

ROOTS: May 1985



A Hosiery Era Launched



NAHM 1985 LEADERS -- From left: William Schubert, president, Alba-Waldensian, Valdese, treasurer; Lynn Small, executive vice president, Lemco Mills, Burlington, second vice chairman; Robert E. Solomon, chairman, Charleston Hosiery, new NAHM first vice chairman; William H. Burn, chairman, Crescent Hosiery Mills, Niota, TN, chairman of NAHM; Sid Smith, president; and, Matt Kurtz, vice president.

"Pride and Patriotism"... "Crafted with Pride In USA"... "American-Made Only."

If such sentiments seem connected to the turbulent times associated with the globalization of the marketplace, remember there was another time when hosiery producers were touting domestic socks and pantyhose.

It was June 1985.

The Catawba Valley Hosiery Association and its statewide membership were planning for the 1986 Hosiery of Tomorrow exposition for retailers. The association marketing committee's

Photo at top of page: *CHVA FASHIONS -- A display at the 1985 annual meeting featured products that were spotlighted at the HOT Show earlier. Mills were turning to fashion to increase sales and develop new customers.*

recommendation to exclude foreign-made products eliminated a Canadian exhibitor and several hosiery mills that included imported lines in their offerings.

A major concern was whether restricting the show to domestic goods would discourage retailers from attending. "Buyers obviously want to see everything that can be seen," the CVHA executive director asserted.

Ironically, the decision may have spelled the end for the show. The 1986 event in Winston-Salem was the last HOT show for the industry.

The May 1985 planning retreat for CVHA leaders was held at the Green Park Inn in Blowing Rock and issues addressed 19 years ago continue to face the industry: impact of technology, shifts in merchandising and marketing strategies, and imports.

One manufacturer at the retreat was quoted as saying that adding high-speed knitting equipment amounted to "a slow death or going out of business with a bang."



SHALL WE DANCE? -- Professional entertainers at the 1985 CVHA annual meeting pull participants from audience as part of the act.



HOSIERY WEEK -- Linda York, Inform Inc. account executive, organizes the shirts and caps for the softball tournament which was sponsored by Pepsi Cola Bottling Co.

Another manufacturer observed that modernization is resulting in the diversification of products. "We are looking at equipment that will give us total flexibility... we are actively pursuing the purchase of equipment that will make a different product from that we are now making..."

Another participant at the retreat urged his associates to consider in-house sales staffs as a means to lower cost of sales. "The in-house sales staff also helps you push your bread and butter items," he commented.

In June, final details for the annual Hosiery Week celebration were wrapped up.

Pepsi Cola led the list of sponsors by underwriting the softball tournament. Etta Packaging picked up the cost for entertainment at the barbecue. A membership drive leading up to Hosiery Week brought in 31 new members, bringing the CVHA roster to 108 manufacturers and 125 suppliers.



PLANNING -- The annual CVHA planning retreat in Blowing Rock included some pensive moments.

These also were heady days for the National Association of Hosiery Manufacturers. With the International Hosiery Exposition generating tens of thousands of dollars every other year, annual meetings were held in Las Vegas, Bermuda, and other top-ranked resorts.

Clarence Wall of Kentucky Derby Hosiery headed up the CVHA board, with Ken Wofford, vice president of knitting for

Ellis Hosiery as president-elect; Elsie Childres of Arlene Hosiery as vice president; and Norman Cook of Jo-Mil Hosiery Inc. as treasurer.

Looking back, 1985 signaled an era of transition. Just around the corner were computerized knitting machines and only a few mills had computers in their business operations. In-house sales programs were just coming together, and the small trickle of imports was a signal of greater problems. The creation of a Hosiery Technology Center was five years in the future.

Since 1985 mills have closed and new manufacturers have opened doors. Others have stood the test of time, adjusting to the challenges that were emerging 19 years ago.



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