading an effort among a group of U.S. suppliers who are planning to pool their resources to hire sales reps in other major world markets.

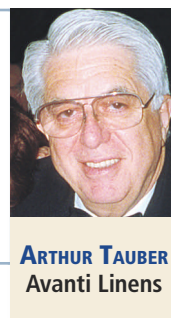
"Everybody's in the same boat. The economy has killed a lot of people. We need to find new places to sell."

showrooms on Fifth Avenue; now Tauber is also reaching out to other home textiles companies.

Among those that have so far signaled an interest in participating are: Ammermills, Bacova, Beacon Looms, Caldeira USA, Chesapeake Merchandise, Crosscill, Downlite, Elite Home, Ex-Cell, Faribault, Grand Imagination, Greenland

Home, Hedaya Home Fashions, AQ Textiles/Intellatex, Linen Essentials, Patton Picture, Raymond Waites, Royal Heritage Home, Soft-Tex, Taymor, Thro, Trend Dex, TruBamboo, Venus, W-C, Westex and YMF Inc.

Tauber can be reached at atauber@avantilinen.com. **HTT**



ARTHUR TAUBER
Avanti Linens

"Everybody's in the same boat. The economy has killed a lot of people. We need to find new places to sell," said Arthur Tauber, chairman of Avanti.

Tauber pointed to Europe, South America and England as potential markets for representation.

He began the effort by circulating letters to New York

ing in the Grameen microfinance system. The company specializes in block prints using azo-free dyes and 100% GOTS certified organic cotton.

"We're working on new bedding prints that are a little more edgy than the India prints — although we will keep the India prints in the line," said Peters.

Also new for this year, Raksha Bella will begin doing custom work. "Now we can mix and match any color on any products," she told *HTT*.

The company kicked off the year launching an organic cotton loungewear line in tandem with designer and boutique owner Erica Tanov.

Raksha Bella will participate in next month's DnA show in Los Angeles, via its California rep, Trunkshow. **HTT**

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Karastan Ads to Feature Grammy-Nominated Jewel

DALTON, GA. — For its 2009 “Make a Statement” advertising campaign, upscale area rug house Karastan has partnered with Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter Jewel.

This year’s program was created in six versions — three for carpets and three for area rugs. The campaign is anchored by a different celebrity each year.

The Jewel campaign is kicking off in the April issues of shelter and lifestyle publications including *Architectural Digest*, *Elle Décor*, *InStyle*, *Metropolitan Home*, *Town & Country*, *Traditional Home*, *Veranda* and *Western Interiors*.

Jewel is the sixth celebrity to partner with Karastan on Make a Statement, the company said. Recent stars have ranged from actress Kelly Preston and



actress/model Andie MacDowell to “Law and Order: SVU” star Mariska Hargitay and “Lost” star Evangeline Lilly.

Since her “Pieces of You” album in 1995, which went Platinum 12 times, Jewel has sold more than 27 million albums worldwide. She is the founder

of Project Clean Water, a charity that has so far helped 30 villages in 13 countries build wells and add water filters to provide quality drinking water.

Karastan said it selected Jewel as its partner for 2009 because she has an “ambition to ‘make a statement’ in both her professional and personal life.” David Duncan, vp marketing, noted that her “multifaceted persona, commitment to balance in life and work, and love of design and craftsmanship are completely in sync with the defining characteristics of the Karastan consumer.”

Karastan will soon post an in-depth interview with Jewel on its website — www.karastan.com — in which she talks about her love of home design and shares details about her career and her personal life. **HTT**

CMI Launches Dimensions Fabrics

MIAMI — CMI Enterprises, a supplier of treated upholstery fabrics and fabrication solutions, has created a new product under its environmentally friendly Nanocide Antimicrobial line of goods.

Called Dimensions, this new product line encompasses coated vinyl fabrics for upholstery and bedding that are 99.9% resistant to Staphylo-

coccus germs, tests have shown. Such germs that come in contact with a new Dimensions product are killed within minutes.

“Nanocide Antimicrobial for the health care, transportation, institutional and hospitality settings is the beginning of an environment that offers a greatly reduced risk of MRSA contamination, from

seating and bedding upholstery material,” explained Michael Novick, CMI ceo.

Novick said his company’s antimicrobial product is more earth-friendly than many other biocides frequently used in seating and bedding products because the latter often are arsenic- and cyanide-based.

Dimensions is available in at least 20 different colors. **HTT**

Victor Group Expands Residential Eco-Fabrics

SAINT GEORGES, QUEBEC — A new collection of sustainable fabrics and a new grouping of tapestries and luxury chenille velvets will be key introductions by The Victor Group at the Toronto Fabric Fair.

The sustainable collection, trademarked eHome, is the latest eco-friendly grouping of fabrics from Victor Group’s residential side, which also includes the Eco Intelligence brand of polyester fabrics for the contract furniture market that are certified “Cradle to Cradle Gold” by product and process design firm MBDC.

The Victor Atelier collection is an assortment of tapestries and chenille velvets in “complex weaves, unique yarn mixes, and modern color combinations,”

the company said. These are also designed for Victor Group’s residential side.

Also set to debut are the World@Home and Terrazzo fabric brands.

The outdoors-ready Terrazzo is made with solution-dyed fiber technology to withstand weather conditions. The collection employs a broad palette and elegant designs interpreted on novelty yarns.

World@Home represents a new value product and is priced competitively. Looks span traditional, transitional and contemporary in a mix of chenilles, boucles and novelty yarns.

The company’s roots are as a supplier to the contract market. “We are relatively new to the res-

idential market,” said Paul Bennotti, director of marketing, adding that side of the business has been “well received.”

Founded in 1947, family-owned-and-operated Victor Group is a textile company that since 1980 specializes in environmentally sustainable fabrics designed for the contract, residential, outdoor and apparel and specialty markets. It operates mills in several Canadian and U.S. locations, service-and-warehouse facilities in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Fall River, Mass., and design studios in New York City and Fall River.

The Toronto Fabric Fair is set for Feb. 23-26 at the Paradise Convention Centre in Concord, Ontario. **HTT**

Textillery Weavers Preps Lines for High Point

BLOOMINGTON, IND. — Spring blue, wasabi green, pastel plaids, menswear-inspired textured and tonal tweeds, along with bamboo in colorful twills will make Textillery Weavers’ fashion statement this spring at the upcoming High Point Market.

Eco-friendly trends will take the forefront.

“We’re finding that customers are taking the eco-friendly movement seriously,” said head designer Judith Rose. “They want to know that the products they buy — and the companies behind them — are environmentally friendly from start to finish.”

Textillery’s “On the Waterfront” collection features a spring blue palette meant to evoke tranquility and peace, she said. New products include: a mid-weight variegated twill bamboo throw — 73% bamboo and 27% cotton — finished with a two-inch fringe; a lightweight 100% rayon chenille plaid throw with a ribbed accent and finished with a six-inch fringe; and a lightweight 100% rayon chenille plaid throw with six-inch fringe.

With the wasabi green palette that has been accented

with neutral tones, Textillery hopes to catch the eye of earth-minded consumers. “Our increasing eco-consciousness is still fueling the popularity of green tones, and I think brighter wasabi greens will continue to be popular in 2009 and beyond,” said Rose.

New products made in wasabi green include: a lightweight 100% rayon chenille plaid throw with mid-weight ribbed accent and finished with a six-inch fringe; a mid-weight bamboo-and-cotton throw finished with a rolled hem; and a lightweight cotton-and-rayon textured throw finished with a six-inch fringe.

A new assortment of “pretty pink” and pastel plaids, Rose said, is a spring-specific design message. Included are several rayon chenille throw styles, some of them also employing the wasabi color.

New bamboo twill throws offer “warm, silky and luxurious new designs in colors that also respond well to today’s design directions,” she said.

Textillery Weavers’ High Point showroom is in space 408 at the International Home Furnishings Center. **HTT**

Designer Audigier Mounts Trade Event

LOS ANGELES — Christian Audigier, known for his fashion interpretations of the work of tattoo artist Ed Hardy, produced a four-day fashion trade show in Las Vegas highlighting his collections and products across seven different brands.

The latest “When I Move You Move” event ran Feb. 16-19 at Caesar’s Palace Hotel. “We want to create a positive, exciting experience for retailers during this time,” Audigier said in a statement. “When I Move You Move is designed to invigorate the retail industry, build excitement and express appreciation for retailers.”

The organizer, Audigier Brand Management Group, showcased the brands Ed Hardy, Christian Audigier, Smet, Cry-

stal Rock, Paco Chicano, Rock Fabulous, and C Bar A. Several fashion shows to spotlight fall 2009 looks were incorporated into the event, which featured a broad range of apparel and fashion accessory products.

Among other projects, Audigier teamed with Wholly Sheet to launch a line of Ed Hardy bedding; goods like duvet mini-sets were being offered at Macys.com by last summer and headed into Macy’s stores. By last fall, other Ed Hardy products such as beach towels, Euro shams and dec pillows were set to be tested variously at Bed Bath & Beyond, Bloomingdale’s and Dillard’s — and Wholly Sheet was preparing to extend the line into comforters. **HTT**



CHRISTIAN
AUDIGIER

U.S. Manufacturers Hail Kissell Amendment

WASHINGTON — An affiliation of U.S. textiles associations hailed the passage this month of the Kissell Amendment, a provision in the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The Kissell Amendment mandates any textiles and apparel products contracted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) be manufactured in the United States with 100% U.S. components.

The amendment was offered by freshman Congressman Larry Kissell (D-NC), who spent nearly three decades working in the hosiery industry. It extends the provisions of the Berry Amendment, which since 1941 has required the Department of Defense, for certain products judged essential to military readiness, to obtain goods that are 100% U.S. made from U.S. materials.

“Even a small contract can be the difference between a plant staying open or a plant going out.”

— **HARDY POOLE**
National Textile Association

The new amendment applies to government procurement of textiles and uniforms for the Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard, each part of DHS.

“It’s not going to be the same [impact] for every textile company in the United States, but every little bit helps,” said Martin Foyle, chairman and ceo of Tuscarora Yarns, during a press conference.

Hardy Poole, government procurement specialist for the National Textile Association, said, “When you’re seeing the retail meltdown we’re seeing today, even a small contract can be the difference between a plant staying open or a plant going out.”

Contracting officers have the right to waive the buy-American requirement if the price being offered by U.S. companies is not competitive in the U.S. market — which includes prices being offered on the same goods by foreign companies.

Proponents of the Kissell

Amendment assert the program will return over \$43 to the U.S. economy for every \$250 spent, in the form of wages, income taxes, producer profit and corporate income taxes.

The bill was championed by domestic textiles companies that

have toughed out decades of overall decline and off-shoring. “All the weak sisters in the textiles industry are long gone,” added Lloyd Wood, director of membership and media outreach for the American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition. **HTT**

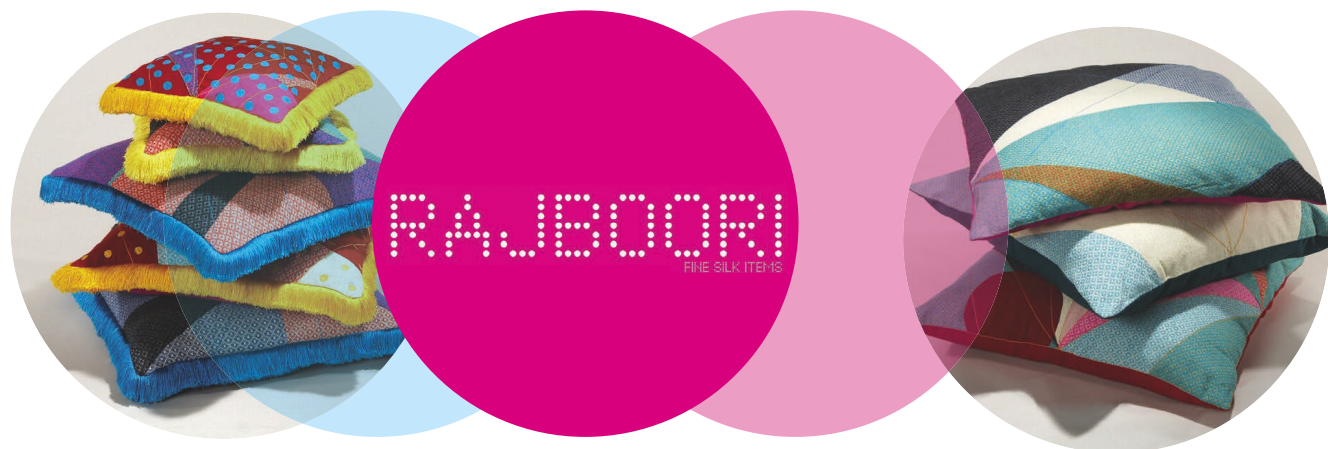
Amici Opens Showroom in Dubai

LEBANON, N.J. — Area rug and broadloom manufacturer Amici International has opened a permanent showroom in Dubai, targeting trade in Asia and to better service its overseas accounts.

“With the company’s com-

mitment to participate at Domotex Asia and our continued growth in the commercial broadloom market, it was logical to open a showroom,” commented Amici founder Jeff DeSantis. The showroom will highlight Amici’s full assortment of broadloom as well as custom Tibetan carpets.

Domotex Asia will be held March 24-26 in Shanghai; the Amici International showroom will be in space W1J30. **HTT**



NEW YORK DESIGNED CALCUTTA MADE
LUXURY ECO-SILK COLLECTION

luxe
organic silk
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HOLI QUILT—2ND PLACE WINNER OF BEST NEW PRODUCTS AT NYIGF WINTER 2009

RAJBOORI, regal, colourful, luxe, organic, hand-crafted. A new Collection of home textiles from NY Designer Stephen Burks of Readymade Projects and home textile industry veteran, Mitun Chakrabarti. Together, they have created a new brand of eco-friendly, unique, artisanal silk fabrications that are as beautiful and sustainable as they are eminently-suited for all kinds of modern living. Our Premiere Collection consists of **coverlets, quilts, pillows, duvet covers, shams** and more. **RAJBOORI** combines the intricacies of a traditional and rich weave like jacquard with the contemporary and geometric patterns in the designing of our bedding ensembles. The techniques used to create **RAJBOORI** require immense skill, patience, and dedication to create such a rare and desirable product.

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Surya Promotes King, Mortensen

CALHOUN, GA. — Surya is elevating two executives, Seth King and Al Mortensen.

King, formerly vp of business development, has been promoted to vp of sales and marketing. Mortensen, who was director of visual merchandising, now assumes the role of creative director.

Satya Tiwari, Surya president, credits King with helping the company rapidly grow and expand its product offerings and sales since he joined the team in January 2007. In his new position, King is charged with leading the company "in restructuring and implementing our overall sales and marketing strat-

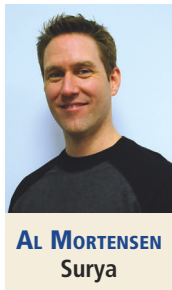


SETH KING
Surya

egy as we enter a critical period of innovation and growth," Tiwari said.

King continues to work with overseas factories for production and distribution of products, and helps develop new accessory lines. He also continues to build relationships with large retailers and wholesalers as he expands Surya's marketing department.

While at Surya over the past year, Mortensen has created award-winning market displays, point-of-purchase marketing tools and in-store displays and rack systems and has



AL MORTENSEN
Surya

planned and coordinated events and worked one-and-one with the company's clients on specific design projects.

As Surya's new creative director, Mortensen is responsible for guiding the color trends of product lines, supplying design direction in the creation of new graphics and photography, and broadening the scope of in-store merchandising. He is also charged with acting as a design liaison to Surya's major furniture dealer partners. "We've expanded his scope to include all creative areas so that we can focus greater on our customers growing needs," Tiwari said. **HTT**

AmericasMart Taps Designers for Seminars, Showcases

ATLANTA — Several designs are hosting special events and seminars during upcoming, concurrent markets — the Spring Gift, Home Furnishings & Holiday, and the International Fine Line & Home Textiles — at AmericasMart next month.

This marks the first time the Mart will create a special program with these designers to offer product showcases and discussion sessions for attendees of these two events, which are scheduled for March 14-16.

On opening day, the forum "Bedded Bliss: Industry Experts Reveal the Secrets to Sweet

Dreams and Stylish Accents" will be offered at 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in room 101A on the first floor of Building 1. Here, an ensemble of interior designers and shelter publication editors will discuss their picks for beautiful bedrooms. Participants will include Manhattan-based interior designer Suzanne Kasler, who recently partnered with Surya to create a new collection of high-end area rugs, as well as Marcia Sherrill and Suze Surdyk Jones.

At another session titled "Holiday Transitions — Keep Them Coming Back," Rebecca Bull

Reed, associate garden editor for Southern Living magazine, will demonstrate how to display and use decorative seasonal items and how they can transition from Christmas to Easter to the fall season. This event is scheduled for 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. March 14 in space 19-A-23 on the 19th floor of Building 1.

Also new will be the "AmericasMart Beautiful Bedding" vignette, set to feature new high-end linen collections from participating exhibitors. This display will be showcased all three days of the two markets on the first floor of Building 1. **HTT**

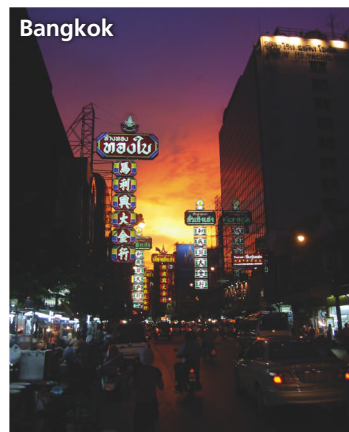
Bangkok Trade Fairs Slated for April

BANGKOK, THAILAND — The Bangkok International Gift Fair and Bangkok International Houseware Fair (BIG+BIH) are preparing to mount an April 21-26 showcase of gifts, premiums, home décor, artificial flowers and plants, handicrafts, household items, spa products, home textiles, toys, and stationery.

This will be the 27th edition of the twin shows, organized by Thailand's Department of Export Promotion, Ministry of Commerce.

Along with regular exhibitors, there will be a display of award-

winning design prototypes and a section of model homes, hotel rooms, spa and restaurant set-



Bangkok

tings and gardens, said the ministry.

Trade-only days will be April 21-24, before BIG+BIH opens to the public on April 25-26. The location is IMPACT, Muangthong Thani.

"To celebrate the Thai New Year month, many shopping centers, retail outlets, hotels and travel agencies offer special discounts and privileges to BIG+BIH visitors," the organizers said. For more information, contact Marketing Integration Co., at email: info@mi.co.th or telephone: +66 (0) 2574-6414. **HTT**

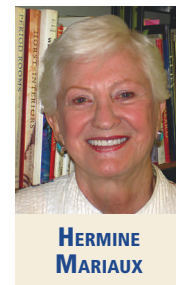
IFDA Speakers to Review Paris, New York, Cologne Fairs

NEW YORK — In a three-speaker seminar format, the New York Chapter of the International Furnishings and Design Association (IFDA) will present a trend roundup, "Trade Show Highlights from Maison & Objet, Paris, NYIGF, New York and Cologne Furniture Fair."

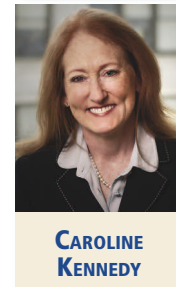
The IFDA seminar will feature three industry executives offering their insight into three major home furnishings trade shows:

Hermine Mariaux, an expert in the fields of branding and licensing and a specialist in international marketing for home furnishings companies and museums, will focus on the most current trends from Maison & Objet in Paris. Mariaux blogged from the show for *Home Textiles Today* last month.

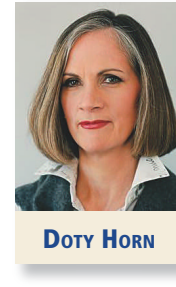
Caroline Kennedy, editor-in-chief of *Gifts and Decorative*



HERMINE MARIAUX



CAROLINE KENNEDY



DOTY HORN

Accessories magazine, will show the highlights of the latest gift markets and trends from the recent New York International Gift Fair. GDA is a sister publication to *HTT*.

Doty Horn, director of color and design for Benjamin Moore, will review the trends and furnishings she spotted at the Cologne Furniture Fair and offer an insider's guide to color clues and key influences.

Set for Tuesday morning, Feb. 24, the event will be held in the Brueton Showroom, Suite 1502 in the New York Design Center, 200 Lexington Avenue between 32nd and 33rd Streets. Continental breakfast will be offered at 8:30 a.m., followed by the program, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

To reserve, email ifdanyny@verizon.net or call at (212) 686-6020. Tickets will also be sold at the door if space is available. **HTT**

China Luxury Goods Event Set for June

NINGBO, CHINA — The sixth annual China International Consumer Goods Fair (CICGF) is set for June 8-12 in Ningbo, China.

The event is supported by the Department of Trade and Industry in Ningbo and attended by buyers and wholesalers from all regions of China.

Organizers expect 15,000 international visitors and 20,000 traders, looking for luxury goods for

their respective markets. Included in the product ranges on display will be bedding and bath, kitchen textiles, and related home décor and accessories products.

For more information, visit cicgf.com or call Chi Qiaoyu at +86-574-8717-8074.

The event is co-produced by TEMA Technologie Marketing AG; for exhibitor information contact Samson Sackett at sackett@tema.de. **HTT**

Atlanta July Market Dates Shift

ATLANTA — The AmericasMart here has announced its plans to shift the dates of its next International Gift & Home Furnishings market in July to run for an eight-day stretch. The event will now be scheduled to take place from a Wednesday through the following Wednesday.

The July 2009 market is set for

July 8-15 for the permanent showrooms, and July 10-14 for the temporary booth exhibitors.

Also up for a possible change in timetable for its July dates is the sister event, the International Area Rug Market. The AmericasMart said this market's dates are "under review for possible new scheduling." **HTT**

Bottom Falls Out of Cargo Volume

WASHINGTON — Cargo volume at the national major retail container ports is expected to drop more rapidly during the first six months of this year than it did in 2008, when volume tumbled 7.9%.

The National Retail Federation and HIS Global Insight forecast volume for the first six months of 2009 of 6.6 million TEU, down 11.8% from the 7.5 million TEU seen during the same period in 2008. One TEU is one 20-foot container or its equivalent.

Port Tracker forecasts only six months into the future, so an estimate of volume for the entire year won't be available until this summer.

Total 2008 volume was 15.2 million TEU — the lowest total

since 2004, when ports handled 14 million TEU.

"2008 was one of the most challenging years retailers have seen, and all indications are that 2009 won't be any better," said NRF vp for supply chain and customs policy Jonathan Gold. "Unfortunately, cargo volume at the ports reflects retailers' anticipated sales, and NRF expects that sales will get worse before they get better. Retailers are only going to import what they can sell."

Reflecting the grim holiday period, the study found U.S. ports processed 1.06 million TEU in December, down 13.9% from November and 17.2% from December 2007. December was the 18th month in a row to see a year-over-year decline in cargo

moving through the ports. The last month to see a year-over-year increase was July 2007, when the 1.44 million TEU moved through the ports was up 3.4% from July 2006.

"The combined influence of the recession and the usual winter slowdown will result in extremely weak February port traffic," IHS Global Insight economist Paul Bingham said. "Import container traffic is projected to be weak through June because of the underlying reduced demand during the global recession."

All U.S. ports covered by Port Tracker have been rated "low" for congestion, the same as the prior month. Those ports are Los Angeles/Long Beach, Oakland, Seattle and Tacoma on the West Coast; New York/New Jersey, Hampton Roads, Charleston and Savannah on the East Coast, and Houston on the Gulf Coast. **HTT**

Super-Union to Split

WASHINGTON — UNITE HERE, the body resulting from the 2004 merger of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, is suffering internal fissures, as leaders of a sizeable portion its U.S. membership have sued to dissolve the merger.

In essence, the textiles faction has accused the hotel group of a power and money grab.

Together, 15 vice presidents — who represent roughly 150,000 of the members — filed suit in federal court in New York for the joint boards of the former UNITE to be "released from the merger agreement and the union's constitution." The lawsuit claims that a faction "has used their majority on certain governing bodies to attack

other affiliates and their leaders and resources."

Specifically, the suit alleges the leadership of the former HERE leadership "merged with the intention of gaining access to the assets of UNITE and its affiliates, with no intention of working together as partners," and alleges "breach of the covenants of good faith and fair dealing."

"Instead of a collaborative organization built on pooled resources and mutual support, we will have a tyranny run by a faction of the board that will seize the assets built up over a hundred years by garment and textile workers," said Edgar Romney, evp and manager of the New York Metropolitan Area Joint Board of UNITE HERE. "My members did not elect me to preside over that, and we cannot allow it." **HTT**

Belk Shuffles Execs

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Southeastern regional department store operator Belk announced the retirements of Steve Pernotto, evp of human resources, and Bob Greiner, chair of Belk's Northern Division based in Raleigh, N.C., effective April 3.

The company also announced their successors and the appointments of a number of other key executives in its Northern Division and at the Belk corporate office in Charlotte, N.C.

Bill Roberts has been promoted to succeed Bob Greiner as chair of Belk Northern, reporting to Johnny Belk president and coo. Roberts joined the retailer in 2000 as svp and director of stores for Belk Northern and was named evp and gmm for men's and home at Belk's corporate office in 2004. He returned to Northern in March 2008 as svp and director of

stores. Prior to joining Belk he was president and coo of Britannica Home Fashions.

Adam Orvos is promoted to succeed Steve Pernotto as evp of human resources effective April 3, reporting to Johnny Belk.

Gary Pierce has been named to succeed Bill Roberts as svp and director of stores for Northern. He most recently served as svp and director of stores for the Belk Central Division in Charlotte. Prior to joining Belk in 1993, Pierce was vp and director of stores for 15 Dillard's stores in the Carolinas.

Jon Pollack has been named evp of marketing, sales promotion and cosmetics, reporting to Kathy Bufano, president of merchandising and marketing. Pollack joined Belk in 1985 as dmm for cosmetics and hosiery and was named evp and gmm, center core, in 2002, which

included cosmetics, accessories, intimate apparel, hosiery, children's and fine jewelry.

David Zant, evp and gmm, men's and home, has been assigned the additional responsibility for children's.

David Neri, who has served as evp and gmm of shoes for Belk since 2006, has been assigned the additional responsibility for accessories.

Mark Boerio has been named svp of planning and allocation, reporting to Amy Wooden, evp of merchandise planning and allocation and eCommerce.

Ron Shealy, who was previously svp, merchandise allocation and store process, has been named svp of the company's Parisian Integration office, reporting to Johnny Belk. In this role, Shealy will lead efforts to complete the integration of the 25 Parisian stores acquired in 2006 from Saks Incorporated. **HTT**

Foamex Files for Chapter 11

MEDIA, PA. — Polyurethane foam producer Foamex International filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on February 18, saying it hopes to restructure its debt-laden balance sheet and emerge in about six months.

The company, a major supplier for furniture and bedding producers, said it has secured \$95 million in DIP financing from Matlin Patterson Global Opportunities Partners and Bank of America, and plans to continue normal operations.

"Like many companies around the world, Foamex has been hit hard by the economic downturn in the market we serve," said Jack Johnson, president and ceo. "Although we

have reduced debt by approximately \$240 million to \$380 million over the past two years, we cannot support the existing heavy debt load in the current operating environment."

According to documents filed with U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Wilmington, Del., the largest creditor is Dow Chemical, owed \$18.1 million. Milliken & Co., a textile and chemical manufacturer, is next at \$2.9 million.

The bankruptcy filing is the company's second in recent years. Foamex filed for Chapter 11 in September 2005 and emerged in 2007. **HTT**

(Reported by Larry Thomas, business editor of *HTT* sister publication *Furniture Today*.)

Fortunoff Auction Postponed to Feb. 23

NEW YORK — A U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge postponed until this week an auction of "substantially all" the assets of home furnishings and jewelry retailer Fortunoff.

The auction, which had been scheduled for last Thursday, February 19, is now set for Monday, Feb. 23, in the offices of the Fortunoff bankruptcy counsel, Sid-

ley Austin LLP, at 787 Seventh Ave. here.

A hearing to approve the sale is scheduled the following day in the courthouse in lower Manhattan.

Following a dismal holiday selling season, Fortunoff filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Feb. 5 and has moved quickly to liquidate its assets. A so-called "stalking horse" bid-

der has not been named in documents filed with the court.

The Bankruptcy Court earlier this month granted Fortunoff access to a \$10 million loan from its chief lender, Wells Fargo. The \$10 million is to go toward approved administrative expenses of the bankruptcy, as well as the payment of certain pre-petition liabilities. **HTT**

Momeni Closes High Point Showroom

CARLSTADT, N.J. — Looking to streamline its sales efforts, upscale rug house Momeni Inc. is closing its long-time High Point, N.C. showroom.

Reza Momeni, president, said his sales staff has been "spending too much time in showrooms rather than on the road, where most of their business is built." Also working against "the influx of" markets is declining retailer

traffic at these events, he added.

"An overall assessment of our presence at the various markets came into play," he said of the decision to shut down its International Home Furnishings Center space, where Momeni has showed on the third floor for more than 10 years.

Momeni is now focused on two markets — the International Area Rug and the Las Vegas markets — in Atlanta's AmericasMart and the Las Vegas World Market Center, respectively.

Momeni is also keeping its flagship showroom at company headquarters here. **HTT**

Vendors Offer Fashion to Turn Around Top of Bed

BY JILL ROWEN

NEW YORK — Filling the half-full — or half-empty — glass in 2009 is going to take some bold fashion steps, as well as an ample dose of value-engineering, say suppliers of bedding.

The first of *HTT*'s reports on bedding, specifically the top of bed category, isn't much of a page-turner. The figures for 2008 are down as expected, in line with what the economy has recently doled out, and reflects a difficult year for retailers.

However, the results have the added effect of quickly dividing the industry into those who see their part as a glass half full and those who see it half empty.

The market seems to be diverging into vying for the consumer haves and have-nots. While prices are coming down to attract a bargain shopper, vendors are also tweaking high-end collections to catch the eye of the buyer with an affluent consumer in mind.

For 2008 overall, top of bed accounted for approximately \$2.67 billion in sales, down more than 13% from \$3.09 billion in 2007. No product category avoided the downward plunge,

HTT research shows, though bedspreads and coverlets took less of a lashing, thanks to a still relatively strong fashion shift toward simpler beds.

The biggest loss was in comforter sets. Inventory, or oversupply, was a major issue in this subcategory, as chain store closings left many vendors with more product than retail doors available. And the heyday of megapiece comforter sets seems to be waning from the point of view of consumer preference, suppliers said.

Vendors resigned to the new economic reality have one thing in minds going forward — getting a customer's attention. Bright colors and bold looks are the key to getting out of the doldrums, they note.

"If something with great texture and color catches your eye, you may buy it," noted Carol Antone, creative director, Peking Handicraft. She said of the consumer mindset, "If you already have a basic, you're going to use it until it falls apart."

At the last market, Peking Handicraft showcased new techniques with lots of novelty looks and color, though they are admit-

tedly "sharpening our costs," said Antone.

The company is also looking at quilts, a category which was down significantly in 2007 as that trend cycle sputtered. This time around, the quilt trend is taking new shape. Modern "flea-market" looks that appeal to high-end buyers and to trendy upscale stores like Anthropologie are showing some resurgence. It's not your grandmother's quilt anymore. "Traditional patchwork quilts are only a small part of the market," she noted.

"People still have some money, but they are being particular," said Jesse Galili, vp sales, Hallmart Collectibles. Noting that passing off "50-piece comforter sets for a song" doesn't attract customers as reliably as it used to, Galili said fashion and color have to be added to the mix to get people shopping. For Hallmart, high-end looks featuring unique embroidery details in its Kathy Ireland line are doing well, he said.

Hallmart is paying attention to its value pricing, but Galili warned, "Retailers shouldn't fall into the trap of selling more of what they sold before. There needs to be better fashion and

color in the stores."

David Greenstein, president, Homestead, reported that the company's turnkey approach has helped it weather the current storm. "We provide all-home solutions to our customers in design, development, market sourcing," he said. "It sets us apart and I think we have many clients who are looking to us for that reason, especially in these difficult times."

Scott Howard, vp sales, JLA, stated the strategy going forward simply: "To get the consumer to move forward, you've got to catch their attention." The company is doing that fully on the high-end side with its Natori brand, which he said is performing very well in spite of economic forecasts. Howard observed that the retail pie has shrunk, which is all the more reason vendors have to turn toward fashion to stand out from the crowd.

"When times are difficult, you need people focused and watching," concurred Dean Davaros, vp sales, Sunham. "You have to have the goods and the price points and strike a good balance. We are consistently good in our designs and colorations across all categories. It looks great and it sells. Ultimately, we're partners and if retailers don't do well, we don't do well," said Davaros.

That may never have been truer than in 2008, when the bad news from retailers kept coming. Home textile specialty chains, department stores and even closeout chains took hits with the demise of Linens 'n Things, a staggering Fortunoff, the exit of Mervyns, and troubled National Wholesale Liquidators and Filene's Basement.

Still, the half-full folks don't see it all as doom and gloom.

"Yes, all those retail doors closed," said Galili, "But, the customers haven't disappeared. The economy will certainly keep some customers away, but most will find new ways to shop."

Larry Queen, president, AQ Textiles, predicts a significant strategy shift — and new opportunities — for a range of retailers. "I think you'll see department stores trying to lower their prices to reach more consumers," he said. On the other hand, Queen sees potential for off-pricers such as Ross Stores and T.J. Maxx to gain new ground. "I think they'll be able to raise their prices, and take on some of the higher-end goods that others will be leaving behind."

HTT research revealed sales growth in top of bed products for just two channels of distribution: off-price chains, gaining by a convincing 29.2%, and warehouse clubs, inching up by 2.1%.

Online retailing is also still showing strength, vendors say, although total direct-to-consumer volume, which include catalog merchants, was down 6.7% in 2008. "If you're really price conscious, you'd rather sit at a computer looking up what you want, rather than driving around to gather that information — it's all in front of you," said Sunham's Davaros.

Calling himself an optimist, Davaros sees a turnaround coming soon. "I think we'll turn a corner in the first quarter. But, the fear factor could take a while for the turnaround to show up on spreadsheets," he said.

No doubt the entire industry is looking for a quick, and positive, a resolution. **HTT**

Top of Bed			(\$millions)		
Categories	2008	2007	CHANGE	% OF TOTAL 2008	% OF TOTAL 2007
Comforter sets/bedding sets	\$1,575.30	\$1,860	-15.3%	59.0%	60.1%
Comforters	\$491.28	\$565	-13.0%	18.4%	18.3
Bedspreads/coverlets	\$176.22	\$185	-4.7%	6.6%	6.0
Duvet covers	\$64.08	\$74	-13.4%	2.4%	2.4
Quilts	\$363.12	\$410	-11.4%	13.6%	13.3
Total	\$2,670.0	\$3,094.0	-13.7%	100.0%	100.0%
Distribution Channels	2008	2007	CHANGE	2008	2007
Home textiles specialty chains	\$320.4	\$498.0	-35.7%	12.0%	16.1%
Single-unit home textiles specialty stores	\$66.7	\$83.0	-19.6%	2.5%	2.7
Department stores	\$154.9	\$185.0	-16.3%	5.8%	6.0
Mid-price chains	\$520.6	\$619.0	-15.9%	19.5%	20.0
Discount dept. stores	\$1,121.4	\$1,207.0	-7.1%	42.0%	39.0
Off-price chains	\$120.2	\$93.0	29.2%	4.5%	3.0
Variety/closeout	\$96.1	\$124.0	-22.5%	3.6%	4.0
Direct-to-consumer	\$173.6	\$186.0	-6.7%	6.5%	6.0
Warehouse clubs	\$69.4	\$68.0	2.1%	2.6%	2.2
Other	\$26.7	\$31.0	-13.9%	1.0%	1.0
Total	\$2,670.0	\$3,094.0	-13.7%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: HTT research

METHODOLOGY

In determining product category sales figures, as well as determining retail sales for those categories by channel of distribution, the editors and research department of *Home Textiles Today* used data compiled from a variety of sources, including publicly filed financial reports, vendor sales information compiled by the editors, and information provided by retailers and home fashions suppliers.

Home Textiles Today will produce a series of three reports on bedding, of which this is the first, breaking the overall bedding category into three of its component parts: Top of The Bed; Utility Bedding, Blankets and Throws; and Sheets & Pillowcases.

The research was compiled by editorial contributor Jill Rowen; Dana French, director of market research; and Jennifer Marks, editor-in-chief.

Peking Handicraft Bows Animal Dec Pillows

SAN FRANCISCO — Home décor and furnishings supplier Peking Handicraft Inc. is offering a new perspective on the animal-skin trend with a collection of wool hooked decorative pillows.

The collection features close-up profile images of different animals — koi fish, zebras, giraffes, leopards and roosters — with each creature's eye as the focal point.

The pillows are constructed of 100% hooked wool and come as 18-inch squares. They are set to retail for \$48. **HTT**



AFC Home Enters Infant and Juvenile Market

NEW YORK — AFC Home Fashions has expanded into infant and juvenile with a line of fleece products.

In the infant category, AFC offers a fleece blanket along with a plush animal. The blanket is rolled in bundle and the animal's arms encircle the blanket. The giftable combo is available in two blanket sizes. The plush with 30-inch-by-

40-inch blanket retails for \$7; retail is about \$10 for the 50-inch-by-60-inch blanket.

Another new offering is a gift pack containing a small fleece pillow with embroidery along with an embroidered 30x40-inch blanket. The set retails for \$12.

"Now that the economy is bad people are looking for lower prices," said Frank Chen,

owner of the Xindao City-based manufacturer.

Chen opened AFC's New York showroom at 261 Fifth Ave. a year ago. The company's primary product category is soft window treatments, but AFC also produces quilts and top of bed. In bedding, the company recently introduced microfiber sheet sets that can retail under \$10. **HTT**

Huntsman Trims Costs, Ramps Up Asia Focus

BASEL, SWITZERLAND — Textile dye and chemical producer Huntsman said its Textile Effects division has completed its restructuring, with a new focus on Asian markets.

"The sales and customer support organization in Asia is now the largest in Textile Effects, consistent with the latest trends in market requirements as well

as current forecasts of future business development potential," the company stated.

Some research and technology assets have been relocated to the division's Panyu, China facility, while a team in Mumbai, India is also being expanded. These moves coincide with what the company called "a major consolidation of the division's sales

offices and laboratories" ... "taking place in many countries."

Meanwhile, Huntsman said, "the division has suspended production for up to seven weeks at its largest site," in Basel, where one-third of the workforce will work a short-time schedule.

With all factors included, Huntsman, expects to achieve \$60 million in annual savings. **HTT**

Waites, Boyd to Decorate Japan Show House

NEW YORK — U.S. designers Raymond Waites and Eileen Kathryn Boyd will participate in the inaugural designer house show being put on next week by the new International Home Furnishings and Design association chapter in Japan.

The show will open March 4 in Yokohama City, Japan, and will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the city as a major seaport. The house selected is a Spanish style mansion, designed by American architect H. Morang Hall in 1930 for the London-born owner of Berrick Trading. The historic landmark

now belongs to the city.

Waites will transform the master bedroom and sun porch. Boyd will design the den and bath. Both are conferring with designer workrooms in Japan, which will handle the installations.

"This event promises to be a very good introduction to the show house concept in Japan and something we intend to build on in the years to come," said Yasue Ishikawa, president of IFDA Japan.

The show house can be viewed at yokohamadsh.web.fc2.com. **HTT**

IFDA Honors Chris Madden

KING OF PRUSSIA, PA. — For her "Operation Cozy Comfort," in which she sent hundreds of blankets to wounded American soldiers in Iraq, designer Chris Madden was recently honored with a presidential commendation from the International Furnishings and Design Association.

The tribute came from Dave Gilbert, who made it his last official act as the 2008 president of IFDA, a worldwide professional alliance of residential and commercial furnishings and design industry players.

Madden, whose branded home textiles line is sold at JCPenney, was contacted by Blue Star Mothers of America Inc. to help provide a "softer

touch of home" to wounded soldiers in Iraq. She approached her blanket vendor, WestPoint Home, for a donation of Chris Madden-branded plush twin blankets, of which ultimately 500 were sent to the Air Force Hospital in Iraq.



CHRIS MADDEN

The IFDA commendation to Chris Madden read, in part, "For your efforts to bring comfort to those who sacrifice on our behalf, we salute you."

Madden responded, "Despite these tumultuous and difficult economic times, it remains vital that we

continue to be vigilant in our philanthropic efforts to help those causes and organizations that are near and dear to our hearts." **HTT**

Maholi Bows Bamboo Line

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA — Maholi Inc., a manufacturer of sheets and down duvets and pillows, has come up with a new take on bamboo bedding products.

The company's recently released Damask Stripe collection is a 100% bamboo collection of sheet sets and duvet sets. Damask Stripe represents a new design direction in this natural fiber, which typically results in solid-colored products.

Maholi's staff in Shanghai,

where the company owns and operates a sheet production factory, came up with a technique that both reduces waste and creates a damask stripe look on bamboo sheets and duvets, explained Jiani Wang of Maholi.

The suggested retail price point for sheet sets or duvet sets ranges from \$150 to \$200. The collection just hit specialty stores in Toronto this winter — and Maholi is looking to expand its distribution into the United States this year. **HTT**

Stein Mart Shoppers Aid Salvation Army Cause

JACKSONVILLE, FLA. — Stein Mart has partnered with The Salvation Army for the second consecutive year in the national “Give & Receive” event, with the retailer giving shoppers discounts for bringing in apparel donations.

The event — set for March 5-7 at Stein Mart — comes in a critical time for the Salvation Army, which is experiencing at its Thrift and Family Stores as much as a 20% decline in donations over last year.

While supplies last, Stein Mart is offering 20% discounts on any item for donated “gently used garments in good condition.” There is a limit of four coupons per person, but shoppers can donate as many pieces of clothing they can or would like to. Tax receipts are available for donations.

“During these difficult economic times, the services that The Salvation Army provides our com-

munities have never been more important,” said Jay Stein, chairman of Stein Mart. “It’s rewarding to see our loyal customers join us in our efforts to support this valued organization.”

Last year, Stein Mart customers donated more than 400,000 pieces of clothing during the event. All proceeds from the Thrift and Family Stores directly support The Salvation Army’s Adult Rehabilitation Centers.

“The economic downturn has meant that people are keeping their gently used items longer so we are seeing fewer donations to our thrift and family stores,” said Major George Hood, The Salvation Army’s national community relations and development secretary. “This means that we have fewer goods to sell and therefore less funding for our life-changing programs. Stein Mart’s support, and that of their shoppers, is vital to our service.” **HTT**

Wal-Mart Results

WAL-MART FROM PAGE 1

Food sales drove the business, but the chain also saw an uptick in parts of home, according to Eduardo Castro-Wright, vice chairman.

“There is one major behavior change we’ve seen during the past year that has had a significant impact on our home busi-

ness. Families are definitely eating more often at home. While we expect this to have a positive impact on grocery, we also have seen increased comps in home categories for cooking, dining and entertaining at home,” he said.

Sam’s Club sales for the fourth quarter were flat at approximately \$11.8 billion, with comps up 2.5%. Operating income fell 3.8% to \$427 million.

Holiday sales were soft even though traffic was positive every month during the quarter. Average ticket, excluding fuel, declined slightly.

Wal-Mart International saw sales slump 8.4% to \$24.7 billion, with currency exchange rates impacting results. China (6.2%) and Brazil (up 7.3%) posted the strongest fourth-quarter sales.

Consolidated corporate sales for the fourth quarter rose 1.7% to approximately \$108 billion. Comps rose 2.8% compared to a 1.7% bump in comps during the previous fiscal year. Profits fell 7.4% to \$3.79 billion, or 96 cents per share.

For the year, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. generated profit of \$13.4 billion on total revenues of \$405.6 billion (including retail sales of \$401.2 billion). Comps rose 3.5%, including fuel. Without fuel, comp rose 0.2%.

The company expects earnings per share for the first quarter of 72 to 77 cents. For the full year, Wal-Mart expects to generate EPS of \$3.45 to \$3.60. **HTT**

WAL-MART STORES, INC.			
QTR. 1/31 (MILLIONS)	2009	2008	%CHANGE
Sales	\$107,996a	\$106,208a	1.7
Oper. Income (EBIT)	6,377	6,876	(7.3)
Net income	3,792	4,096	(7.4)
Per share (diluted)	0.96	1.02	(5.8)
Average gross profit	23.5%	23.5%	—
SG&A expenses	18.6%	18.1%	—
FISCAL YEAR			
Sales	\$401,244a	\$374,307a	7.2
Oper. Income (EBIT)	22,798	21,952	3.9
Net income	13,400	12,731	5.3
Per share (diluted)	3.39	3.13	8.3
Average gross profit	23.7%	23.5%	—
SG&A expenses	19.1%	18.7%	—
a. Sales. Does not include revenues from membership and other income.			

Wal-Mart de Mexico in Expansion

MEXICO CITY — Wal-Mart de Mexico, which now operates 1,208 retail locations in five retail (and one restaurant) formats, plans to open 252 new stores in 2009, an investment of \$11.8 billion pesos, or about \$798 million.

In a statement by Eduardo Solórzano, ceo of Wal-Mart de Mexico, the division of Wal-Mart International said its 2009 plan represents a 4% increase than the 2008 investment in expansion — and projected a 15% in “new direct jobs,” or as many as 14,500 new positions.

Solórzano stated, “Our 2009 investment plan will allow us to take the savings offer that characterizes us to more rural and urban populations, providing them with a wide variety of goods at every day low prices.”

The 2009 store opening plan includes: 225 Bodega Aurrerá units; 13 Walmarts; 4 Superamas; 7 Sam’s Club; and 3 Suburbia stores

These units represent a sales floor growth of 10%, the company said. **HTT**

JCP Home Goals

JCPENNEY FROM PAGE 1

three years. We may see a better trend going forward, although until the housing crisis is fixed on a macro basis it will be hard to see great increases.”

Revenues of \$5.76 billion for the fourth quarter ended Jan. 31 were down 9.8% from \$6.39 billion in the year-ago period. For the full year, sales of \$18.5 billion fell 6.9% from \$19.9 billion in the prior year.

Quarterly net profit of \$211 million, or 95 cents per diluted share, was down 51% from \$430

million, or \$1.93 EPS in the same quarter one year ago.

For the year, profit of \$572 million, or \$2.57 EPS, was off 48% from \$1.11 billion, or \$4.93 EPS last year.

Potentially aiding JCP’s improvements in home are the chain’s recent efforts to court former customers of the now defunct Linens ‘n Things and Mervyns stores. “We are very aggressively looking at what vendors they were doing business with and what customers were relying on them as their retailer of choice,” Ullman said. “We’ve been successful in recruiting those customers to our format. It’s a little early to say what the over-

all impact would be, but clearly a little bit of an up-tick in trend when we were [geographically] head-to-head with those stores and they are now closed.”

JCP shared proximity with about 57 former Mervyns units. But because LNT was mainly an off-mall format, “it’s been more difficult” for JCP to correlate the direct impact of those closings with increased traffic and sales on like merchandise.

Hicks said JCP is aggressively going after those shoppers. “We know the products which were successful at...LNT and we put some of those products in our stores which we did not have. And we are working closely with the vendors from each of those, knowing the locations and the items and making sure we are working to pick up,” he said.

JCP is “starting to see some good results from some of our larger vendors as well as some of our private brands,” Hicks added. “We’ve stepped up our messaging in those markets and were seeing the benefit of that.”

During the fourth quarter, JCP’s best performing category was apparel, “where our sales trends were once again stronger than our competitors,” Hicks said, particularly in women’s apparel and family shoes.

Quarterly results, Hicks said, reflect lower mall traffic at holiday and weaker-than-expected January sales.

Good news from the period came via a 10.5% reduction in inventories and “tightly controlled operating expenses,” which JCP said it reduced by more than \$400 million.

This helped offset expense increases from the 113 new stores opened since 2006 and 17 new stores planned for 2009.

JCP was able to “effectively clear through seasonal merchandise and end the year with a clean inventory position,” Hicks said.

For spring, JCP remains “pretty positive” about its apparel and sportswear assortments, and expects the lagging American Living program to continue on its recently improved path. But the retailer remains guarded.

“We see opportunities, but we also see the environment being difficult,” Ullman said. “Mall traffic still continues to be down 6% to 8% a week. We’re doing better than that in our mall stores and even better than that in our off-mall stores. But the customer is being very tentative. They are buying what they need and being smart about how they spend their money — it’s not irrational.” **HTT**

J.C. PENNEY COMPANY, INC.			
QTR. 1/31 (MILLIONS)	2009	2008	%CHANGE
Sales	\$5,759	\$6,390	(9.8)%
Oper. Income (EBIT)	389	729	(46.6)
Net income	211	430	(50.9)
Per share (diluted)	0.95	1.93	(50.8)
Average gross profit	34.6%	36.2%	—
SG&A expenses	25.8%	23.2%	—
FISCAL YEAR			
Sales	\$18,486	\$19,860	(6.9)%
Oper. Income (EBIT)	1,135	1,888	(39.9)
Net income	572	1,111	(48.5)
Per share (diluted)	2.57	4.93	(47.9)
Average gross profit	37.4%	38.6%	—
SG&A expenses	29.2%	27.2%	—
(loss)			

Revman to Debut Incog-Neato Leak-Proof Pads

NEW YORK — Revman International will produce Incog-Neato wet-protection bed pads licensed by mother and inventor Tammy Cheskis; the line combines rub-

ideas for new uses I haven't even thought of," she said.

Winning a 2008 iParenting Media award attracted the attention of diversified home textiles product manufacturer



berized fabrics with flannel prints.

The "cheerful decorative prints" help this leak-proof juvenile line stand out, Revman said. Cheskis is working with Revman designers to create a signature look — and to meet what they call "the growing retail demand for her product."

Cheskis has been selling the pads on her website, www.incog-neato.com and said they are being used beyond the bed, in such functions as protecting car seats and furniture from wet bathing suits, to pet beds, play mats, changing pads, and as wheelchair protectors.

"People constantly send me

Revman.

Richard Roman, president and ceo of Revman International, said, "We are pleased to be able to work with Tammy to bring this new and innovative product to the retail market and feel that its many possible uses will extend its appeal for many seasons to come."

Revman will show the launch collection at the New York Home Fashions Market, March 9-13. Goods will start shipping in May, the company said, noting the collection will feature not only juvenile designs, but also "solid color styles suitable for adults, as well as designs specifically targeted for pets." **HTT**

Hohenstein Institute Opens U.S. Headquarters

ELON, N.C. — Textile research and testing laboratory Hohenstein Institute, based near Stuttgart, Germany, has established Hohenstein Institute America, Inc. here in response to its growing U.S. customer base.

Hohenstein America offices here will provide in-country support to U.S. textile products manufacturers, sourcers, and retailers, the company said.

"The U.S. market drives the global textile industry," said Hohenstein Institute director Dr. Stefan Mecheels. "Hohenstein America will provide U.S. companies with personal service and easy access to Hohenstein's full range of product development, testing and certification services."

Hohenstein America will be

led by Samuel Moore. "As consumers demand more and more from their textile products, a differentiated technical sales story becomes even more critical for success in a competitive marketplace," says Moore.

Among its services, Hohenstein provides materials testing and certification for textile safety, UV protection, antimicrobial effectiveness, and FR performance, as well as comparative and competitive product testing.

As a founding member of the International Oeko-Tex Association, Hohenstein also provides Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certification, and is certified by the Consumer Products Safety Commission as a third-party, independent laboratory for CPSIA compliance verification. **HTT**

CHF, Alex Bow Line at Toy Fair

NEW YORK — Toy company Alex partnered with diversified home textiles producer CHF Industries to introduce the ALEX Home collection at the American International Toy Fair, earlier this month at the Javits Center here.

Alex is known for its creative children's products; its line of more than 1,000 items encourage imaginative play and crafts projects. Alex products are sold to the upscale specialty market through retail stores, catalogs and Internet sites in more than 80 countries.

CHF previewed the line to home textiles retailers at market last September, and will now provide toy buyers a chance to get in on the debut.

The launch collection will feature the new "Moody Monsters" — a theme Alex is introducing this year at the Toy Fair. The line will include a collection of bedding and bath items inspired by the Moody Monsters concept, which was designed to



Moody Monsters look launches the Alex Home collection from CHF Industries.

help children get over their bedtime fears by "channeling their inner monster."

Moody Monsters bedding products will include sheeting, comforters, sleeping bags and dec pillows. Bath items are designed for kids to play with in the tub. In addition, CHF will launch a line of interactive room accessories provide play

for children while also giving decorative and storage solutions to their parents.

Nurit Amdur, ceo of Alex, said his company partner with CHF "because of their mutual interest in bringing innovative products to the marketplace."

CHF evp Joan Karron noted that CHF "has a soft spot for quality kids' products." **HTT**

Thorndike Mills Debuts Artist Susan Branch's Line

PALMER, MASS. — Family-owned-and-operated braided and hooked rug company Thorndike Mills has partnered with Martha's Vineyard artist Susan Branch to create a collection of rugs, chair pads and decorative pillows that targets gift retailers.

The Home Sweet Home collection is a wool, hand-hooked assortment in two sizes of rugs — a 2-foot-by-3-foot accent and a 2-foot-6-inch-by-4-foot oval — as well as 15-inch square chair pads and 18-inch square decorative pillows.

All the pieces will don Branch's watercolor artwork, which spans many familial themes, like home; cooking, childcare, the four seasons, "and all the little things in life," Branch said.

The product will be ready for delivery to retail in April, said Karen Garabedian, Thorndike's national sales manager. The collection is made to match to Branch's existing fabric lines and other products.

Branch, a self-taught artist and author of 14 hand-written and water-colored books pub-

lished since 1986, has licensed her work to other product categories, including fabrics, fine china, stationery, pajamas, and her annual calendar.

"The designs are diversified, but all share that common Susan Branch signature style," said Mitchell Garabedian, president. "There are patterns for those that are drawn to a more nautical feel, such as Summer Day, to designs that appeal to the home baker, such as Cupcakes."

There is also a holiday line in the works. **HTT**

High Point Hotels Cut Rates for April Market

HIGH POINT, N.C. — The High Point Market Authority has succeeded in persuading some local hotels to reduce their rates and minimum-stay restrictions for the spring market.

HPMA said regular room rates have dropped 15% on average, and by as much as 25% at some hotels. HPMA said half of the hotels it contracts with have reduced rates for the April

market, while another 17% also eased their minimum-stay requirements.

At least 20 of the hotels listed on the HPMA website have no minimum-stay requirements — and none requires more than a three-night minimum. Hotels taking part in a new hotel partner program are listed on the Market site at www.highpoint-market.org.

"We continue to look for ways to provide affordable accommodations for our Market guests, particularly in light of current economic conditions," said Brian Casey, president and ceo, HPMA.

The new rate cuts are offered in addition to the Authority's existing sub-block program, which offers savings to market-goers for early bookings. **HTT**

PEOPLE Today

Revman's Roman is HFPA President-elect

NEW YORK — The Home Fashion Products Association has announced the election of a president-elect, four new members to the board of directors, and the re-election of three directors to new two-year terms.

Richard Roman, head of Revman International, was selected as president-elect; his term will begin Jan. 1, 2010.

Gretchen Dale, Loftex USA; Ed Greenberg, Pem-America, Inc.; Andrew Riesel, Richloom Fabrics Group; and Keith Sorge-

loos, Home Source International were elected by the membership to serve on the board of directors for two-year terms.

Re-elected to serve were Frank Foley, CHF Industries; Jeff Hollander, Hollander Home Fashions; and Tom Merriman, Mohawk Home.

Continuing on the board



RICH ROMAN
Revman

along with Roman are Steve Elias, Louisville Bedding; Nancy Golden, WestPoint Home; Carl Goldstein, S. Lichtenberg; Mark Grand, Peking Handicraft; Bob Hamilton, Welspun; Carl Legreca, Croscill Home; Barry Leonard, Ex-Cell Home Fashions and Glenoit LLC; Thomas O'Connor, Springs Global USA; and Stephen Palmer, United Feather & Down. **HTT**

Sears Marketer West Honored by NRF

WASHINGTON — The Retail Advertising and Marketing Association has named Ric West, divisional vp, Sears Holdings, as the newest member of its Retail Advertising Hall of Fame.

Prior to joining Sears, West spent 13 years at Best Buy, including a stint as marketing vp. His first role in retail was with Coast to Coast Stores, a "mom and pop" hardware franchisor.

West has been actively engaged with RAMA, a division of the National Retail Federation, for 24 years, serving as a board member as well as chair-

man and vice chairman. He championed RAMA's regional events called the Action-Taker series and helped advance interactions of chief marketing officers from around the country through RAMA's DecisionMaker series.

"Ric is an industry veteran who has made a living out of connecting with shoppers through creativity and branding," said RAMA executive director Mike Gatti. West



RIC WEST
Sears Holdings

will accept the award Feb. 26 at the RACie Awards dinner to be held during the RAMA Retail Advertising Conference in Las Vegas. **HTT**

Textiles Product Winners Honored

NEW YORK — More than 120 entries were judged in the New York Home Textiles Market Week Best New Product Awards, and the overall, or Best of Market, winner was New York-based Dixie Reinhardt Fine Linens, for its Private Collection hand-embroidered pillows made of Italian linen.

The category winners and runners-up:

- **Bed:** V Rugs & Home (Miami) for the Monet duvet cover, made of 100% linen with handmade flowers and mother of pearl. Finalists: Rajboori Luxury Home Textiles (Vancouver, B.C., Canada), Holi Quilt; and Schlossberg of Switzerland (Clinton, N.J.), Schlossberg Papillon print duvet.

- **Bath:** Schlossberg of Switzerland (Clinton, N.J.), Sensitive towel, made of cradle-to-cradle certified hand-plucked Egyptian long staple cotton and vegetable dyes. Finalists: Espalma by Cobra (New York), Art Deco bath ensemble; and John Matouk & Co. (New York), Orlo towel collection.

- **Dining:** VDS/Alexandra Turpault (Woodland Hills, Calif.), Hannah tablecloth, made of 100% linen with unique color and embroidery. Finalists: Libeco Home (New York), Fjord tablecloth; and Shades of India (Noida, U.P., India), Cambria Orchid napkin tie.

- **Home Accessories:** The Concept Collection (Punta Gorda, Fla.), Traces of Yellow collection



Presenting the Home Textiles Market Week January 2009 Best New Product Awards are (front row, from left) Penny Sikalis, GLM vp, and Danielle Johnson, sales manager of At Home featuring Home Textiles, honoring Dixie Reinhardt, co-owner of Dixie Reinhardt Fine Linens; Jens Sondergaard, owner of The Concept Collection; and Valerie Villanueva, U.S. sales coordinator of VDS/Alexandre Turpault; along with (back row, from left) Nitin Ramani, co-owner of Dixie Reinhardt Fine Linens; Mariano Michelli, vp, and Rafael Velazquez, president, both of V Rugs & Home; and Christoph Kull, president of Schlossberg of Switzerland.

of pillows and throws, made of 100% wool. Finalists: Anupama (Montreal), CC 50 on cotton; and Malaika by Luxe Brands International (Oakville, Ont., Canada), Smocked toss pillow from the Luxor Silk Collection.

"Creativity and innovation are more important than ever in today's challenging business environment, so we're thrilled to see so many exciting new introductions at this market" said Penny Sikalis, vp at show producer GLM.

Criteria in the judging included innovation in design;

creative use of materials/construction; and new fiber, material or technology.

The judges were: Jenny Heinzen York, editor-in-chief, *Home Accents Today*; Jennifer Marks, editor-in-chief, *Home Textiles Today*; John Saxtan, editorial director, Talcott Publications (representing *Home Fashion & Furniture Trends*); Julie M. Smith, editorial director, *Design & Décor*; Wanda Jankowski, editor-in-chief, *LDB Interior Textiles*; and David Gill, senior editor, textiles, housewares, bedding, *HFN*. **HTT**

J.R. United Taps Enders for Sales

MIAMI — Bedding, bath and kitchen textiles supplier J.R. United recently appointed Kevin Enders vp of sales.

A 20-year veteran of the retail and wholesale segments of the home textiles industry, Enders most recently founded and operated his own young men's denim brand and private label athletic apparel line.

Prior to that, he held several top executive posts at Foot Locker Inc. in New York City.

And before that, from 1989 to 1998, he spent nine years working for now-defunct May Co., where he held many posi-

tions — including buyer of decorative home and gift housewares.

Now based in South Florida, Enders is charged with managing all of the company's retail accounts and product categories.

He reports to Salo Grosfeld, president and ceo, who said Enders brings "an extensive retail background that helps us understand what retailers in today's tough environment are going through so that we can create the right product and offer the right service to them."

HTT

New Showrooms Open for Market at 7 West

NEW YORK — In time for the upcoming New York Home Fashions Market in March, six new permanent showrooms and several new exhibitors will showcase their wares at home accents mart 7 W New York.

The six new showrooms are for: Createx Corporation; Devgiri Exports; K.K.P. Fine Linens; Kensington Home Fash-

ions; Orian Rugs, Inc.; and Safdie International.

New exhibitors at the mart also include: Design Weave; Faze Three Limited; Indo Count; Nanshing America; Sinomax-USA; and United Weavers.

The building is located at 7 West 34th St., just west of 5th Avenue. **HTT**

Pendleton Kicks Off Centenary Celebration

PORTLAND, ORE. — In recognition of reaching its 100th year in business, six-generation family owned and operated domestic blanket and fabric weavers Pendleton Woolen Mills is creating commemorative home and apparel collections for launch this fall.

Under its “Weaving America’s Spirit Since 1909” yearlong celebration, which started Feb. 16, Pendleton is celebrating this milestone with new product collections and special events. The kick-off came with a re-dedication of the original mill site here.

“This is a time of both reflection of the many stories, successes and challenges over the decades, as well as our Pacific Northwest company’s influence on American fashion and home products. It is also a time to look ahead as we enter a new century for our company,” said Mort Bishop III, president.

“Our challenge in the sixth generation is to engage a new generation of consumers... We are positioned well for the next 100 years and look forward to continuing to design and weave not only the American icon and treasure – the Indian trade blanket – but our full collection of Pendleton womenswear, menswear and home products,” said Bishop.

New to the exhibit here are additions to the Heritage Collection to honor CMB Jr. – a fourth generation family member. It features his personal collection of authentic American Indian artifacts.

Pendleton’s new product launches for the fall include a collection of home and apparel goods that feature the special “Spirit of the Peoples” pattern created for the anniversary, including a commemorative Indian Trade blanket.

The company will also release a Holiday 2009 collection by NBC’s Today Show Animal Welfare Reporter Jill Rappaport. Titled the “Pendleton by Jill Rappaport Collection,” it will include coats, status bags, and other dog products that features designs inspired by three antique Indian trade blanket patterns. Proceeds will benefit the American Indian College Fund and the Jack & Jill Foundation, an affiliation with Tails

of Home for educating pet owners on medical advancements, the company said.

Pendleton’s commemorative collections will be sold at specialty stores, department stores and through Pendleton own retail stores, catalog and online stores beginning in July. **HTT**

Texlynx Adds Positions in United States, Pakistan

LAHORE, PAKISTAN — Texlynx is adding to its team as it looks to expand its reach in a turbulent market.

The company recently hired Mike Proloux as evp, development and international sourcing. He was previously country manager in China for Revman

International. Proloux will be based in the United States.

The company has hired Shahbaz Sumar as evp to oversee business development in the regions of Europe, Middle East, Far East, and Africa. He was formerly director at Mohammad Farooq Textiles

in Karachi.

Vice president Shahab Ahmed has been transferred to create another business development unit for the regions of North, South, and Central America.

Sumar and Ahmed will be based in Pakistan. **HTT**



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BUSINESS Today

Wal-Mart Cuts 700 HQ Jobs

BY JAMES MAMMARELLA

BENTONVILLE, ARK. — Merchandising, marketing, real estate and support jobs here have been cut — between 700 and 800 received their pink slips on February 10 as Wal-Mart Stores Inc. made reductions it said fit its strategic goals.

Wal-Mart spokesman David Tovar told *HTT* the company was at the same time planning

to increase the head count in its New York apparel and fashion office. Tovar said the retailer will shift more of “the buying and planning function from Bentonville to New York.”

Linda Heffner remains as evp home. Tovar noted that the positions eliminated range from buyer up through most levels, but not into the vice president level. Walmart U.S., Sam’s Club, and Wal-Mart

Stores Inc. corporate staff each took their share of position cuts.

Tovar emphasized that Wal-Mart still will hire new employees “in the tens of thousands” during 2009 — the company added 33,800 jobs in the U.S. last year — and plans to open 125 to 140 new stores in the U.S., mainly supercenters. He told *HTT*, “Our store and club growth plans are still the same.” **HTT**

Crown Crafts Swings to Loss on Goodwill Impairment

GONZALES, LA. — A \$9.0 million goodwill impairment charge, triggered by the decline in the company’s market capitalization, pressed Crown Crafts Inc. into a third quarter loss of \$8.2 million.

The Q3 loss was 88 cents on a per share basis. In the same period last year, the company recorded net income of \$1.2 million, or 12 cents per diluted share.

The company stressed, “The impairment charge did not re-

sult in any cash expenditures and did not affect the company’s cash position, cash flows from operating activities or availability under its credit facility.”

Randall Chestnut, chairman, president and ceo of the infant and juvenile products maker, noted, “Although we regret the need to record such a sizeable charge to our goodwill, we are convinced that our business model, our focus on cost controls, and our strong cash posi-

tion will keep us in an excellent competitive position to manage through this economic downturn and subsequently benefit from its recovery. Notably, year-to-date EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) for the current year was \$6.3 million, up from \$5.5 million in the prior year, and we continue to generate strong cash flow.”

Quarterly sales of \$19.3 million were up 4.9% from \$18.4 million in the year-ago period, reflecting the positive impact of the baby products line Crown Crafts acquired last year from Springs Global. **HTT**

January Sales Fell 11%, Home Down 14%

Jan. Sales Beat December - Except in Home

WASHINGTON — Retail trade sales in January 2009 were 1.1% above December levels, but fell 11.0% below January 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau said in its advance estimates statement.

The measure excludes food services sales volume. With food services, January 2009 volume of \$344.6 billion was 1.0% above December and down 9.7% from January 2008. All figures are adjusted for seasonal variations and

holiday and trading-day differences, but not for price changes.

In the furniture and home furnishings stores segment, January sales volume of \$8.29 billion was down 1.3% from December, and plunged 14.3% from January 2008.

Looking at overall sales for the retail fourth quarter, Census reported November-January sales down 9.5% from the year-ago period. **HTT**

Unifi Q2 Loss Widens on Depressed Sales

Projects Margin and Cost Improvements

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Cooling demand hurt the second quarter results of textured polyester and nylon yarn producer Unifi Inc., but the company expects a better second half.

“Net sales were negatively impacted by the reduced demand for the company’s products caused by sharp declines in consumer spending and compounded by the related effect of excess inventory across the respective supply chains,” said Unifi, which supplies the apparel, home furnishings and automotive markets.

For the fiscal quarter ended December 28 loss from continuing operations before taxes was \$8.7 million and net loss was \$9.1 million or 15 cents per share. That operating loss was narrower than the \$13.6 million recorded one year ago — but the net loss was broader than the year-ago period’s \$7.7 million or 13 cents per share.

Net Q2 sales of \$125.7 mil-

lion were down 31.5% from \$183.4 in the year-ago period.

“Based on current retail sales estimates, we expect it to take an additional four to six months for this built-up inventory to completely work through the supply chain. Accordingly, we anticipate continued pressure on our sales throughout the second half of the fiscal year,” said Ron Smith, Unifi cfo.

“We do, however, expect conversion margins and cost to improve during the second half of the fiscal year, and we anticipate continued strength in our sales to the CAFTA region as more apparel production is shifted there from Asia to reduce the overall sourcing cycle.”

Unifi did show progress on a year-to-date basis. The net loss for the first half of fiscal 2009 was \$9.7 million or 16 cents per share, compared to a net loss of \$16.9 million or 28 cents per share one year ago. **HTT**

Same-store sales

Retailers Edge Up on February Comp Goal

NEW YORK — Still in negative comp-store sales territory, retailers last week nonetheless edged further ahead of their February target, the Johnson Redbook reported.

For the second week of February, the Johnson Redbook Retail Sales Index was down 1.4%, following a 1.7% drop the prior week; this yielded a month-to-date comp drop of 1.6%, ahead of the 1.9% negative comp goal.

“Sales during the week were influenced by spring promotions, Valentine’s Day and the Presidents Day weekend. Sales were event-driven, with department stores reporting relative strength in women’s apparel, women’s accessories and cosmetics,” said Redbook analyst Catlin Levis. “Certain discounters reported that sales in last minute Valentine’s Day items such as flowers and candy

were brisk and said the resulting increase in customer counts drove traffic in categories not directly related to the event, including consum-

able basics and seasonal apparel.”

Levis observed, “Warmer temperatures in parts of the country may have helped to boost early sales of spring merchandise, adding a seasonal component to the week.”

The four-week February retail month, first month of the 2009 fiscal year for most retailers, will end on Saturday, Feb. 28. **HTT**

Johnson Redbook Index

Second week of February, year-over-year % change

WEEK ENDED	2/7	2/14	2/21	2/28	MONTH	TARGET
Department stores*	-9.0	-8.4			-8.7	-8.8
Discounters	2.7	2.9			2.8	2.2
Redbook Average	-1.7	-1.4			-1.6	-1.9

*Including chain stores and traditional department stores
Source: Johnson Redbook Index

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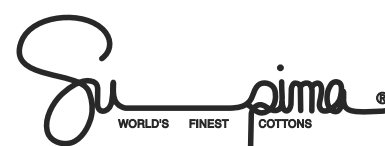
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Calendar



March

1

FIDexpo

Gostiny Dvor, Moscow, Russia
+7 812 303 88 65
www.restec.ru

8

HTT Market Kick-Off Party Sunday, 6 p.m.-8 p.m.

Penthouse & Roof, 230 Fifth Ave.
(646) 746-7290
www.hometextilestoday.com

9 – 13

New York Home Fashions Market

New York Showrooms
Home Fashion Products Association
(212) 297-2122 (Kellen Co.)
www.homefashionproducts.com

12 – 15

Dallas Total Home & Gift Market

Dallas Market Center, Dallas
(214) 655-6100
www.dallasmarketcenter.com

13 – 16

HD Exposition & Conference

Sands Expo & Convention Center,
Las Vegas
(508) 743-8502
www.hdexpo.com

14 – 16

The Atlanta Spring Gift, Home Furnishings & Holiday Market

AmericasMart, Atlanta
(404) 220-3000

www.americasmart.com

14 – 16

The Atlanta International Fine Linen & Home Textiles Market

AmericasMart, Atlanta
(404) 220-3000
www.americasmart.com

15 – 18

ASD/AMD Las Vegas

Sands Expo Center & Las Vegas Con-
vention Center, Las Vegas
(310) 481-7300
www.asdamd.com

18 – 20

Interstoff Asia Essential— Spring

Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition
Centre, Hong Kong
(852) 2238 9917
www.interstoff.messefrankfurt.com

18 – 21

Intertextile Guangzhou

Pazhou Complex, Guangzhou, China
(852) 2802 7728
www.messefrankfurt.com/hk

24 – 26

DOMOTEX Asia/CHINA FLOOR

Shanghai New International Expo
Centre, Shanghai, China
+86 21 6247 7668
www.domotexasiachinafloor.com

April

15 – 17

Lineapelle

Fair District, Bologna, Italy

+39 02 8807711
www.lineapelle-fair.it

21 – 23

Material World

Miami Beach Convention Center,
Miami Beach, Fla.
(678) 285-3976
www.material-world.com

25 – 30

High Point Market

High Point, N.C.
(336) 869-1000
www.highpointmarket.org

May

5 – 7

gulfBID

Bahrain International Exhibition
Centre, Manama, Kingdom
of Bahrain
+973 1729 3131
www.gulfbidexhibition.com

6 – 8

Proposte

Villa Erba in Cernobbio, Como, Italy
+39 02 6434054
www.propostefair.it

12 – 14

DOMOTEX Middle East

Dubai Airport Expo Centre, Dubai,
United Arab Emirates
+971 4 337 6072
www.domotex-middle-east.com

13 – 16

International Window Coverings Expo

Georgia World Congress Center,
Atlanta
(404) 223-4000
www.windowcoveringexpo.com



16 – 19

International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF)

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center,
New York
(914) 421-3200
www.icff.com

17 – 19

Surtex

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center,
New York, NY
(914) 421-3200

www.surtex.com

20 – 24

Evtex

CNR EXPO, Istanbul, Turkey
+90 212 465 74 75
www.itf-evteks.com

June

2 – 4

Licensing International Expo

Mandalay Bay Convention Center,
Las Vegas
(212) 951-6612
www.licensingexpo.com

3 – 5

Interior Lifestyle (Ambiente/ Heimtextil/HomeDesign) Japan

International Exhibition Center
(Tokyo Big Sight), Tokyo, Japan
+81 3 3262 8453
www.interior-lifestyle.com

7 – 10

Showtime

Market Square, Textile Tower,
High Point, N.C. (336) 885-6842
www.itma-showtime.com

8 – 12

China International Consumer Goods Fair

Ningbo, China
www.cicgf.com

15 – 17

NeoCon World's Trade Fair

The Merchandise Mart,
Chicago
(800) 677-6278
www.merchandisemart.com/neocon

15 – 17

American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) National Conference at NeoCon

The Merchandise Mart, Chicago
(202) 546-3480
www.asid.org/foryou09

18 – 20

China Textile & Apparel Trade Show

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center,
New York
(718) 261-1181
www.nychinashow.com

21 – 24

Summer Fair London

ExCeL, London, UK
0207 728 3949
www.summerfair.com

24 – 30

Dallas Holiday & Home Expo

Dallas Market Center, Dallas
(800) DAL-MKTS
www.dallasmarketcenter.com

24 – 30

Dallas Total Home & Gift Market

Dallas Market Center, Dallas
(800) DAL-MKTS
www.dallasmarketcenter.com

26 – 29

FINDS Dallas Temp Show

World Trade Center, Market Hall,
Dallas
(214) 655-6116
www.dmfcds.com

July

8 – 15

The Atlanta International Gift & Home Furnishings Market

AmericasMart, Atlanta
(800) ATL-MART or (404) 220-2435
www.americasmart.com

8 – 13

The Atlanta International Area Rug Market

AmericasMart, Atlanta
(800) ATL-MART or 404.220.2437
www.americasmart.com

9 – 12, 16 – 19

New Designers

Business Design Centre,
London, UK
020 7288 6738
www.newdesigners.com

August

8 – 10

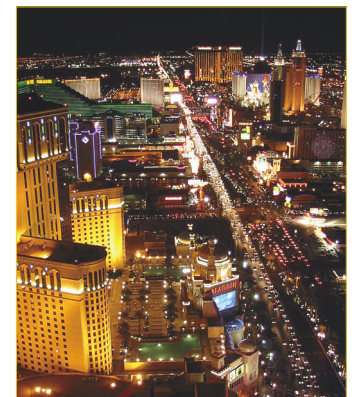
Gourmet Housewares Show

The Moscone Center,
San Francisco
(914) 421-3200
www.thegourmetshow.com

9 – 12

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Quilt Designer/Sales Rep

Leading home fashion manufacturer seeks full time designer (NYC based). Must have understanding of trends, product constructions, experience in completing entire design process, CAD required. **Sales Rep**, ideal candidate is experienced professional and has strong ties with national retail chain. Email: newtextile@aol.com

REPS WANTED

A Pakistan based vertically integrated fashion bedding mfr seeks expd rep with strong relationship at key retailers. Excellent earnings potential. Top styles with fine quality at competitive rates. Email resume with current buyers to liberty@libertymillslimited.com

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HomeTextiles^{Today}

Window Covering Group Invites Award Entries

NEW YORK — The entry deadline for the Window Covering Manufacturers Association (WCMA) Product Innovation Awards is Monday, March 16.

The WCMA honors manufacturers for design creativity, technical advancement, and overall innovation in products and services. Awards will be presented at a reception on May 13 in conjunction with the International Window Coverings Expo (IWCE) in Atlanta. All entries will be displayed on the IWCE 2009 exhibits floor and at www.wcmanet.org with a link to the submitting company's homepage. Entry forms are available now at the website.

Entries will be judged in the following product categories: cellular shades; drapery hardware; horizontal blinds; motorization; Roman, roller and pleated shades; shutters; specialty applications; verticals and panel tracks; wood blinds and faux wood blinds; miscellaneous products; and "green" products. One will be selected as Product of the Year. **HTT**

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Executive Bill Brand Gains Merchandising Oversight at HSN

ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. — HSN has expanded responsibilities for Bill Brand, evp of programming and advanced services, to include marketing and business development functions. Brand reports to Mindy Grossman, ceo.

In making the announcement, Grossman said, "Bill has been part of the leadership team that has driven HSN's turnaround over the last three years, and I continue to have great confidence in this team's ability to navigate the current environment and chart HSN's next chapter of growth."

Brand said, "A critical component of HSN's development has been our ability to articulate and deliver a unique brand identity that differentiates the HSN experience for our customers. How we market ourselves, what we program, and our ability to reach consumers on every available platform will be key to shaping HSN's future, and the prospect of leading this combination of functions, which are critical to HSN's continued growth, is an exciting opportunity."

Brand's responsibilities now

span several areas key to the elevation and expansion of the HSN brand. As head of programming, he directs the strategy for the network's lineup and identifies new programming concepts and opportunities around the company's key merchandising events. Additionally, he leads HSN's off-network initiatives.

Brand will now also manage HSN's marketing team, which includes brand management, customer relations management, strategic marketing alliances and public relations, as well as business development, which identifies new partnership and merchandising opportunities. **HTT**

AATCC Names Design Competition Finalists

125 Entries Received in 5th Annual Event

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. — The American Association of Textile Chemists & Colorists (AATCC) received 125 entries, representing 38 different educational institutions, in its fifth annual design competition.

The competition was developed by the AATCC's Concept 2 Consumer (C2C) Interest Group for design and retail-related textile professionals, and the Computer Integrated Textile Design Association (CITDA).

The 10 finalists are:

Fabric Design Finalists

- Blossoming Botanics by Katie Carroll, Rhode Island School of Design
- Florafest by Chelsea

Plumb, Rhode Island School of Design

- Haystacks by Katie Stone, North Carolina State University
- Let Freedom Reign by Miranda Shilati, Syracuse University
- Pattern in Architecture by Eleanor Hoffman, North Carolina State University

Product Design Finalists

- Footsteps Maternity by Erika Neumayer, Dominican University
- Sleepy Secrets by Anna Johnson, Dominican University
- Sustainable by Stephanie A. Franchetti, Albright College
- Sweet Snowflakes by Wesley Kathryn Woods, Auburn University

• Urban Posh by Rachel Jenkins and Tricia Schinnerer, Radford University

These students will be sent instructions on submitting story boards and products for judging, which will take place on March 25 at the AATCC Technical Center.

Winners will be announced on March 31. Winners will receive cash awards of \$1,000 for First Place and \$500 for Second Place in each category and a complimentary student registration for the 2010 AATCC International Conference.

First place winners will also receive a complimentary copy of Pantone's Color Passport, pantone.com.

The First Place winner of the Product Design category will also win a trip to Goa, India, to compete for the Society of Dyes and Colourists (SDC) International Colour and Textile Award, June 25-26. **HTT**

JanelleStyle Expands Area Rug Offering

BY CECILE B. CORRAL

SMYRNA, GA. — Textile designer Janelle Jarous Lampp, owner of JanelleStyle Designs, is building up her area rug lines via a new partnership with flooring wholesaler Homelegend and an expanded assortment with existing partners Chandra Rugs and cmi.

JanelleStyle Designs, which designs and distributes decorative pillows, fashion accessories and braided rugs, was founded in 1994.

With Homelegend, based in Chino, Calif., Lampp is creating designs for two licensed programs — one with the Walt Disney Corporation on specific properties including Hannah Montana and the Jonas Brothers — and the other with marine-theme artist

Kevin Wyland.

"It is so much fun to work with the youthful and lighthearted art of Walt Disney and the realistic, almost photographic quality marine life Wyland artwork," Lampp said. "It is truly a creative challenge that I have welcomed and enjoyed."

Also continuing to grow her existing licensed collections, Lampp is adding four to six new designs with Adairsville, Ga.-based Chandra Rugs. These introductions will debut in July at the next Atlanta International Area Rug market.

She is also working on a soft launch of two new designs to be added to her Simply Home collection of indoor/outdoor rugs with Pawtucket, R.I.-based braided texture rug company cmi. **HTT**

Vegas Market

VEGAS FROM PAGE 1

antly surprised at both the volume of our customers and the order writing. It definitely was a positive market — considerably better than we thought going in."

Looking at the company's textile product results, Downing said, "We had a pretty good reaction to top of the bed, especially because of our promotional pricing and fast delivery. Utility bedding was very strong."

"The quality of the buyers was exactly what we wanted

ed it to be," commented Bob Pearce, vice president, DreamFit. "There was an overwhelming response to our Comfort Quilted Sheet."

From another perspective, Pearce remarked "It was refreshing to see so many positive attitudes. They were tired of gloom and doom. They were more committed than ever. They understand the programs we've put in place for the furniture and mattress stores."

"It actually was pretty good for us," said Jesse Galili, vice president, Hallmart Collectibles. "We built more features into the products and offered better value." **HTT**

CHF Adds Line

CHF FROM PAGE 1

the dedicated stores, Gold explained.

In recent years, MG + BW has expanded its product reach beyond its original upholstered furniture collection, into case goods, occasional furniture, rugs, lighting and accessories.

The bedding and textile accessories program began with Bloomingdale's, said Frank Foley, ceo of CHF. "They've been very excited about the results of their August furniture launch and the results. They

suggested doing home textiles."

Gold added, "We had been thinking about it for a while. We wanted to keep the whole styling sense of what we're all about — an easy, modern look that's understandable for people, but that they can coordinate, and be consistent with what we do in other categories. The color palette all works together."

"They had very clear likes and dislikes," said Joan Karron, evp of CHF. "They wanted 'crisp sheets' — thread count was second to a highly constructed sheet."

The core program includes

Signature Solid sheets in six colors, duvet covers, two coordinating sheet set styles for each duvet cover, coverlets, quilts, throws and decorative pillows — including the MG + BW signature Beach Ball pillow, now covered in the bedding fabrics as compared with the furniture cover fabrics used in the furniture line.

Karron said the components can be in mixed in a variety of ways to change the tone of each bed, a concept she referred to as "one bed, two seasons." Thinking of consumer reception to the line, she said, "It's a very practical and easy system of design." **HTT**

OPINION Today

Not Quite Dead Yet

"I won't be at all surprised to see infomercials or TV shopping broadcasts by Holiday 2010 for 'Fortunoff fine jewelry at affordable prices.'"

LATE LAST WEEK, I Googled the word "linens." The idea was to see how many pure-play internet retailers are out there that I'd never heard of.

Imagine my surprise when the listing that popped up in the lead position was for "The New Linens 'n Things."

The owners of the defunct retailer's intellectual property (Hilco Consumer Capital and Gordon Brothers Brands) aren't selling merchandise yet, but they are keeping the name alive. A placeholder page at www.thenewlnt.com states: "Linens 'n Things is under new ownership and you'll be blown away with what's to come."

The page promises a wide selection of home textiles, home accessories and housewares "at prices you can afford" and encourages visitors to subscribe to e-mail bulletins that will provide updates on the relaunch as well as promotional offers.

Talk about events moving quickly.

When they bought the trademarks last month, the nameplate's new owners said they hope to launch store-in-store LNT shops eventually, so it will be interesting to see how the brand is positioned (or repositioned) online, who they contract to run the operation, and where they see opportunities to drop in physical LNT shops. Home centers? Hardware stores? Supermarkets?

I fully expect something similar will happen with the Fortunoff name after its assets are auctioned, an event scheduled

to take place this week. I won't be at all surprised to see infomercials or TV shopping broadcasts by Holiday 2010 for "Fortunoff fine jewelry at affordable prices."

The Sharper Image — once a 186-store chain — was reconstituted last year as a brand license (owned by Hilco and Gordon Brothers) and will make its home textiles debut next month at the London Luxury showroom during New York Home Fashions Market.

Jennifer Marks
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The intellectual property of one-time retailer The Bombay Company was acquired in liquidation last year (Hilco & Gordon Brothers again) and has been licensed to the Otto Group, which intends to push the name into several product categories, including lifestyle, furniture, home accessories and décor, and fashion accessories.

Portico Home, a small chain of home furnishings boutiques that collapsed in 2007, is now a brand owned by home textiles veterans Gregg Haft and Charles Schlang. They are licensing Portico as an organic lifestyle brand in a number of categories, including domestics (licensed to Home

Source International).

It seems the effort retailers put into making the *store* the brand during the go-go bubble years (internet and housing) is paying off — at least for those coming in to pick up the pieces after bankruptcy.

Given the outlook for 2009, I expect more to come. **HTT**

Once More — with Feeling

"The home textiles business has not embraced fashion forwardness nor spotlighted its potential star young designers."

HAD SOME INTERESTING VISITS during the Las Vegas market earlier this month that pointed to one of the challenges confronting the home textiles world today — the apparent lack of passion for product that seems pervasive across all levels of the business.

It was an interesting eye-opener, especially in view of the upcoming home textiles market here in New York next month, which is expected to be challenging at best.

Sitting and chatting with a number of exhibitors, I was watching the behavior patterns of the retailers working the lines in each show space. Many were the run-of-the-mill "today's buyer," essentially looking and buying according to a rote pattern.

The standouts were at least a dozen different groups of buyers who actually exhibited a passion for what they were doing. Observing them was a sheer pleasure — and a throwback to when most buyers had a similar zest for product.

When was the last time you actually saw buyers having fun working out a color assortment, or working over a towel program to create a proprietary program for the store — or surrounded by piles of swatches in order to craft a

style or color story for decorative fabrics?

And the players were all ages — a couple of 50-something women, a group of coed 30s confreres, and a trio of young women shepherded by an older man — among those I watched.

Carole Sloan
FOUNDING
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

What made these observations even more interesting was the weekend page 1 feature of WWD during the recent Fashion Week in New York. The highlighted fashion collection was designed by one of "the fresh crop of new designers" — a radical concept for a front page feature during a major market in any business segment.

One of the problems facing this business is the replication of same-old, same-old that has created a sameness across a broad spectrum of price points and distribution channels. The home textiles business has not embraced fashion forwardness nor spotlighted its potential star young designers. The age-old copout has been: "If we spotlight our designer(s), someone will steal them."

With the industry at its most challenged level, perhaps it's time to take a look at fashion overall and develop a new focus on design innovation and design stars. Next month's market might be a good time to start. **HTT**

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