

WHEN *retailers* CAME TO SUPPORT HOSIERY

Ice covered the streets, the highways and the interstate highways. But in January 1994, some 200 hosiery executives and retailers converged on Hickory for Focus '94.

Marketing was dominating the future of the industry and spokespersons from the nation's retailers were scheduled to offer insights into trends.

Eleven years ago, speakers at Focus were looking through a pretty clear crystal ball. Sheers are flat and will not regain momentum with women, Dot Rainey of J.C. Penney announced.

Look for more sales in an international marketplace, said Kenda Fowler of Nike. The emergence of NAFTA was a common topic of conversation at the 1994 conference.

The casual lifestyle also was on the agenda. Ms. Rainey noted that sales of women's flat shoes were up 60 percent in 1993. Men's suits were being replaced by casual wear.



Richard Otremba, men's hosiery and accessories buyer for Kohl's Department stores, advised hosiery manufacturers to pay more





attention to outdoor products, announcing he was adding outdoors socks to his spring line for the first time.

And from Kenda Fowler came the observation that black athletic socks are “hot sellers” in 1994.

In the February issue of Legwear Trends, Wal-Mart announced it had opened its first store in Mexico City and trumpeted the fact that “55 percent of the store’s products were made in America.” Obviously, NAFTA had set the stage for dramatic changes ahead.

The Hosiery Technology Center was focusing on training people for the transitions that were taking place in the production operations. The center announced it had added a course in hosiery electronics to cover

the basics of hosiery knitting electronics. The flood of computerized knitting machines had just begun. Seamer repair classes were scheduled to

Focus ’94 are still employed in an environment far different from that in 1994. Denise Yow, 1993-94 CHA president, continues her role at Moretz Inc. and Arthur Lavitt, a key member of the Marketing Committee, has taken Paul Lavitt Mills Inc. to broader horizons, more than double its size 11 years ago.

Jim Halvorsen, sales executive with Clayson Knitting, is serving on the Hosiery Technology Center Advisory Board. Halvorsen was the master of ceremonies for several Focus functions over the years and helped recruit retailers to the Hickory conference. Today retailers



start in March.

Suppliers to the hosiery industry were enjoying a strong domestic market. The Bank of Granite was cited as the “Supplier of the Year” by the North Carolina organization. The Carolina Hosiery Association also touted the fact that over \$50,000 in sponsorships had been raised from

supplier companies, among them Cytec Industries, DuPont, Monsanto, Harriet and Henderson Yarns and others who also have left the scene.

The industry personalities who organized

continue to come to the North Carolina center for hosiery. But the attraction is Hosiery 101 and 102 courses conducted at the Hosiery Technology Center.

The message from retailers to manufacturers in 2005 is quite different and price figures in the dialogue. But there was a time when the emphasis was on business relationships and how to grow business – at manufacturing and at retail.

If you would like to share your comments on issues discussed in this edition, a related matter or perhaps a memorable item in your hosiery industry experience send them to:

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