

Fabrics & Furnishings[®] INTERNATIONAL

The Global Home & Contract Sourcing Newspaper
Volume 30, Number 4 • Autumn 2020

30th Anniversary

RV Leads Upholstery Revival

By Ray Parker

MIAAMI BEACH, Fla. – Some U.S. textile companies have had an uptick in sales this summer, especially in the upholstery, outdoor, and recreational vehicle markets.

Richloom Fabrics Group Inc. has a supply chain twisting across the globe. It and others have been hit with the U.S.-China trade war, as well as the coronavirus pandemic, which has increased freight costs and hindered international travel.

Despite all that tumult, "Furniture retail is up," Richloom COO/ Vice President Michael Saivetz says. (continued on Page 8)



Michael
Saivetz
of Richloom

Stead McAlpin, 185-Year-Old English Mill, Expands Services; Mitloedi Swiss Mill Ends

F&FI News Network

CUMMERSDALE, England – Stead McAlpin, a mill specializing in printing and dyeing

for 185 years, is now courting customers from Mitloedi Textilruck AG, a Swiss printing mill that is in bankruptcy. (continued on Page 5)



Chandresh Gokani

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Textile Execs: Business During COVID-19 • PG 16



Jeff Harris



George Jordan



Kathryn Richardson



Patrick Shelton



Diverse Offerings for Niche Industries: Weavetec Continues Despite Industry Setbacks • PG 6

Expo 2020 Update

- Evtteks (Istanbul, Turkey): To be announced
- Intertextile Shanghai Home Textiles: Aug. 24-26
- Proposte: (Lake Como, Italy): Canceled
- ACT (New York City): Online conference to be announced
- Boutique Design New York (BDNY): Canceled
- Showtime Market (High Point, N.C.): Nov. 15-18

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Sunbury Facility Closes Due to Pandemic

The Glen Raven plant employed more than 100 people.

Hank Truslow Jr., CEO of Sunbury Textile Mills

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Rockland Industries Closes Last U.S. Blackout Mill

Here is the F&FI list of 10 global blackout manufacturers.



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Universal Furniture's Upbeat Outlook

Vice President Sean O'Connor explains "the next normal."

Covering the World



Labor Hinders Upholstery Boom

The upholstered furniture industry picked up big time during the U.S. holiday called Memorial Day (May 25).

The dam has broken as far as the upholstery business is concerned. The retailers are actually ahead over last year.

They are looking to buy as much as they can get. Havertys is an example—beat figures from 2019 Memorial Day. Ashley Furniture has been overwhelmed with new business. Ashley owns its own stores.

That puts pressure on the fabric suppliers, but the real problem is labor at the furniture factories in the U.S. The

labor likes staying home, instead of seeking a job, due to unemployment insurance.

Labor is making it difficult to meet demand for upholstered furniture. Business is literally booming and the fabric suppliers are starting to get orders again from the furniture manufacturers.

Furniture introductions at High Point, North Carolina, this April were not released due to the pandemic, but these same lines will be shown during the High Point Fall Market 2020, taking place October 13-21.

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www.fandfi.com
ISSN: 1523-7303



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(continued from cover)

Historic U.K. Stead McAlpin Expands With Swiss Mill Ending

Stead McAlpin officials say they will continue offering low minimums (as little as 100 meters) high-quality work, and techniques that few other printers offer. Since 1835, the English company has specialized in the design and production of high-end printed fabrics.

Over the course of its storied history, the company says it has printed for such high-profile clients as Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth II, Buckingham Palace, the Titanic, Winston Churchill, Prince Charles, and “Harry Potter” author J.K. Rowling, according to its website.

“We are supplying many of the major customers worldwide who make use of our strong in-house design department and archive,” Stead McAlpin CEO Benjamin Soper says. “We’re the only independent high-end printer in England and are in a strong position financially to help potential customers.”

The company’s 30 employees print and dye fabrics for the residential and contract industries, Soper says. It has annual sales of about 5 million pounds (\$6.3 million) - 70% domestic and 30% international, mostly in the U.S.

The company’s facilities include the availability of up to 24 colors on both flat bed and rotary printers. It also has digital capability on-site, with

both conventional and digital routes, offering the previously mentioned low minimums.

This is complemented by its dye house, where there is reactive, vat, pigment and disperse dyeing facilities, as well as a final processing department, with its large selection of finishing equipment.

“They’re known for flat-bed printing, phenomenal archive, and wonderful designs,” says Nick Savoye, who is based in New York, and now represents the English mill in the U.S.

Stead McAlpin officials are planning a trip to Switzerland. “We realize this must be a difficult time for some customers with the imminent closure of Mitloedi,” Soper wrote in a letter to customers. “We have also been in discussion around the transfer of screens from Switzerland. We are in the process of planning the first trip in the coming weeks to arrange collection of customer-owned screens.”

Soper noted that if customers do have any screens in Switzerland, “please discuss with Nick or me, and we can advise what to do to ensure you have continuity of design.”

HISTORIC MILL

At the historic printing and dyeing mill in Northern England, all the production happens on-site. Soper start-

ed restructuring the family-owned business five years ago, following his father’s death, and it’s stronger as a result, he says.

“We created a sustainable business for the future and focus on what the business is renowned for, which is printing for the leading designers and interior furnishing firms across the world and supplying jobbers, manufacturers, and distributors,” Soper says. “Aimed primarily at the interior furnishing market, we also produce contract, outdoor, and specialty fabrics.”

He adds: “We are focused on taking this historic business back out to win business and service our customers on our merits, heritage, and capability that includes catering to the modern requirements of competitive short-run printing - 100-meter MOQ rotary and flat printing; 50 meter dyeing capability; all finishing done in house; in-house design and archive.”

Savoye will help develop business in the U.S., Soper says, and provide feedback to the U.K. team.

“We have a modern machinery platform at our disposal and can print and dye out to 3.2 meters wide, and we are investing for the future in terms of expansion of our digital offering,” he says. F&FI

Neutex Celebrates Hitting June Sales Goals Amid COVID-19

F&FI News Network

MUENCHBERG, Germany – Joint Managing Directors Joseph Wheeler and Andreas Peter of Neutex Home Deco celebrated hitting their sales targets in June.

“We took over our new positions on April 1 right in the middle of the COVID-19 outbreak,” Wheeler writes in a LinkedIn post. “Even though I consider both of us rather ‘experienced’ veterans, nothing could fully prepare us, or any of us, for the challenging weeks ahead.”

He continues: “We have taken a small step forward in June by surpassing our June 2019 monthly sales figures and carefully pushing to reach our sales goals established prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.”

The Neutex team celebrated by handing out ice cream to each employee.

“Without working together none of this would be possible,” Wheeler writes. “We would also like to thank our customers, sales representatives, suppliers as well as the Hoftex Group AG for their continued support. We are very proud to be a part of this great team and hope there is ice cream every month!”

The Neutex Home Deco GmbH (Neutex) is a producer of decorative fabrics, made-up goods, textile window coverings, and technical fabrics.

Wheeler joined Neutex in 2014 and has previously been sales director for national and international sales.

Peter has been part of Neutex since 1990, and was the technical director for production, technology, and purchasing since 2011.

Wheeler and Peter will continue Neutex’s strategic development with a focus on further integrating digital technologies and enhancing customer services.

Neutex, a division of the Hoftex Group AG, has locations in Muenchberg, Germany and in Targu Mures, Romania, and employs 240 people. F&FI



Joint Managing Directors Joseph Wheeler and Andreas Peter

Organizers Cancel Proposte 2020

F&FI News Network

CERNOBBIO, Italy – Proposte 2020 has been canceled this year, scheduled for Sept. 23-25.

It will be postponed until April 19-21, 2021, a source confirmed. Organizers have not yet made a statement about the 2021 dates.

The COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated issues

surrounding it, is the main reason for the cancellation.

“The uncertainty of travel conditions, especially at the international level, as well as the rapidly changing world scenario do not enable us to confirm the September dates, as up to 75% of our visitors come from foreign countries,” President Piercarlo Viganò says in a statement released July 16.

U.S. travelers are not allowed to visit the European Union as of July 1. EU ambassadors supported 15 travel partners, including South Korea, Japan and, with one footnote, China.

Those countries were hit when the pandemic began but were able to bring the coronavirus under control.



The EU requires reciprocal travel and the U.S. currently bars most EU travelers. China will have to remove its travel restrictions on EU members in order to stay on the EU list.

Heimtextil, the biggest international trade fair for home and contract textiles, is expected to be held Jan. 12-15, 2021. Organizers recently sent an email to exhibitors about extensive safety and hygiene regu-

lations. For details, go to: www.messefrankfurt.com/hygiene.

Proposte organizers say in the coming months they will be active on social media “with a series of initiatives.”

“This will be a concrete opportunity to relaunch the world of furnishing fabrics and curtains with Proposte becoming a container of outstanding news for the entire sector,” Viganò says in a statement. F&FI

Diverse Offerings for Niche Industries: Weavetec Continues Despite Industry Setbacks

Influential plant manager retires after 33 years

F&FI News Network

BLACKSBURG, S.C. — Weavetec Inc., a decorative jacquard mill, credits its longevity to a conservative, family-focused approach. And one longtime representative of the company's philosophy recently announced his retirement: Stepping down is plant manager Charles "Nubert" McDaniel, 89, who started with the company 33 years ago.

"The numbers only tell part of the story, as Nubert had an even greater impact personally on Weavetec's associates, customers, and suppliers," according to a company statement. "His integrity, work ethic, compassion, and faith impacted everyone he encountered. Nubert is always willing to give of himself and go above and beyond to meet every need."

McDaniel was instrumental in starting the first sample looms for original owners Harold Pennington Sr. and Haskell Mallory, months prior

to Weavetec's incorporation in 1987.

McDaniel started with Weavetec full time in 1990, and soon thereafter began planning construction of Weavetec plant #2 (later renamed the Charles N. McDaniel Plant in his honor) in his hometown here.

At one time, more than 250 people were employed at this location, contributing more than \$20 million in payroll and benefits to the local economy, while producing in excess of 25 million yards of fabric since opening.

Today, Weavetec employs 30 people.

"We make a wide variety of small-run specialty-fabric," says principal Harold Pennington Jr. "We also make safety apparel, wallcoverings, throws, and upholstery products I think we've been able to stay in business because we're very conservative. We focused on specialty business. Customer service is more important than cost - we're family owned; my wife

and sister also work here."

Weavetec began in 1987 when elder Pennington and Mallory started a small-commission-weaving operation in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Both owners had extensive experience in the textile industry.

Pennington Sr. graduated from Clemson University in 1965 with a degree in textile management and spent the next 22 years working with Burlington Industries and Wendell Fabrics. Mallory worked with Lawson Hemphill and Wendell Fabrics prior to starting Weavetec.

Weavetec initially operated two Dornier Dobby looms in a small leased space. During its first two years, Weavetec grew to 12 looms and constructed its original plant in Spartanburg.

By 1990, Weavetec had expanded its dobbie upholstery manufacturing base and purchased its first jacquard loom to weave throws. During a similar timeframe, Simply Country Wholesale was incorporated in Wytheville, Virginia, to provide throws and other home décor products to the gift industry.

Weavetec and Simply Country entered into a partnership in 1990, which would be the basis for a significant expansion of both operations. The Weavetec/Simply Country partnership was by all accounts extremely successful. By 1992, Weavetec had added an additional weaving facility in Blacksburg, South Carolina, to meet the growing demand for both upholstery fabric

and throws.

In 1994, Weavetec merged with Innovative Technology. Innovative was owned by Harold Pennington Jr. and provided finishing services for the growing business. Innovative had begun in 1990 to provide finishing and packaging exclusively to Weavetec but had since expanded to offer a wide range of finishing services to the local textile industry.

After the merger, Weavetec operated four plants in upstate South Carolina totaling almost 100,000 square feet, with 100 looms and 200-plus employees. By 1995, the niche throw business had peaked, and the Weavetec/Simply Country partnership model was less competitive. The competition had grown more vertical, and both companies realized it would be difficult to continue operating as two separate profit centers.

As a result, in October 1995, Weavetec bought Simply Country and began operating it as Simply Home, a division of Weavetec. Then, in 2001, the Pennington family purchased Mallory's ownership in Weavetec.

The younger Pennington notes that the American textile industry has experienced a significant decline since 2000. That's reflected in Weavetec consolidating its weaving operations into the Charles N. McDaniel Weaving Plant in Blacksburg in 2003. Weavetec ultimately sold the Simply Home business unit to HomTex in late 2016.

"Weavetec's ongoing success is the result of a dedicated staff and development of a diverse product offer-

ing catering to niche textile industries," Pennington Jr. says.

He adds Weavetec continues to focus on three core business units.

"The numbers only tell part of the story..."

• Home Furnishing Fabrics

Weavetec serves as the primary manufacturing partner for multiple converters. Fabrics include upholstery, drapery, and home décor accessories. This unit has expanded from three primary converters in 2000 to 10-plus and growing since 2011.

• Specialty Fabrics

Weavetec manufactures such fabrics for safety apparel, filtration, instrument case, belt substrate, wall-panel, and room-divider applications. In 2008, Weavetec further expanded its specialty fabric production to include an equestrian line previously produced by Sherman Textiles.

• Home Décor Accessories

Weavetec manufactures custom tapestry home décor accessories and gift items on a contract basis for distributors and designers.

"I think we try to focus on specialty opportunities," the younger Pennington says. "The main thing is trying to be profitable, no matter whatever amount of business." F&FI



Harold Pennington Jr. (l to r), Harold Pennington, and Charles "Nubert" McDaniel

India's Modisch Group Reopens to European Sales; Now Looks Toward U.S. Upholstery Market

Neptune Mills produces first fabric line for U.S.

F&FI News Network

MUMBAI, India – Neel Merchant, director of the 30-year-old Modisch Group here, says on June 11 that India is off lockdown for the most part.

“Factories have started producing,” Merchant says. “People are coming to retail shops to buy.”

He says there is another positive indicator of business returning.

“Reliance Industries has sold a \$12.96 billion stake to Facebook in its digital assets unit in the seven weeks of the pandemic,” Merchant says.



Hamir Merchant and Neel Hamir Merchant

Modisch European furnishings fabric agencies are now looking toward buying furnishing fabric in India for their collections, he says.

“With universal demand for natural fibers, India has a distinct advantage,” he says. “We now play two roles: importing fabrics from Europe and exporting furnishing fabrics from India. We find this very well balanced as everybody is able to buy what he likes.”

Merchant says he has satisfied his European clients. As a result, he can begin to focus on selling to the U.S. market.

“We have tied up with an Indian mill, which can cater to the requirements of the American furnishings market,” he says.

MODISCH PARTNERS WITH NEPTUNE MILLS

Modisch works with Neptune Mills in Ahmedabad, India.



Malav and Varun Shah

It is a jacquard weaver of upholstery, curtains, and decorative fabrics. Neptune exports to the Middle East, North America, South America, and Europe.

The principals are Malav and Varun Shah, father, and son, which take marketing direction from Merchant.

The Neptune line starts at \$1.75 per meter, according to Merchant.

A major American converter is Neptune’s first customer in the U.S., where Neptune is looking to build its business and where it is looking for an agent. F&FI

A Great Light Has Gone Out: Regina Gurman, International Fabric Saleswoman, Dies at 72

F&FI News Network

ROSLYN, N.Y. – One of the great lights of the international fabric business has gone out with the death of Regina Gurman, 72, on Saturday, July 11.

A funeral service was held here the next day at the Shelter Rock Jewish Center.

The Russian-born powerhouse dominated the international fabric scene and was loved by those in the industry.

She was witty, vibrant, clever, and very successful with the lines she represented starting with the U.S.’s Mastercraft and finishing with Italy’s Mario Sirtori, whom she represented as Regina Gurman International.

Gurman left Mastercraft in December 1999, along with her sister and business partner, Ita Aingorn, after 20 years with the company. They had been responsible for export sales at Mastercraft, the most successful mill in the world for many years under the management of Andrew Major and Harry Turpan.

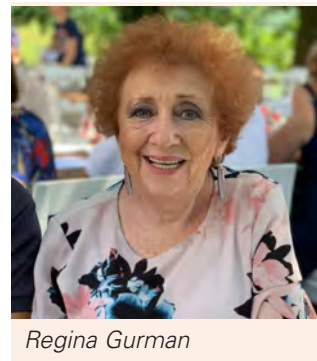
Gurman and her sister departed in the wake of the acquisition and merging of Mastercraft, Home and Doblin by Elkin McCallum, who has since left the industry, as have those companies.

Gurman and her sister dominated the fabric export trade for many years. (Many export buyers she worked with called themselves members of the “Regina Club.”)

She hung out at the Amigo Hotel during Decosit and was part of the Mastercraft stand at Heimtextil for 20 years. One particularly memorable year, she dressed as a clown at the Mastercraft tent at the German event.

What no one knew, however, was that Gurman was on allocation with Mastercraft.

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Regina Gurman

Glen Raven Closes Sunbury Facility in August

F&FI News Network

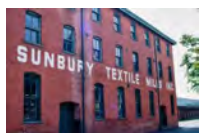
SUNBURY, Pa. – Glen Raven officials will close their production facility here, formerly known as Sunbury Textile Mills, in August due to the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 100 people worked at the facility, which was founded in 1954.

“(The company will) also eliminate a select number of positions based out of our Burlington, North Carolina headquarters and other facilities in the USA, effective immediately,” a June 4 company statement reads.

Glen Raven Mills Inc., a global textile manufacturer, bought

David Swers



Sunbury in 2017. Both companies had been long-time co-branding and jacquard upholstery marketing partners.

Sunbury had been the licensing partner to Glen Raven for the production of jacquard fabrics with the Sunbrella brand. Sunbury produced its regular lines of woven fabrics for jobbers and furniture manufacturers.

Glen Raven produced Sunbrella plains, plaids, and stripes for upholstery, marine, and awnings.

Hank Truslow Jr. was CEO of Sunbury Textile Mills and could not be reached for comment.

David Swers, current president and COO of Custom Fabrics and executive vice president of Glen Raven could not be reached for comment.

“After a thorough analysis of the market and the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandem-

ic, our company, and our global manufacturing footprint, this difficult decision was made to streamline operations and support the long-term position of the company,” the company statement reads. “We are grateful for the hard work and dedication our team at Sunbury and our other facilities have shown over the years, and we are committed to supporting them through this transition.” F&FI



Hank Truslow Jr.

(continued from front cover)

U.S. Upholstery, Outdoor, and RV Textile Sales Up During Pandemic

"We're seeing a very big upswing in the low- to medium-priced furniture market, and our RV business has gone through the roof."

He adds outdoor fabrics are also on the upswing. Richloom bought a mill last year, now called Richloom Weaving,

which has helped the company meet domestic demand.

"We have orders and over the past four weeks business has steadily increased," Saivetz says in late July. "We have also developed level-one (minimum risk) and level-two (low risk) [medical] gown-fabric."

While textile production in China has resumed,

he says, for the most part he sees many factories working at 75% capacity, while some smaller factories have closed.

There are many reasons for that, including global freight costs reportedly doubling. In addition, in mid-July, nearly a dozen states in India imposed partial lockdowns that closed many textile mills.

Richloom bought the U.S. mill for that kind of global tumult.

"It's things you just can't get out of China or India," Saivetz said last year about the new mill. "The one thing that Richloom can do is to bring the product from all parts of the world, all different looks, and marry it in here. It's not just wovens, not just



John Greenawalt of Stout

body cloth, not just prints, not just embroideries--we can do everything."

Overall, furniture and home furnishings stores had an increase this year in sales of \$4.0 billion in April to \$7.2 billion in May, according to a U.S. Department of Commerce July 16 report.

A handful of U.S. textile companies contacted by F&FI reported optimistic sales in mid-summer, including Stout Fabrics, a residential fabric wholesaler with about \$25 million in annual sales. Stout is in Colmar, Pennsylvania, and 95% of its business is domestic.

"We're doing pretty well across the board," says John Greenawalt, Stout vice president of operations. "We had a massive amount of product in stock during March and April this year, when the Pennsylvania lockdown stopped. We surpassed June numbers and are well on the way for [making our] July numbers."

He adds global freight costs have become a concern, especially after a shipment got delayed in Italy and its associated shipping costs nearly doubled.

"We're adjusting to a longer timeline, from 6 months to 9 months," Greenawalt says. "As a result, we're thinking about producing more domestic product here."

But the pandemic continues, and with it, executives say they remain uncertain about the demand for their products in future months, and perhaps years.

(continued on Page 11)

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Gokani Boots China in Favor of U.S. Fabrics; K.H. Impex Will Specialize in American Fabrics for Indian Market

F&FI News Network

MUMBAI, India – Chandresh Gokani, principal of K.H. Impex, the 30-year-old fabric importer, says he is renewing his ties with American mills.

He says he expects to be the No. 1 specialist for American goods in India. He is currently contacting his old friends and some new ones in the U.S. to secure fabric lines.

"We in Mumbai are in a lockdown format, but I am

rethinking my business plans as a result," Gokani says.

He has now gone full circle with American-made goods. He started with Quaker Fabrics years ago and specialized in importing American-made goods into India. Then the Chinese mills displaced American mills there.

"We had been importing 80% of our fabrics from China in the last years, but we are phasing out the Chinese goods in favor of American

made," Gokani says. "It is no longer feasible to buy anything from China for import to India because the Indian people resent anything now made in China."

Still, he says about 90% of India remains in lockdown as of July 23 and it will be some time before business resumes. India's consumers are now buying only essentials.

"Interior-related jobs too have taken a beating as real estate in metropolitan cities

is going through a terrible slump in sales, hence no new houses being sold, therefore no new interior-related projects being executed," Gokani says. "Even payments are being deferred or delayed by large businesses [building] houses who once used to be prompt pay masters."

"Unless [there are] vaccines, and surety of incomes and jobs are there, until then, I do not see the very conservative and price-conscious middle- and upper-mid-



Chandresh Gokani in Australia

dle class, Indian population spending for luxury products, and even if they do, it would be very price consciously driven." F&FI

Mobus Officials Bullish Despite Pandemic Setbacks

U.K. textile manufacturer opens new warehouse

F&FI News Network

BRIGHOUSE, U.K. – Mobus Fabrics Ltd., a leading upholstery fabric manufacturer, moved earlier this year into a new 65,000-square-foot office/warehouse complex.

Sales Director Lee Paxman says improvements have already been made at the location, such as a new stock system.

"This is already improv-

ing service levels and giving much greater processing and working efficiencies," Paxman says. "We have created stock classifications for every product, each classification uses different stock routings to reduce handling and improve efficiencies."

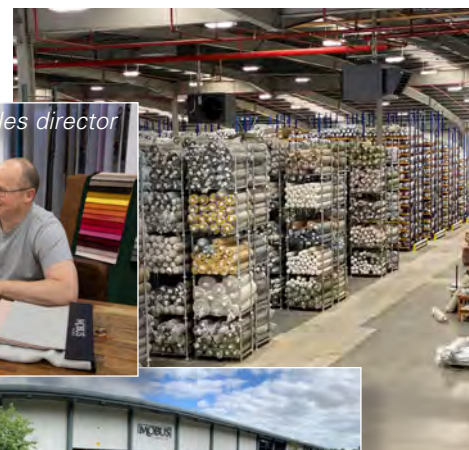
Founded in 1994, Mobus has annual sales of \$30 million and employs more than 70 people, according to the company.

"Since the return to work at the end of May, our sales have steadily grown and we are definitely moving in the right direction," Paxman says. "We offered open cancellations to all our customers, and rather than fighting cancellations, we understood the full supply chain had to realign and reset."

He adds: "We also gave bulk processing commit-



Lee Paxman, sales director



ments to our U.K. finishers, so they had the confidence to reopen and take staff back off furlough. This helped restart production for the sector and keep our stock plan ahead of demand."

Mobus offers all its fabrics with the U.K. fire-retardant finish, Paxman explains, which it can offer from the U.K. or within its own finishing plant in China.

"All fabric is tested and certified to ensure full compliance with full traceability and due diligence," Paxman says. "We have developed a new type of finish with our chemical and finishers, which is a greener alternative to the old deca-brominated FR systems. This new chemical will launch at the end of 2020 on the Mobus Eden, which is a new 100% recycled polyester velvet."

Mobus officials are working on their brand development, which will roll out over the next 12 months, Paxman says.

"This will follow on, or coincide, with the launch of our new eco products, images of the new distribution center, testing laboratory, development center, and promote the future direction of Mobus Fabrics," he says.

There have also been changes in China.

"We have recently consolidated our Chinese operation, so all our purchasing, [quality control], and sales teams come together under one company," Paxman says. "This consolidation will give us a platform to expand our Asian market presence further. It will also give a foundation to open up other export markets around the world." F&FI

Material Bank Raises \$28 Million for Expansion Amid 200% Revenue Increase

F&FI News Network

NEW YORK – Material Bank, the materials company for the architecture and design industry, announced May 3 it has secured \$28 million, which is led by Bain Capital Ventures.

Material Bank will use the funds to accelerate expansion into new categories, build a new robotic logistics facility to support increased demand, and further develop its SaaS platform.

SaaS, or software as a service, is a software licensing and delivery model in which software is licensed on a subscription basis and is centrally hosted. It is sometimes referred to

as "on-demand software."

For the first quarter of 2020, Material Bank recorded 45% quarter-on-quarter revenue growth, and the company is on track to grow revenue 200%, and will double its participating brands in 2020, according to the company.

Material Bank is the world's largest material marketplace of its kind. It simplifies the complex process of material search and sampling by enabling architects, designers, and corporate buyers to search hundreds of thousands of materials, such as paint, flooring, and tiles across hundreds of vendors. F&FI



Adam Sandow

Lori Weitzner Keeps Her Eye on Design

By ELAINE TAYLOR-GORDON

NEW YORK – When Lori Weitzner floats by with her Raphaele blond curls and paratrooper boots, it is hard to equate this slip of a woman with the design powerhouse that she has quietly become.

A real stealth ranger, her Pacman-like intensity has succeeded in creating a design empire, while she has delegated the administrative details to other right-brain experts.

“After years of building Lori Weitzner Designs, I realized that what I really hated could be delegated to someone else, and that person was Susan Whalen, CEO of Pollack, who runs a tight ship,” Weitzner said in an interview last year. “My sale of the design entity I built allows me to maintain and continue design control with none of the business and administrative details,

which set me free to diversify and stream creatively without any of the barriers that used to slow me down and keep me up at night.

“The six years since I sold my company have been my most productive and continue to be so. I’m designing hardscape materials for Artistic Tile, Trimmings for Samuel and Sons, and now jewelry. Because I’m not bogged down with the business side, I’m free to explore and create and start new businesses. For me, freedom is the fuel for creativity.”

Weitzner was interviewed during NY Design. She participated in a panel discussion about technology in design and as the outlier in the group, immediately interested us in doing an interview.

“A wonderful example of this is the evolution of my passementerie designs created as jewelry for the home for Samuel & Sons, into fashion jewelry, using the same

ancient hand embroidery techniques employed by artisans in Calcutta,” Weitzner says. “In my experience, no machine or other mechanized form of textile production has ever been able to replicate the beauty, richness and unmistakable uniqueness of the handmade.”

She uses these same handmade, artisanal techniques for her wallcovering designs. She has had an unconventional career path.

“Little did I know when I set out to become a painter during my undergraduate years at Syracuse University that I would be inspired to change lanes into textile design,” she says. “And how could anyone have foreseen my first job designing Laura Ashley-type designs for bedding would inspire me to jump ship without a net and display my designs at Indigo in Lille. That led me to Italy, designing for Missoni,

and later for Sacco for 12 years—culminating in my big break in NYC with Jack Lenor Larsen.”

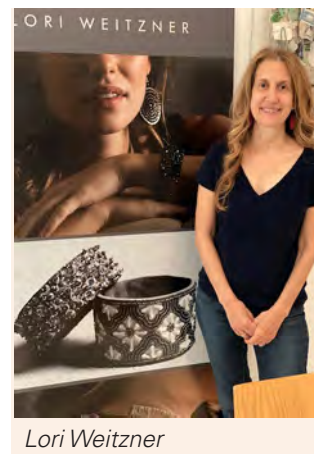
Timing can be everything. In 2008, JP Morgan Chase was offering women-owned businesses revolving credit lines of \$100,000, around the time she opened her design studio.

“This made it possible to start my first independent effort into wallpaper design, production, and sales,” she says.

Nowhere is her organic approach to design more evident than in the Lori Weitzner Design’s Chelsea studio.

All around there are her statement boards and boxes filled with bits and pieces of shards, yarns, and materials that attract her magpie eye; photos and drawings by her children, as well as paper constructions.

“Everyone working in this studio can paint and draw,”



Lori Weitzner

she says.

Her design process begins by asking questions.

“Our process often varies depending on the project, but I would say that what is consistent is that we always begin by talking and asking questions and treating the project holistically,” she says. “What is the concept, and how does this make sense and fit our brand? Do we need this? Does the world need this? Will it resonate? How can we make it unique?”

Technology has become an important part of the design process.

“We all use our computers (Macs) and various programs like Photoshop and CAD to help us take our original artwork and get it into a state that can be reproduced easily,” she says. “We do repeat work usually on the computer, after the original work is done by hand. We use a top-of-the-line scanner to capture the art as best we can and then manipulate it on the computer.” F&FI



(continued from Page 8)

U.S. Upholstery, Outdoor, and RV Textile Sales Up During Pandemic

Furniture maker La-Z-Boy, for example, continues to adjust to the shifting global production, The New York Times reported. It shifted production from China to Vietnam last year to handle U.S. tariffs on \$360 billion worth of Chinese goods.

Then, the company announced deep employee layoffs.

“Effective immediately, the company will reduce its global

workforce by about 10%, or approximately 850 employees, across its manufacturing, retail, and corporate locations,” a La-Z-Boy June 4 release states, “including the closure of its Newton, Mississippi, upholstery manufacturing facility.”

La-Z-Boy CEO Kurt Darrow says in a statement: “Since restarting production at the majority of our plants at the end of April, we have steadily

increased production and continue to bring back more employees to meet demand. As more states open and allow our retail partners to re-engage with their customers, we anticipate a stepped process of increasing production and bringing additional employees back to work.”

Such moves are apparently the new normal, at least for now. F&FI

Heimtextil Russia 2020 Canceled

F&FI News Network

MOSCOW – Heimtextil Russia 2020, which was scheduled for September 15-17, has been postponed until next year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The venue will remain the same next year at the Expocentre and will

be held Sept. 14-16, 2021. Read more on this topic at: www.FandFI.com. F&FI



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Traditional Artisanal Craftspeople Combat Extinction in Today's Global Market

How to reverse the decline in handwoven and dyed fabrics

By Rachelle Tenace

It is well known that weaving is acknowledged as one of the oldest surviving crafts in the world dating back to Neolithic times, while fiber twisting, the process needed for weaving to develop further, dates back between 20,000 to 30,000 years.

However, due to globalization and automation, many of the world's most beautiful crafts are doomed, as well as the communities that produce them.

As far back as history records, caravans of traders have traveled the world's oldest and most important trade routes seeking the textile treasures at the end. The stories that accompanied these traders went along with them.

Now both the stories and the craft of making these textile masterpieces from various ethnic groups across the globe, with centuries of tradition behind them, are threatened with extinction.

As a textile lover, who also has a keen interest in history and culture, I think it is important to preserve these ancient weaving crafts for future generations. In these times when technology is moving at lightning speed, personal connections becoming less and less personal, and with automation and globalization taking over, it's imperative to bring to light, educate, and help the remaining community of artisanal craftspeople throughout the world, most of whom are women, to maintain their craft with the purpose of sustaining their livelihoods, their culture, and their art.

The question is, how do we reverse the decline in handwoven and dyed fabrics as well as

the extinction of parts of the culture that goes with it?

Some think that developing relationships between fashion designers and weavers could be the key. Designers and textile producers face a difficult challenge. They need to re-invent traditional fabrics and garments in a way that appeals to modern consumers, while at the same time maintaining the things that make the traditional crafts special.

Some weavers have responded by changing the style of cloth they produce, such as replacing religious texts with more graphic styles in more modern colors. While the crafts are still made with age-old techniques and completely by hand, they have now evolved into new shapes and palettes. Gone are the clashing primary colors that used to be the hallmark of local crafts and now are being replaced with more natural hues or pastel shades.

SARAWAK'S IBAN TRIBE

One such group making the move toward more modern colors are the weavers of the Sarawak's Iban tribe who make tie dyed textiles called pua kumbu.

The textiles are magnificent for their highly intricate designs, but they used to come only in somber mud brown and dark red colors. Now, thanks to advice from Welyn Jehome, an anthropologist from the University of Malaya, who works with weavers in remote areas of Malaysia, the newest versions of fabrics are infused with fresher colors like blues and yellows. They are still being colored with natural dyes obtained from the rainforest, but they are using the

colors once traditionally used as highlights in predominately brown patterns.

The trick is trying to strike a balance between retaining the soul and heritage of the craft, while making it attractive to the urban consumer. Jehome tries hard not to make too many suggestions to the textile weavers to avoid curtailing their creativity, and letting the women come up with their own designs and putting their own spin on the patterns.

There is also a move to make hand-loomed fabric aspirational and some Indian fashion designers, for example, have even built their careers around hand-loomed fabrics. The logic being that the weaving community will not survive if the cloth is only bought as an act of charity. It needs to be desirable in its own right.

INDIAN DESIGNER ANITA DONGRE

One of these designers is Anita Dongre, who created a collection in 2015 specifically to highlight the contribution of traditional artisans. This included Ikat fabrics from Karnataka and Hyderabad in India. Many designers are also working to make sure that these weavers are getting recognition and a fair share of the profit from their work.

Modern life has brought many challenges to many weavers scattered throughout the world, with increasing need for money to buy the necessities that they once obtained for free from nature.

In many cases, master weavers are reluctant to teach their children the craft because the pay is low, and the work is hard. Also, many

young people prefer to pursue higher education giving them more opportunities to support themselves and their families. To help mitigate this problem, collectives are being set up in more remote areas, particularly for women, to help them sell their handicrafts, which helps supplement their incomes as well as upgrading their skills.

TEXTILE COLLECTIVES

One example of these changing times are weavers of the Tompoq Topoh collective, and indigenous ethnic group, called the Mah Meri, whose men and women are skilled in craftwork. They are located on Carey Island, about 70 kilometers from Kuala Lumpur.

After upgrading their skills, they are now considered among the finest weavers in Malaysia and their business is thriving.

SOCIAL MEDIA HELPS

One way to utilize modern technology to help, instead of hinder, this preservation is through social media. India's Minister of Textiles, Smriti Irani, conducted a popular online campaign to promote handmade fabrics.

The result of all of these efforts is to ensure that these crafts do not end up as just another product in the crowded consumer market, losing their meaning along the way, while at the same time preserving their cultural heritage and uniqueness, making sure that these traditions remain for future generations. If these traditions die out, they will be gone forever, taking much more than just textile designs with them. F&F

With Rachelle

My love affair with textiles started at a young age, when I went to New York City to visit my much older, and very glamorous cousin, Sandi, an interior designer with her own office in midtown. I was tasked with sorting through little fabric swatches and organizing them. I remember distinctly that it was hard for Sandi to tear me away from the job, imploring me to finish up so we could go to lunch. I exhibited the same tenacity that I still have to this day – my last name, Tenace, literally means tenacious in Italian. My Italian friends who know me well joke about it.

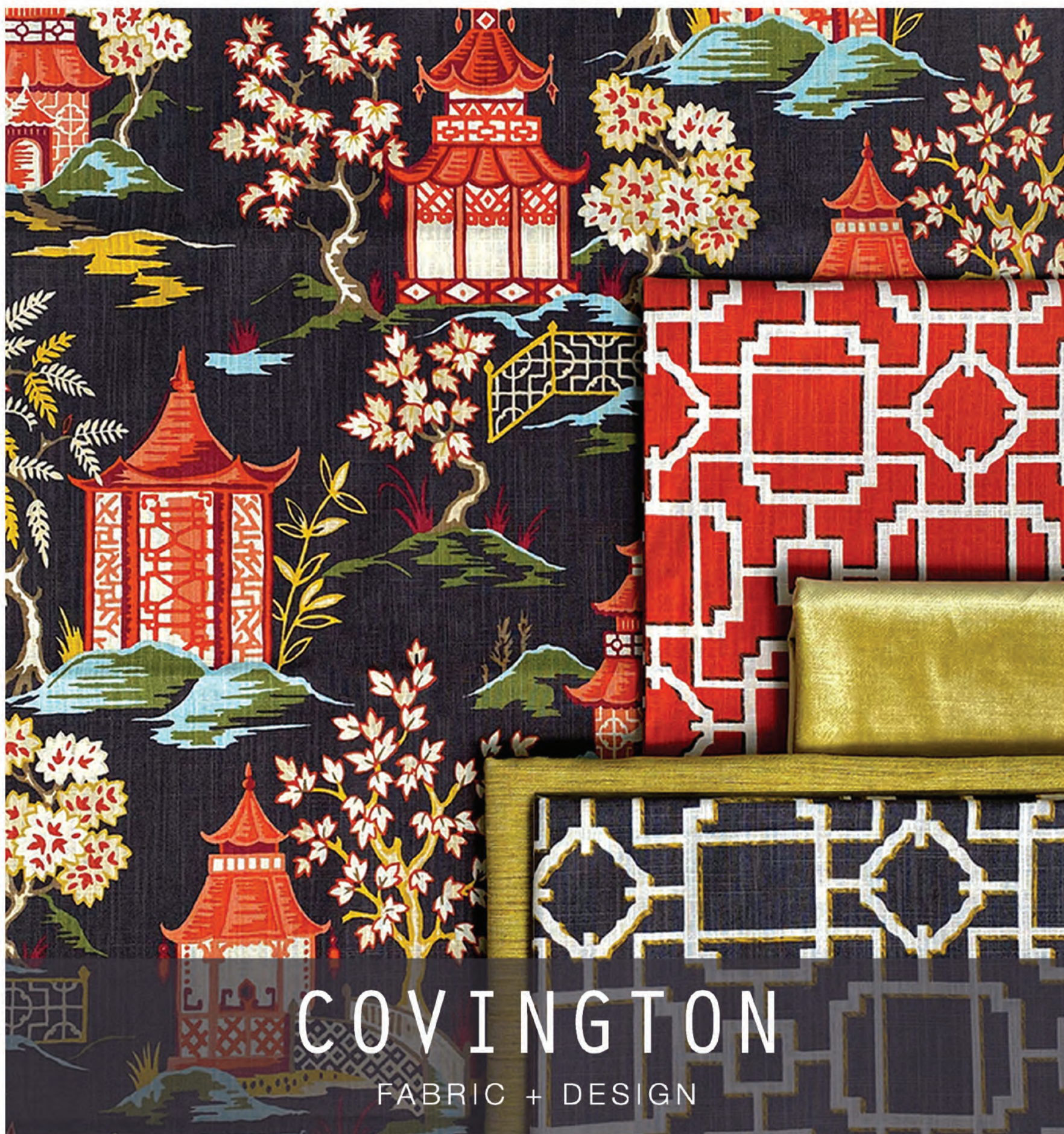
Fast forward almost a half century later, I'm still sorting through and organizing swatches, albeit now for my career in the textile industry.

I'm fortunate to have made a career out of my passion for fabrics and travel.

Now, I am embarking on a new adventure, bringing stories that I love to anyone who is interested in textiles, history, travel, design, world cultures and people, with the purpose to educate, inspire, and keep the traditions alive in this ever-changing world. Follow me as I highlight a specific company, country, or craft, in this column.

If you know any great textile stories, please send to Rachelle at: DomaniTextiles@gmail.com.

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Staying in Touch: Textile Industry Execs Share Strategies for Doing Business During COVID-19

A furniture retailer, upholstery manufacturer, textile converter, and two textile manufacturers discuss keeping employees and customers, preparing for the fall, and performance fabrics

F&FI News Network

HIGH POINT, N.C. – Not many generalizations can be made about the home furnishings industry during the coronavirus pandemic, except this: Everyone involved is eager to get back to business.

The effects of COVID-19 on the home furnishings business have been extensive – retail stores closed, manufacturing plants temporarily shuttered, and industry shows canceled. Even as there are signs of the industry reopening, it won't be going back to business as usual anytime soon. [See cover story: RV Leads Upholstery Revival.]

During a May 18 webinar, a diverse group of industry executives gave their views about doing business during “the new normal.” Their answers often depended on the type of business they are involved in or where they operate.

Textile industry veteran Jack Eger, of Crypton Home Fabrics, moderated the webinar, whose panelists were: Jeff Harris of Furnitureland South, the largest U.S. retail furniture store; George Jordan of the MT Company, a leading furniture manufacturer; Kathryn Richardson of Belgium's Libeco; Patrick Shelton of Valdese Weavers; and Greg Thomases of Swavelle Mill Creek.

For now, most of the panelists' companies are in a holding pattern.

“You know, we've pretty much taken our May launch, and pushed it to November,” Swavelle Vice President Thomases says. “We just won't have customers that will really be buying like they

normally do this season.”

Thomases notes the company has two locations at the epicenter of the pandemic. As a result, its New York office closed March 13.

“And who knows when it's going to be allowed to reopen,” he says. “So, we've taken everyone from New York, and everyone's working remotely and fortunately we were kind of all prepared and set up for this, technology-wise. So that has gone pretty seamlessly.”

Still, it has been difficult for the company to run its mill in northern New Jersey, Thomases says.

“Unfortunately, some positive cases [of the coronavirus],” he says. “We've had to work around that. Right now, we're operating the mill, but it's really only essential workers -- management and design. None of that is at the mill; everyone in those roles is working remotely.”

As for the company's warehouse in South Carolina, “it's up and running and pretty much has been the whole time.”

WORKING REMOTELY: THE NEW NORMAL

Eger, senior vice president at Crypton Home Fabrics, pointed out that businesses can usually plan based on their past performance, “but you can't do it here because this has never happened in our lifetime.”

Shelton, vice president of sales at Valdese Weavers in North Carolina, an industry leader in the residential market, says some markets have continued as normal, while others have not.

“You know, we often liken it to a battleship, as it's

hard to make quick turns and it's hard to slow down quickly,” Shelton says. “So, we work with so many different customers and so many different segments of the market, some of which have reopened, and some of which never closed because they work in the healthcare part of the market.”

Eger says large retailers such as Furnitureland South are a “frontline indicator of how our market is progressing as we move out of this pandemic.”

The massive North Carolina store has never been completely shut down during the pandemic, says CEO Jeff Harris.

“Let's face it, when you don't have consumers walking through your showrooms, it's hard to sell sofas,” Harris says. “We felt that immediately, although we were still having a lot of requests for delivery and for service, and we continue to make deliveries.”

“Throughout this entire time, we've had a lot of our people working remotely. We've had our facilities accessible. We've staggered schedules.”

The store has had many outdoor tent events since the easing of lockdowns in its home state, he says.

“When the stay-at-home mandates were lifted in North Carolina, we saw an immediate boost,” he says. “We've seen a lot of people coming in.”

PPP BRINGS EMPLOYEES BACK

Several panelists say they had to furlough employees, but that federal government assistance, via the Paycheck



Greg Thomases
of Swavelle Mill Creek



Jeff Harris
of Furnitureland South



Jack Eger
of Crypton Home Fabrics



Patrick Shelton
of Valdese Weavers

Protection Program (PPP), has helped bring people back to work.

“We had to furlough over half our staff for about eight or nine days when this thing first started, but we were able to apply for the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) PPP, which we received and that got our people back to work,” Harris says.

Harris says he's optimistic about getting enough business in late summer that there won't be any more furloughs.

At the MT Co., a custom upholstery manufacturer, it had to close for five weeks before reopening in May, says Jordan, president of the High Point, N.C.-based company.

“We've already filmed a

video on our new products,” he says. “I just think it's going to be a different means of how we get those products out to our customers.”

Valdese's Shelton says activity has been increasing at his company.

“We're seeing week-over-week increases in our business,” he says. “We have people in our facility to be able to ramp our production back up.”

CASH FLOW CHALLENGES

As is the case with many companies, cash flow has been a challenge for Libeco, says Richardson, vice president of sales at the Belgium-based company.

“As a European supplier-wholesaler ... the retailer

(continued on Page 19)

Kravet Promotes Ian Schwartz as National Sales Manager-Contract

F&FI News Network

NEWYORK – Ian Schwartz has been promoted to national sales manager of Kravet Contract, leading the commercial sales team, overseeing key accounts, and working with Kravet's executive team on sales strategy.

Schwartz served the last 11 years as an outside sales representative in New Jersey for the residential division.

"The Kravet Contract team has been doing a tremendous amount of listening to our customers and partners, to learn what new challenges they are facing, and will continue to face during this pandemic and the foreseeable future," Schwartz says. "Kravet Contract has been focusing on creating product and sample tools that will provide solutions our customers will need in this new market environment."

"A one-resource solution to all our designers needs ... has given Kravet Contract the ability and flexibility to pivot our business."

"Being that our parent company Kravet Inc. is the industry leader, and offers a one-resource solution to all our designers needs, it has given Kravet Contract the ability and flexibility to pivot our business"

His career spans 18 years at Kravet, where he began as an intern in the warehouse, sample department, customer service, and showrooms.

After graduating from Philadelphia University with a degree in textile management, Schwartz joined Kravet

with responsibilities in the Kravet Studio and Export Department. He also created and managed Kravet's government division.

Schwartz played golf for four years during college and was captain of the team for two years. He was also Kravet's Creative Seller of the Year award winner in 2018.

Schwartz will continue to reside in New Jersey with his wife, Lauren, and their three children, and works out of Kravet's New York City Studio. Schwartz will report to Dallas Chapman, senior vice president of Kravet Contract.

"Ian has exhibited the ability to increase sales and

efficiencies in his various responsibilities at Kravet," Chapman says.

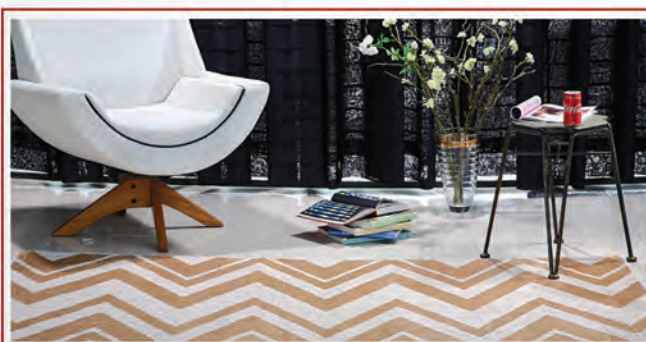
Kravet Inc., established in 1918, is an industry leader in to-the-trade furnishings. This fifth-generation-family business distributes fabrics, furniture, wall coverings, trimmings, carpets, and accessories. F&FI



Ian Schwartz



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Fradin Writes About 'The New Normal'

To my friends and colleagues,

As we continue to navigate through this challenging time, I felt the need to connect with you.

Like you all, I've had to pause from what was formerly my 'normal' life. But it's given me a lot of time to reflect. Our world of home textiles is unique to any other industry of which I've ever been a part. Many of us were born into it; many others have had great careers borne from it. One thing is for certain - once you have textiles in your blood, it stays there.

I've known a lot of you for decades - some as far back as 30 years. We have seen tough times before. Right now, I just miss the everyday business - the ringing of the phones, the flow of new orders and projects to work on, new concepts to explore, challenges to overcome, but, like you - I have taken the time to focus on what's truly important: ensuring the safety of my loved ones. Over these past few months, we've all taken on additional roles: we've become cooks, gardeners, school teachers, and more. But this is also a time to focus on strategies, on ideas, new technologies and on the future. We all have a hand in shaping the tomorrow of the textiles industry.

I don't know exactly what that tomorrow brings, but I look forward to it. It will be brighter than today. And I look forward to this textile community, this family of ours, getting back to producing and designing and fabricating and purchasing the beautiful, the sustainable, the functional, the performance-driven, timeless pieces of cloth art that we put in our hands and crumple up and pin to our office walls.

I've spoken to several of you recently. I feel the groundswell of business coming back. Here's to us all coming out of this better than we were before....

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,
Darren Fradin
President
Rockland Mills



Business-casual is now T-shirt and sweats, Fradin writes. Hair is a little longer and I have the best coworkers ever!



We're baking a pineapple upside-down cake with Max - came out great!



Jiu Jitsu classes by Zoom at home.



Marco taking care of the plants.

Rockland Closes Last U.S. Blackout Mill: Who Fills the Void?

F&FI News Network

BALTIMORE – Rockland Industries, the last manufacturer of blackout linings in the U.S., has closed its sole manufacturing plant in Bamberg, South Carolina.

As one of the world's largest blackout producers, supplying hospitality, health-care, and other industries, its exit creates a void now being filled by other companies in other countries.

Deborah Newberger sold the Roc-lon brand, her Rockland job ended in March, but now works at Hanes Fabrics continuing to sell blackouts.

"There are many decent producers in China now, [that was] not the case five years ago," Newberger says. "They've come a very long way....You have to know what you're doing."

Rockland President Darren Fradin agreed that it's important to buy blackouts from a reputable source, especially because the fabric gets exposed to the sun all day.

"I have comfort in knowing that here in the U.S. we have tremendous government oversight and regulation of chemical usage," he says. "I don't have that same comfort with products made elsewhere."

Here is a list of key blackout manufacturers from across the globe, according to a dozen blackout experts, including Newberger and Fradin.

- **Belgium:**
Flocart, Wevelgem
- **China:**
 - Zhejiang Jinchan Curtain, Qianqing Shaoxing
 - Yongshun Textile Industry Co. Ltd., Nan'an, Fujian
 - Zhejiang Huachen New Material Co. Ltd. in Yuhang District, Hangzhou
- **India:**
Alps Industries Ltd., Ghaziabad
- **Mexico:**
 - Corporativo Atelier, Mexico City
 - Rahga Mills, Mexico City
- **New Zealand:**
Textile Bonding, Auckland
- **Taiwan:**
TJM Company, Taipei
- **UK:**
Edmund Bell, Rochdale
owner of P.W. Greenhalgh

(continued from Page 16)

Staying in Touch: Textile Industry Execs Share Strategies for Doing Business During COVID-19

asks for extended terms," she says. "The manufacturer then asks for extended terms, and then it comes back to us as a fabric supplier, or one of the component pieces, to extend payment terms. And that is really challenging from a cash-flow perspective."

Richardson adds the European Union has not had a uniform policy on reopening.

"I think they're seeing some of the same challenges we're seeing state to state [in the U.S.]," says Richardson, who works in the company's New York office.

In addition, it's been tougher shipping goods from Europe.

"We're lucky in that we have a lot of differentiation with our business," Richardson says. "So, we do have a retail-facing site with consumer products. We sell bed linens, accessories, rugs,

that sort of thing."

She continues: "The one thing that we do see is that shipping freight is just a lot harder. There are fewer commercial flights, and UPS traditionally has used such flights to get transit back and forth. ... The problem is now [shipping] containers – the number of containers coming back and forth."

STAYING IN TOUCH WITH CUSTOMERS

Eger asks about how sales reps are working amid lockdowns and reopenings. The MT Co.'s Jordan says it depends on the region with 15 sales reps.

"Obviously, it's going to be dependent on store openings to be able to do [Zoom or call]," he says. "It's going to come in waves."

He and others say they've started filming training videos for its sales reps to talk

about the company's history, collections and other matters.

SOME WAITING FOR FALL TO BUY

In the meantime, Libeco's Richardson says some buyers have simply decided to wait for the fall.

"People are either not buying again for the fall, if they had bought for spring, because they're just going to transition that product to the next market," she says. "Or they're going to buy much lesser amounts for the fall, knowing that their consumer has not come back."

It's a good idea of have digital samples right now, but Richardson thinks things will go back to face-to-face selling.

Furnitureland South's Harris agreed.

"I was really excited to hear Catherine's words



Kathryn Richardson
of Libeco



George Jordan
of the MT Company

because, obviously with 1.3 million square feet of showroom space for our customers to shop, we believe it's a very tactile industry as well," he says. "And we don't see this thing completely going digital either. It's all about the experience."

DEMAND CONTINUES FOR PERFORMANCE FABRICS

Several of the panelists say performance fabrics continue to grow.

Valdese's Shelton says such materials are his company's fastest-growing category: "When you start talking about different performance brands, I think it's critical to educate and identify why yours is different – what makes it special."

The International Textile Alliance, in partnership with International Market Centers, sponsored the webinar. F&FI

Fred Richman, Richloom Fabrics Founder, Dies at 98

F&FI News Network

NEW YORK – Fred Richman, who founded the Richloom Fabrics Group in 1957, which has grown from one store into a multimillion, global operation, died on July 26. He was 98.

It has remained a family-run business for three generations. Richman's son, Jim Richman, is now the company's CEO/president, while Michael Saivetz, the senior Richman's grandson, is its COO/vice president.

Richman was born on July 18, 1922. He attended New York University, and after serving in World War II, worked in his father's textile business.

Richman started Richloom with a \$5,000 loan from his father-in-law. His son joined the company in 1972. Later, Richman retired, but carried

the title of president emeritus, and lived in Sarasota, Florida.

He was an avid outdoorsman, mountain climber, and along with his wife, Rita Richman, art collector.

Under his leadership, and succeeding generations, Richloom has grown into a major global textiles company with operations in six countries.

During the past two decades, Richloom has expanded, most significantly with its Richloom Shanghai Trading company located in Shanghai, China. In December 2019, Richloom bought a mill in High Point, North Carolina, now called Richloom Weaving.

With headquarters on Fifth Avenue here, Richloom is a fabric converter and mill, which supplies the upholstery, decorative jobber,

hospitality, over-the-counter retail, casual outdoor furniture, and recreational vehicle industries.

He is survived by his wife of 74 years, Rita. His other survivors, in addition to his son, include a daughter, Carol, and four grandchildren – Saivetz, Aliza Glasser, Jake Richman, and Katie Richman – and five great-grandchildren: Noah, Lila, and Zoe Saivetz and Elliot and Abigail Glasser.

Gifts in his memory can be made at Planned Parenthood (ujafedny.org/donate) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (jdc.org/ways-to-give). F&FI



Fred Richman

Universal Furniture's Upbeat Outlook: How a 'Top 36 Upholstery Fabric Buyers' Honoree Adapts to 'The Next Normal'



Sean O'Connor

HIGH POINT, N.C. – Being named to the latest Fabrics & Furnishing International's "Top 36 Upholstery Fabric Buyers" (summer 2020 issue) puts its honorees in some pretty prestigious company. But no matter how esteemed a business is, it still must grapple with economic ups and downs, including the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

To find out how one of the Top 36 is navigating that tumult, F&FI talked with a senior executive at Universal Furniture, a vertically integrated, to-the-trade manufacturer and wholesaler of home furniture here.

First up, F&FI asked Senior Vice President Sean O'Connor (who manages all upholstery for the company) how Universal's sourcing changed as the pandemic unfolded earlier this year.

He points to two acquisitions, both finalized last year, that are having a major impact on the company now. First, last July, Universal's Hong Kong-based parent company, Samson Holding Ltd., purchased a majority stake in a new factory in Vietnam that produces upholstered beds, fabric, and leather upholstery.

With that move, "We're paying closer attention to mill lead times, and because we haven't been able to visit with most of our fabric mills, we are revisiting previous Showtime favorites that are now in line and in production to make sure they are up to date with colors and other trends," O'Connor says.

Second was the October acquisition, again by Samson Holding, of 96-year-old Southern Furniture.

"We're not sourcing as much direct from China mills as we once did, mainly as a result of the Southern Furniture deal," O'Connor says. "That acquisition gave us the immediate ability to broaden our fabric assortment."

Looking ahead, O'Connor details some of the ways his company is coping with the "next normal" that the pandemic has wrought for the global economy. Though he believes an eventual return to more face-to-face interactions will benefit all those in the industry, he says for now, the company is wholeheartedly embracing technology to interact with clients.

"We're getting more organized as a company and believe our sales force is learning to better adapt to using technology to support the customer experience," he explains. "We're also photographing product sooner, and our merchants are holding interactive walkthroughs remotely with our designers and retailers. We're hosting designer events online and filming training videos in our factory."

O'Connor also said the company held the industry's first virtual furniture market when the Spring Market was canceled.

"In addition, we recently hosted a webinar with our home furnishings partner, Miranda Kerr, to discuss and share insights on the development process of the Miranda Kerr Home line," he says. "As part of that, she was able to give customers a tour of pieces she hand-selected for her own home."

"Opportunities like this are creating new ways to engage with customers and I think are providing some viable options for still getting business done." F&FI

Euroart Celebrates 20th Anniversary as Coronavirus Takes Toll, But 2021 Looks Bright

F&FI News Network

SHANGHAI – The Chinese market is gradually rebounding after the coronavirus pandemic, says Ricky Lu, owner of Beijing Euroart Co., a 20-year-old retailer to interior designers and distributor to wholesalers in major Chinese cities.

Euroart is considered one of the top wholesalers of upper-end lines in China, with many of the top Western editeur brands in Lu's three showrooms: at its Beijing headquarters; in the Wending Road showroom district in Shanghai; and in Shenzhen, which is on the southern tip of the central Chinese mainland and has a population of about 12.4 million.

"Our sales have been affected by the COVID crisis in the first half of 2020," Lu says. "We are in the second half now, and the market is getting back slowly. Euroart will face the first time of decreasing sales this year in its history, but I feel positive for 2021, as we have complete sales structures and strong marketing tools."

He adds Euroart has been developing its customer base for the past 20 years. The company's showrooms "will play an important role as regional-center-serving retailers and benefit from [Euroart's sister company] ADMD Design Cultural Co.'s strong relationship with the interior designers," Lu says. "The sales to designers will be increasing."

Lu says he is bullish about the future Chinese domestic market, especially as major cities mature, and those cities with medium populations continue to develop.

"China is the biggest and a fast-increasing market; it was and it will be," he says. "The business has more room to grow in the second- and third-level cities now."

Meanwhile, local demands from major cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen "will step into a steady period," Lu adds.

He says Chinese designers are also getting stronger. "The design community in these cities is getting stronger and becoming more international," Lu says. "The design business will soar. Of course, the demands for fabric will increase along with it."

As for Euroart's suppliers, "they've been great," he says.

"All our suppliers are very active – even during the pandemic," Lu says. "We help each other and encourage each other. We have received masks from ROMO. Our active partners like ROMO, Alhambra, and Kobe even joined our online training. We received many warm emails from supplier friends and Mr. Martin Waller of Andrew Martin called us many times."

"Everybody knows the human race is facing a big challenge from this virus," Lu says. "We need to help each other. Sales for everyone will be less than before, but we all are positive and optimistic." F&FI

Highlights of Beijing Euroart Over the Past 20 Years

July 26, 2000:

Beijing Euroart Co. was founded in Beijing. Specialized in European interior fabric and wholesaling in the mainland China market.

May 15, 2007:

Shanghai trade showroom opens. Apart from serving South China retailers, the showroom has played an important role in the company's designer and decorator business.

March 7, 2008:

As a fabric editeur, Euroart released its own brand, Tina Chris, to the public. Each collection has been designed by the Euroart design team or by a famous Chinese interior designer.

July 18, 2012:

ADMD Design Culture Co. is founded in Beijing. As a sister company of Euroart, it specializes in interior design promotion and links Chinese design to the outside world.

May 25, 2017:

Shenzhen trade showroom debuts. The space focuses on serving local designers and decorators.

August 28, 2019:

Euroart launches a new brand called TC at the Intertextile Fair in Shanghai. TC stands for Texture and Color, and it is a stock range serving the Chinese market by cut length. All the fabrics are imported.

Industry Legend Jack Glabman Dies at 97; Combined Two Passions: Textiles and Aviation

F&FI News Network

WASHINGTON – Furniture fabric veteran Jack Glabman died May 3, 2020.

He was 97.

Born in Chicago, he was an avid lover of aviation, and earned his pilot's license before he had his driver's license.

He graduated from the University of Chicago with an MBA and enlisted in Officers Training School in 1942. A naval fighter pilot during World War II, he served in Europe, including the Normandy Invasion, and the Asiatic Theatre Pacific, being awarded various medals. He was honorably discharged 1945.

His training and experience as a naval fighter pilot influenced his entire career path and created a love for flying.



After coming home from the war, Glabman left his family business and started his own lumber business in Wisconsin. He later entered his lifelong career in furniture fabrics, beginning with Goodall Vinyl.

Learning from an array of early industry greats and working with various companies, he met the Chatham family and proposed and founded an upholstery division. He built their nascent furniture upholstery business into the largest division of Chatham Fabrics, even outpacing their blanket business.

He pioneered a durability story by developing nylon-fiber-based yarns with DuPont and capitalizing on Chatham's yarn dye and piece dye capabilities.

He kept a keen conceptual eye with all yarn and finishing suppliers, culminating in working directly with 3M on their new Scotchgard-branded stain-protection fin-

ish. He signed a five-year exclusive contract with 3M, thereby transforming the entire Chatham line to be offered with Scotchgard on all items and featuring a heavy-duty nylon fiber.

This created a diversifying boon for his National Jobber Programs and furniture fabric categories.

Next, after working with Office Furniture Manufacturers in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he created some of the very first office panel fabrics along with heavy-duty seating fabrics.

He was a member of a U.S. trade mission to Scandinavia to promote more trade internationally of U.S. textiles.

Throughout his career, he purchased various private airplanes and was able to incorporate his love for flying as a sales tool with his various customers: from Cessna twin engines, to a Beechcraft Turbo Commander, to finally owning his own Lear jet.

He would pick up customers, such as La-Z-Boy, Kroelher, and Steel Case, and fly them to the mill for showings of new products, and then home again.

In 1983, he proposed an upholstery segment to fabric powerhouse Burlington Industries. Along with developing lines of jacquard damasks, tapestries, and tufted velvets, he positioned Burlington as a major supplier.

Next, he was the



Scandinavian visit —The United States Ambassador to Sweden, the Hon. J. Graham Parsons and Mrs. Parsons (left) chat with Mr. and Mrs. Jack L. Glabman (right) of Highland Park at a cocktail party in the U.S. Trade Center in Stockholm. Glabman was a member of a [then] recent U.S. trade delegation to Scandinavia.

founder and CEO of Print Plant Inc. in Winston-Salem, N.C., with a line he created called Charleston House. It was state of the art with Austrian Zimmer continuous and flatbed printing and finishing equipment.

Later, he met flock machinery innovator, Microfibres, and proposed that they join forces to produce prints and fiber-dyed plain fabrics. The print plant was purchased by Microfibres, and the joint effort produced an era of national and international success and distribution with many innovations from fiber size, resist printing, and air-textured base cloths.

Years later, he teamed up with Blumenthal Mills in South Carolina and started a jacquard line. Adding to the array, he developed a dobby textured line with Southern Phoenix.

Over a span of a lifetime, he strategically positioned mills in the home furnishings fabrics industry, while helping so many people in the business to achieve success.

He spent his life buying new airplanes and also developed Triad Helicopters, a business with a fleet of helicopters leased to the Department of Power in North Carolina, police departments, and local news stations.

He flew regularly to feed his passion, and when he couldn't, he would go down to the Pensacola Naval Air Station to keep himself jet certified in their simulators. There the current flyboy fighters would affectionately call him grandpa, and they would take him up for a flight in the latest jet fighters.

He is survived by his sons, Scott and Thom Glabman.

Throughout his lifetime and amidst all the action, Glabman was a devoted husband to Natalie, and a family man to his four children. He supported all his children's endeavors and interests and helped so many in the industry to achieve success. F&FI



From left Art Zellers (another legend), Thom Glabman, Tom Himes, Jack Glabman. Picture from January 2001.



Thom Glabman is the son of Jack Glabman and the owner of Hyland & Hilton real estate in LA.

August

August 24–26, 2020
Intertextile Shanghai Home
Textiles
National Exhibition & Convention Ctr.
Shanghai

November

November 15–18, 2020
Showtime
High Point, North Carolina

To Be Announced

Evteks (Istanbul, Turkey)
ACT (New York City): Online conference

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Fabric Donghia Showroom
Photography: Hilary Boyay

Arnold Gittelsohn, Founder of Morgan Fabrics, Dies at 98

F&FI News Network

LOS ANGELES – Arnold “Arnie” Gittelsohn, founder of Morgan Fabrics, died on June 12, 2020.

He was 98.

He started Morgan Fabrics in 1956, and the company that has distribution warehouses in Los Angeles, Verona, Mississippi, and Nantong, China, has grown into a leader

as a global fabric converter and supplier to manufacturers, fabricators of home furnishings, recreational vehicle manufacturers, specialty products producers, and the hospitality industry.

Gittelsohn, who was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Jan. 17, 1922, led the company for over 60 years until his retirement in 2016.

From the beginning, he set the tone for employee longevity and many remained a part of the company for over 40 years. He was held in high regard by all of his colleagues, admirers say, because he was known for his honesty and integrity.

He also valued family and brought up his two sons, Michael and Robert, and a nephew, Steven Gittelsohn, into

the company and mentored them as they would be the legacy of Morgan Fabrics.

In 1991, Michael Gittelsohn invested in the company becoming his father's partner. Today, he leads the company as chairman and CEO, and Steven is the company's vice president.

Gittelsohn joined the U.S. Marines on Dec. 8, 1941, the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and spent three years serving in the South Pacific theater during World War II. He was honorably discharged as a chief master sergeant.

He had a long love and marriage of 70 years with his late wife, Pat Gittelsohn. They had four boys together who were raised in Encino, California.

Gittelsohn had a passion for



Arnold Gittelsohn

golf and fortunately was able to enjoy the game well into his early 90s. He shared much of his success and wealth with various philanthropic organizations and received many personal awards for doing so.

Gittelsohn leaves behind two sons, Michael (Tina) Gittelsohn and Robert (Angela) Gittelsohn, grandson, Max Gittelsohn (fiancé Sara Potter), nephews, Steven and Gary Gittelsohn, and nieces, Gayle Waldman and Susan Tranchina, along with his two grandnieces and seven grandnephews. F&FI

(continued from Page 7)

Regina Gurman, 72

The line was so much in demand worldwide that Gurman could only get a limited amount of goods. She held these goods tightly and doled them out to her customers in Russia. She wrote millions of dollars in orders every year.

Recently, she represented Mario Sirtori in the Russian market.

In addition to speaking her native Russian, she also spoke English and Hungarian. She is survived by two sons and her sister, Ita.

a time that Russia and the Ukraine were riding high by offering a virtual womb-to-tomb service. She met her buyers at the airport, handled their hotels, meals, and evening entertainment – even sightseeing.

“They paid an all-inclusive fee for this. And, of course, she earned commissions as well. Her clients came to buy, unlike Americans, who came to look. Many of her clients spoke no English, but she made sure they always visited her suppliers, and that everyone was happy.

“She and Ita always stayed at the Miralago in Cernobbio (for Proposte), and usually arrived early, as did I. Regina and Ita were strictly kosher and always brought their own food, including matzah, when the shows fell during the eight-day period of celebration, for the truly observant.

“I would arrive from Malpensa and greet them on the Miralago terrace as they enjoyed an Aperol Spritz, cottage cheese, and vegetables from New York.” F&FI

Agent Tom Muzekari Remembers Gurman

“[I] just heard Regina Gurman passed away unexpectedly. Talk about a legend. She was that. No one like her.

“Regina would be a great story about our history during the 1980s and 1990s: American Weavers. She was brilliant at how she handled the Mastercraft line.

“She was one of my career heroes.”

Elaine Taylor-Gordon of Flash Force Sourcing Agents Remembers Gurman

“I met Regina Gurman and her sister, Ita, when I started in the business in 2001. Regina took me under her wing, as a fledgling.

She was a woman of the world and a real icon as a successful entrepreneur.

The sisters took their buyers by the hand and brought the business to the mill during the shows. [This was]



Regina Gurman's dog

John Celesia, 95, Remembered

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a letter to F&FI from Stan Fradin, who was a former president of Rockland Mills.

“When I joined Rockland in 1966, one of the very first people I met, was John Celesia.

“He was, for decades, a vice president of Rockland and the guy that ran Rockland's New York office until 2001. John passed away on Friday, April 24, in California with his oldest daughter and her family nearby.

“He is survived by three children and six grandchildren. John was 95 years old and passed peacefully.

“John was a walking encyclopedia of the

home-furnishing-industry companies and people. He knew everyone, whether in ready-made or made to measure or any and every converter supplying the drapery and curtain industry.

“He knew the jobbers and the buying offices and the chain stores and everyone knew him in return. He was a gentle man with a winning smile and he certainly got me off to a great start learning who was who.

“He was liked and respected by all that knew him. John will be missed. He was one of the good guys.” F&FI

Len Gliner, Former Owner of Jacquard Fabrics, 83

F&FI News Network

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.—Len Gliner, who ran Jacquard Fabrics Inc. for nearly four decades, died here June 13.

He was 83. Gliner was born Oct. 1, 1936.

Jacquard Fabrics was a small upholstery mill in Lakewood, New Jersey, that Gliner sold in March 2018 to The Pearlstine Group.

Jacquard Fabrics had annual sales of about \$6-\$7 million at the time of the purchase. Gliner had owned the mill since 1980, but retired a few years ago to Palm Beach, Florida.

His daughter, Michelle Gliner Rogers, continued to be sales manager but has since left

the company. Under Gliner's watch, Jacquard Fabrics became a resource to many high-end fabric jobbers.

It sold custom woven product direct to the hotel industry. For example, The Venetian Las Vegas was decorated with Jacquard Fabrics.

The original mill was founded in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1937, as a tie-silk manufacturer and moved to its current location in 1987. Before Gliner purchased Jacquard Fabrics, he was in the fabric jobber business from 1962 to 1980. Prior, he worked for his father in the custom drapery and slipcover business.

He is survived by his daughter, Michelle, and his wife, Donna. F&FI



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