Business Week

18th April 05 – 24th April 05

EU to apply 'safety clauses' on China textiles

18 April 2005

The European Commission aims to decide on April 25 whether to launch an investigation into booming Chinese textile imports, the first step towards applying limits allowed under World Trade Organisation rules.

Europe's textile industry is pressing the commission, the EU executive, to impose safeguard measures to curb a flood of Chinese imports that followed the end of the 31-year textile global quota system on January 1.

The US government took its first step toward curbing Chinese textile imports last week by announcing a review to determine whether the recent surge in Chinese imports had disrupted the US market.

The EU unveiled guidelines last week that could lead to limits on Chinese clothing imports if probes reveal that they have grown too quickly since the end of the quota system.

Columbia Sportswear announce new regional sales manager

18 April 2005

Columbia Sportswear International, AG, the outdoor apparel and footwear Company, has appointed Clemens Weigand as regional sales manager for Germany and Austria. Effective May 2, 2005, Weigand will be responsible for managing all sales functions in the German and Austrian markets and will report directly to André Pierre Bonamy, European sales director. He will be based in Munich, Germany.

Prior to joining Columbia Sportswear, Weigand, 37, held senior sales and marketing positions with Nike Germany and Adidas Europe, respectively as the footwear sales manager and the senior key account manager.

17,365 buyers attend Intertextile Beijing

18 April 2005

In the light of the recent textile quota, there was an air of anticipation surrounding the fifth Intertextile Beijing. Despite the uncertainties in the global market, the fair surpassed its previous success and achieved record attendance, attracting 17,365 buyers over three days, representing an increase of 6% over 2004. The show ran from 30 March to 1 April at Beijing Exhibition Centre, and was organised by Messe Frankfurt and CCPIT-Tex.

Over 14,000 of the buyers were from mainland China, coming from every province and region in the country - including Beijing (4,697 buyers), Zhejiang (1,625), Guangdong (1,556) and Shanghai (1,362).

A wide range of apparel fabrics and accessories were shown by the 560 exhibitors, who came from 17 countries and regions. Companies were present from Austria, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Pakistan, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey and the UK, with national/group pavilions from France, Germany, Italy, Korea and Taiwan and Thailand.

The next Intertextile Beijing Apparel Fabrics will take place from 28-30 March 2006 at the Beijing Exhibition Centre.

Former Microsoft CFO John G. Connors appointed to Nike's Board

18 April 2005

Nike has appointed John G. Connors, former senior vice president of finance and administration and chief financial officer at Microsoft Corp., to its board of directors. Nike's board now numbers 11. It is anticipated he will serve on Nike's Audit Committee.

Mr. Connors, 46, spent 16 years at Microsoft before announcing his retirement in January of this year and joining Ignition Partners LLC, a venture capital firm established by former Microsoft and McCaw Cellular executives.

Gola celebrates 100th anniversary with limited edition range

18 April 2005

British sports brand Gola will celebrate its 100th anniversary on May 22, and will be launching a limited edition range to commemorate the event.

The company, which was originally registered in 1905, will launch the two exclusive footwear styles on May 22. Centurion, a modern version of the traditional Gola Classics style, Harrier, will incorporate a crepe outsole and distressed white leather upper, and feature the Gola wingflash in a gold colour for men and silver for women. Centennial will be an innovative low profile option available in gold/black for men and silver/black for women, and will incorporate a football inspired outsole, with a nappa leather upper featuring a nubuck wingflash. The legendary Bronson and Redford bags will be available in leather as part of the centenary collection.

Gola has also joined forces with the RSA (Royal Society of Arts) to create a fantastic opportunity for one of the nation's art/design students to win an internship within Gola's design department. The company will be launching a book The Gola Years: 1905-2005 to highlight the roller coaster ride that the brand has experienced over the years.

VF completes acquisition of Reef Brand

18 April 2005

VF Corporation has completed its acquisition of Reef Holdings Corporation, a company specialising in premium surf-inspired footwear. The Reef acquisition adds an authentic specialty surf brand to VF's Outdoor Coalition, and extends VF's presence in the action sports lifestyle market. VF's growing outdoor array of brands includes The North Face, Vans, JanSport, Eastpak, Napapijri, and Kipling. Dave Gatto will continue as president and CEO of Reef, reporting to Mike Egeck, president, VF Outdoor, Inc.

Sales for the Reef brand in 2004 were $75 million, excluding royalties. As announced previously, the brand is looking forward to another year of double-digit growth in 2005. Reef is expected to contribute about $45 million to VF's sales and be neutral to earnings per share in 2005, and accretive in 2006.

Implus launches apara line of gel spawear inserts

18 April 2005

Implus Footcare, a provider of footcare solutions, has announced the launch of its newest product line apara. Loosely derived from the Hindu Aparajita meaning "undefeated or above all others," apara aims at delivering comfort for consumers of luxury footwear and making footwear more wearable and fit better.

Designed with Implus thermoplastic gel technology and GE silicone gel, the line seeks to bring "Luxurious Footcare" to the shoe specialty and high-end shoe channels. The line offers invisible insoles that disappear into the shoe and stick despite having non-glue backings. Encased in lively pink packaging and bearing creative names and graphics, the apara line seeks to attract the female consumer. Fastened with Velcro, the packaging can be reused over and over. There are five new items for every type of women's shoe.

"Apara takes everything we've learned in 14 years of footcare category leadership, formulates that knowledge just for women's footwear, adds some creative merchandising and creates something totally fresh for today's new luxury consumer," says John Andrews, Implus Director of Marketing. The line joins Implus range of "below the ankle" brands including Sof Sole, Airplus and Sof Comfort.

JJB profits slide 30%

18 April 2005

Sportswear chain JJB Sports has unveiled a 30% slump in annual profits amid very tough trading conditions. Margins were hit after JJB reduced clothing stock by more than £20m in a bid to boost its competitiveness.

Comparable sales had fallen 1.2 percent in recent weeks, and profits for the year fell from £90.5m to £63.3m. Shares dropped nearly 2 per cent to 215 pence per share on the announcement.

Chairman David Whelan said in a statement: "Trading conditions are as difficult as any I have known for some years. It is quite clear that consumers have tightened their belts and that this is fuelling competition between retailers."

Rumours that Whelan plans to sell his family's near-40 per cent stake in the company have been rejected by JJB Sports' finance director David Greenwood.

JJB currently has 438 outlets, including 189 out-of-town superstores and 123 smaller high street shops, as well as 24 health clubs.

9,253 buyers visit Interstoff Asia Spring 2005

18 April 2005

Interstoff Asia Spring 2005 took place 21-23 March at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The exhibition, together with Source It -

an ASEAN event in Hong Kong, attracted 9,253 buyers from 61 countries and regions.

Interstoff Asia Spring's reputation as a serious global sourcing platform is well established, as was demonstrated by the high number of buyers from overseas (32% of total). Significant increases in buyers from Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Malaysia, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, the US and Vietnam were also recorded, while the attendance levels from France, Greece, Korea, Portugal, Singapore and Spain remained similar to 2004.

Over 40 per cent of the attendees were manufacturers, 16 per cent were from trading companies, 20 per cent were buying agents, offices and importers, 7 per cent were designers and 10 per cent were wholesalers, retailers and department store buyers. The remaining visitors included trade associations and other apparel textile related services.

Amongst the visitors there were high-profile buyers from some of most important casual and sportswear labels from Hong Kong, Europe, the USA, Japan and Taiwan.
A total of 266 textile manufacturers, suppliers and designers from 12 countries and regions participated. A large proportion of the exhibitors came from mainland China looking to promote their products and to raise awareness of their production capability to international buyers.

Source It featured 117 exhibitors from 11 countries and regions including Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam. There were also garment manufacturers from Hong Kong, China and Macau participating.
The next Interstoff Asia will run from 5-7 October 2005.

Houston Fire Dept extends PPE contract with Lion Apparel

19 April 2005

The Houston, Texas Fire Department (HFD) extended its contract with Ohio-based Lion Apparel, manufacturers of uniform and personal protective equipment (PPE), by 36 months for the supply of fire fighter protective clothing. The contract began in 2001 and to date Lion Apparel has supplied nearly 2,700 sets of turnout gear. The contract extension allows for additional purchases to replace aging gear and build up reserve inventory.

Since the inception of the contract the department has added Janesville Aero Commando Proximity gear and Tactix TR51 Rescue gear to the agreement. Fire-retardant closed cell foam - placed inside the gear across the shoulders, in each arm, and at the knees - adds thermal protection and reduces the wearer's vulnerability to compression-related injuries.

"Houston's turnouts are designed for safety and performance," said Cliff Gallarneau, Lion Apparel Regional Sales Manager. "The major feature is Lion's innovative isodri Protective System that resists water absorption so that the gear stays lighter during structural fire fighting and reduces potential for steam burns and heat stress."

The fourth largest fire department in the United States, HFD employs approximately 3,600 career fire fighters operating out of 89 stations.

Turkish exhibitors report success at Motexha Spring 2005

19 April 2005

Turkish exhibitors at Motexha Spring 2005 have indicated that business was good at the show. The 500 square metre Turkey Pavilion was the show’s biggest to date housing 20 textile, leather and fashion brands. Brands included Santana, Ceyo, Atak, Zandar Shoes, Ozdoku and UC-EL, Plastab, Ferudun in the leather segment, Janine and Angel’s Story women’s wear.

In 2004, Turkey’s leather footwear, handbags and accessories exports totalled approximately $150 million and apparel exports were $7.5 billion. In the same period, Turkish leather footwear, handbags and accessories exports to the Middle East were $40 million. Exports to the UAE have grown by 200%, with lucrative contracts signed during MOTEXHA directly contributing to the increase.

Aziz Ercan Çeliki, deputy secretary general, AEGEAN Exporter’s Association (Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade), commented, “For Turkish companies targeting the Middle East fashion market, Motexha is regarded as the ‘must attend’ event to market their products to the greater Middle East and to develop business opportunities in this region.

“The Middle East has a growing share of Turkey’s leather, textile and apparel exports. We expect this to increase four to five fold within the next five years.”

Everlast surpasses license milestone

19 April 2005

Everlast Worldwide Inc., manufacturer, marketer and licensor of sporting goods and apparel under

the Everlast brand name, has entered into an extensive licensing agreement with Globus Trading Group GmbH, based in Nuremberg, Germany. This agreement means that Everlast products will now be licensed in 101 countries, surpassing the 100-country milestone.

Under the terms of the agreement Globus will produce men's and women's underwear, men's and women's socks, boxing equipment, handheld exercise equipment, aerobic equipment (treadmills, etc) and weight lifting equipment, men's, women's and children's apparel. The Everlast products produced by Globus Trading Group GmbH will be ready for shipment late in the third quarter of this year and will be distributed through sporting goods retailers and better department stores.

The North Face appoints new general manager

19 April 2005

The North Face has appointed Flemming Henriksen as its new general manager for the Nordic Region, with responsibility for all sales and marketing programmes for the brand in Sweden, Denmark, Greenland, Norway, Finland, Iceland and the Baltic states. Based out of the VF Nordic offices in Helsingor, Denmark, Henriksen will report to Patrik Frisk, The North Face's sales director for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The North Face, a subsidiary of VF Corp, the company produces technically advanced products for climbing, mountaineering, extreme skiing and exploration.

Dralon and Kelheim Fibres to form joint venture

19 April 2005

Germany's Dralon GmbH and Kelheim Fibres GmbH have signed a letter of intent in order to start a joint venture company in the area of spun-dyed (pigmented) and technical acrylic fibre.

Robert Gregan, general manager of Kelheim Fibres GmbH: "We will combine the strength of Dralon and Kelheim and create the global market leader in spundyed/pigmented and technical acrylic fibres. We are happy to join forces with such a strong partner. Our unique technology and longstanding experience with such fibres will be combined with Dralon´s innovation capability, their global market presence and last but not least their cost leadership. All of Kelheim´s acrylic business will be contributed into the JV. Dralon´s current business is not to be part of this JV.

Franz J.Büter, managing director of Dralon GmbH: "This JV is our return in the growth market of spun-dyed/pigmented and technical acrylic fibres. We will contribute all our strength and particularly our historic and current know-how in this area and will lead the business with our global position. Kelheim´s technology and experience, well trained employees and the constructive management style are strong prerequisites for significant growth in the coming years."

Radici increases sales opportunities by 50%

19 April 2005

According to Siebel Systems, Inc., a provider of customer-facing solutions, Tessiture Pietro Radici has increased the number of opportunities in its sales pipeline by 50% in 12 months using Siebel CRM Professional Edition. During the same period, 20% of these prospects were converted into closed sales deals, compared to 10% previously.

Siebel CRM Professional Edition is an on premise sales, marketing, and service solution for small- and medium-sized businesses that prefer to maintain control of their hardware and applications on-site. With CRM functionality provided in easy-to-deploy modules, Siebel CRM Professional Edition is said to provide highly configurable, extended CRM functionality through its customisation and integration tools, enabling organisations to choose the specific CRM capabilities they need to run their business.

Radici manufactures specialist yarns, polypropylene fabrics, and nonwoven fabrics. The company, with 130 employees and revenues of $43 million (2004), is a division of RadiciGroup.

Seminar to stress technical textiles opportunities in India

19 April 2005

FAITMA (Federation of All India Textile Manufacturers' Association) and Office of the Textile Commissioner has organised a one-day seminar on technical textiles, to be held in Mumbai on April 25, 2005.

During the seminar the Textile Commissioner will speak on the status and potential of technical textile industry in India and Dr. Viswanadham of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has also been invited. The German Textination and Messe Frankfurt are co-sponsoring the event.

Arvind Poddar, President, Federation of All India Textile Manufacturers Association said "The world

trade in technical textiles is over $50 billion per annum and it is growing at an accelerated face. India has almost no presence in this segment. It is, therefore, necessary to undertake aggressive efforts to popularise technical textiles in our country."

Schoeller expands facilities

19 April 2005

Swiss textile concern, Schoeller, has begun expansion work at its high-performance weaving mill and at the dye works and finishing department at the Sevelen headquarters. A new logistic centre is also under construction with the aim of increasing supply readiness and customer service.

In the context of the expansion work a new state-of-the-art exhaust air purification plant is being installed that will be linked up to the existing machinery and to a new large-scale coating plant. These measures will lead to an 80% reduction of emissions and a 20% reduction in the energy input, the company says.

The progressive system by König, used in the new plant, is equipped with both an electro filter and a wet filter, enabling for the purification of the exhaust air and heat recovery. It complements the bluesign-oriented textile production at Schoeller that adheres to most stringent standards for safe and sustainable textile production.

Since 1991 Schoeller has invested around 70 million Swiss francs (nearly $59 million) in the Sevelen production site. The current construction work is due for completion around September 2005.

French footwear manufacturers call for protective duties against China

20 April 2005

The Association of French Footwear Manufacturers has demanded urgent and effective measures against Chinese imports in a letter to French ministers and to the European Commissioner Peter Mandelson.

ANCI, the Italian association of footwear manufacturers called attention to the dangerous rise in Chinese footwear imports to Europe earlier this year and now the Fédération Française de la Chaussure, the French association of footwear manufacturers, has raised alarm over Chinese imports, highlighting the dangers in an uncontrolled increase in imports from China.

"We are worried," states the letter, signed by the chairman of the French footwear manufacturers' association, "about the significant rise in Chinese imports, which in January 2005 amounted to 18.8 million pairs, a rise of 38%. This increase is due essentially to imports of products included in the customs categories that were liberalised on 1 January. If we take into consideration only those categories then the increase stands at 92%, while the average price drops from €7 to €4.40. This trend will have catastrophic repercussions on the French footwear industry and on employment."

The figures provided by the French are worrying not only because of the consequences for the French industry, but also for the indirect impact on the European and Italian industries. In January, France's imports of Italian footwear fell by 16% in quantity and 5% in value.

Rossano Soldini, chairman of ANCI, commented, "The French data confirm our fears about China's widespread commercial aggression on the European footwear industry."

Timberland reports record Q1 revenue and earnings

20 April 2005

The Timberland Company has reported record first quarter net income of $42.2 million compared with first quarter 2004 net income of $31.1 million. First quarter revenue increased 10.1% to $354.2 million, driven by gains in both US and international markets. US revenues grew 4.0%, reflecting solid growth in footwear and apparel - and gains in both wholesale (+4.9%) and retail channels (+1.4% on a 3.9% comparable store sales gain). International results (+15.3% or +11.0% in constant dollars) were driven by strong constant dollar sales gains in Europe and Asia. Global retail comparable store sales increased 5.4%, reflecting gains in both U.S. and international markets. Overall revenue growth benefited from favorable foreign exchange rate changes - which added $7.4 million (or 2.3%) to first quarter 2005 revenue.

First quarter results were supported by strong global footwear sales. Global footwear revenues expanded 11.1% to $266.0 million, driven by growth in boots, kids', men's casual and Timberland PRO series footwear. Global apparel and accessories revenue grew 6.7% to $84.6 million, reflecting gains in U.S. and international markets.

Jeffrey B. Swartz, Timberland's president and CEO, stated, "Timberland delivered record revenue and profit results in the first quarter, reflecting continued progress in developing the

Timberland brand portfolio, through an enhanced focus on consumer segmentation and a stepped-up investment against our unique, integrated approach to brand building. The continued expansion of our global business reflects our strategies to develop our brand against discrete consumer segments with increased precision and improved execution."

Dri-release takes a more casual approach

20 April 2005

Until now Dri-release with FreshGuard has only really been used in high energy sports clothing, but it looks as this is set to change as two women athletes at Spooney Wearever have now developed a range of casual-wear that incorporates this technology.

“Once you experience Dri-release, you want your whole wardrobe made of it,” said Janice Fetter, founder of Spooney Wearever, a new casual/loungewear line based in Charleston, SC. Both Fetter and Helen Rockey who recently launched Seattle-based ‘wildbleu sleepwear’ became familiar with Dri-release through their athletic activities and established new women’s apparel lines based on its technology.

Effective at maintaining comfort during high-energy activities, Dri-release with FreshGuard has become well known in the active sports and outdoor industries since its introduction in 2000. The blend of synthetic and natural fibres that accelerates the water release rate of wet fabric can now be found in dozens of major brands of apparel, underwear and accessories around the globe.

FreshGuard, an odour neutraliser, is permanently embedded in all Dri-release fabrics. It works by blocking odour-causing sebaceous body oils from attaching to the fabric, in turn, stopping the attraction of odour-causing bacteria.

Both Spooney and wildbleu use Dri-release cotton knits - a combination of a special co-polymer polyester and cotton. While the fabric possesses the feel and appearance of 100% cotton, it has an even softer drape and “comes out of the washer and dryer each time like new” explains Fetter.

Global demand for nanomaterials to reach $90 billion in 2020

20 April 2005

According to a new study, “World Nanomaterials” conducted by the Freedonia Group, world demand for nanomaterails is set to rise to $90 billion by 2020. According to the report, this increase will come as a result of the commercial impact that they are beginning to have and the broadening applications for these materials.

Until now, nanotechnology has been applied almost exclusively in areas such as wafer polishing, textile treatments and sunscreens, however, it is envisaged that they will soon be widely used in medication, sanitation, and even power generation.
According to the authors of the study, global demand is likely to increase to $3.7 billion in 2008 and continue to expand to $90 billion by 2020, with nanoscale versions of metals and oxides accounting for a large share of this, during the first ten years at least.

The report also forecasts that the USA will remain the largest consumer of nanomaterials, due to its technologically advanced economy. However, Japan, which is the leader in research and development in this field, along with Germany, France and the UK, are also likely to be significant producers and consumers in this market.

BASF increases prices of dispersions

20 April 2005

On April 21, specialty chemical company, BASF Aktiengesellschaft, based in Ludwigshafen (Germany), will be increasing its polymer dispersion prices in Europe by €100 per metric ton. The reasons for the increase were stated as continuously rising costs.

The products affected by the price increases are used above all as raw materials for pressure-sensitive adhesives and industrial adhesives, architectural coatings, construction chemicals and as binders for fibres.

EU launches consultation on origin marking

21 April 2005

The European Commission has launched an on-line consultation exercise into the possible development of an EU regulation on origin marking. The consultation asks both European consumers and producers to comment on current practice for marking the origin of products imported into the EU. Do they find existing systems adequate or are they misleading in any way? Do they make product choices on the basis of information on product origin?

Since last year the Commission has explored the potential advantages to introducing such a system of product identification. The initiative would cover

some industrial products, particularly in the clothing, footwear and ceramics sectors.

Such a regulation would impose a compulsory mark indicating the name of the country of origin for certain products imported into the European Union, allowing consumers to be aware of the country of origin of the products they purchase. This would allow consumers to identify products with the social, environmental and safety standards associated with that country. This kind of information is a crucial part of a fair trade environment.

Origin marking of imports could also help reduce product fraud, a serious problem for European producers who rely on their reputation for high-quality branded textiles, clothing, footwear, leather goods and ceramics. Better and more reliable product marking could contribute to the competitiveness of these European industries by safeguarding their identity.

Wolverine reports record Q1 results

21 April 2005

US-based marketer of branded casual, active, work, outdoor sport and uniform footwear, Wolverine World Wide, Inc., has reported record revenue for its first quarter ended on March 26, 2005.

The company achieved revenues totalling $245.2 million, a 9.0% increase over first quarter 2004 revenue of $224.9 million.

Timothy J. O'Donovan, the company's president and CEO, stated, "Our first quarter results were driven by our strong global brands and product innovation resulting in accelerated consumer demand for the company's products. Operating improvements occurred throughout the business with Europe contributing significantly to the revenue and earnings increase."

Brantano turnover falls

21 April 2005

Belgian footwear retailer, the Brantano Group, generated a turnover of € 67.8 million in the first quarter of 2005, a fall of 4.1% as compared to the € 70.8 million achieved in the first quarter of 2004. This was said to be due to the fact that the company's shops in the Netherlands and Denmark are no longer included in the consolidated figures following their sale.

On a comparative basis (excluding the Netherlands and Denmark) turnover rose by 2.2%, due to a marked increase in sales in the UK outlets. In the first quarter of 2005 the sale of the Dutch shops was finalized and will have no affect on the result of 2005. On March 17, 2005 Brantano announced the cessation of the Danish activities. In the meantime a sales agreement was concluded for 13 of the 14 shops with several well established Danish retailers.

SATRA offers discounts on safety footwear tests

21 April 2005

New standards set for safety footwear sold in Europe have created an unprecedented demand for testing at SATRA and the UK technology centre has responded quickly to prepare test programmes for CE marking and safety certifying of safety and protective footwear,

As a result SATRA is discounting test fees for the new BS EN ISO 20344 safety footwear standards until the end of August 2005. Single sample test fees will be discounted by 20%, while multiple samples will be eligible for reductions up to 33%. These discounts are available to all footwear manufacturers and suppliers regardless of whether they are already SATRA customers or have had previous products certified at other Notified Bodies.

Executive director Austin Simmons explains, "SATRA has introduced these new discounts to encourage and help manufacturers change over to the new standards without delay and to reduce the financial impact."

China warns EU against slashing textile imports

21 April 2005

China warned the European Union on April 19 that slapping limits on Chinese textile imports could harm relations between Brussels and Beijing.

The warning came as the EU is considering how to respond to a surge in cheap Chinese imports since the January 1, and amid protests from Europe's textile industry that they need protection.

"We invite our European partner to be very careful in the use of the safeguard clauses," a representative of the Chinese embassy to the EU said, referring to trade measures the EU could use.

"Don't hurt our bilateral Chinese-European relations with a unilateral action," embassy

commercial advisor Youhou Liu told a hearing at the European Parliament.
The EU's executive commission expects to decide on April 25 whether or not to launch an investigation into booming Chinese textile imports, the first step towards applying so-called safeguards allowed under WTO rules.

The commission is facing growing pressure from the European textile industry to slap limits on cheap Chinese textile imports.

But with billions of dollars in trade at stake, China reacted furiously earlier this month to the mere suggestion that Brussels could consider slapping limits on Chinese textile imports.

Liu offered a more conciliatory tone Tuesday saying: "We are ready to listen to you, to step up our dialogue with the European Commission."

The Chinese official said that a surge in Chinese textile exports after the lifting of the quotas was "inevitable once Chinese exporting strength, held back for so long, was freed."

Columbia Sportswear nominates new director

21 April 2005

Columbia Sportswear Company, based in Portland, Oregon, has announced the nomination of Andy D. Bryant for election as a director which would increase the strength of the board to nine. Other board nominees include Gertrude Boyle, Timothy Boyle, Sarah Bany, Murrey Albers, Stephen Babson, Edward George, Walter Klenz and John Stanton, all currently directors of the company. Election will take place at the annual meeting on May 24, 2005.

Andy Bryant, age 54, is the executive vice president and chief financial and enterprise services officer of Intel Corporation.

Optimistic mood prevails at IWA & OutdoorClassics 2005

21 April 2005

The 32nd international trade fair for hunting and sporting arms, outdoor articles and asccessories, IWA & OutdoorClassics 2005, attracted 26,958 trade visitors (26,924 in 2004) through its doors at the four-day event held in Nuremberg, March 18-21.
|Exhibitor numbers increased to 1,002 from 988 in 2004.

There was a strong attendance from overseas, with people from over 100 different countries visiting the event, accounting for almost 60% of the total number of visitors and 73% of exhibitors.

“We are very satisfied; the mood at the exhibition and in the industry is optimistic,” said a delighted Gabriele Hannwacker, project manager of IWA & OutdoorClassics.

Indigo joins Première Vision and Expofil in PVE

21 April 2005

PVE S.A., the company that organises and runs the Paris fairs Première Vision and Expofil, has taken over the Indigo show, the leading exhibition for textile design and creation.

Since its launch in 1974, Indigo has been managed by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lille Métropole. Dedicated to textile design, there are two annual shows in Paris for fashion designs, and another in Brussels for home-furnishing designs. Indigo attracts over 160 exhibitors and 5,000 professional visitors to each of its Paris sessions. In the Belgian capital, the show, held alongside of the Decosit fair, welcomes over 120 designers and 3,000 trade visitors.

With this move, organisers hope to further strengthen the impact and importance of the international fashion event that brings together the PVE shows (Première Vision, Expofil and Indigo), Mod'Amont, and Le Cuir à Paris, for leather and furs, at the Parc des Expositions de Paris-Nord Villepinte, twice a year.

BASF to highlight ‘new building blocks’ at European Coatings Show

21 April 2005

At the “European Coatings Show 2005”, which will take place in Nuremberg, Germany (April 26-28), BASF will for the first time shine a spotlight on chemical building blocks for modern coatings. Under the heading “New Building Blocks for the Coatings Industry”, Dr. Rainer Klopsch and Dr. Michael Henningsen of the New Business Development unit within BASF’s Intermediates division will present development options for innovative coating products.

Rohan introduces crease resistant linen

22 April 2005

Outdoor clothing manufacturer, Rohan, has launched a new range, Travel Linen, which is said

to offer the light, absorbent, and cool qualities of linen with a crease resistant finish.

Linen has always been a summer favourite, as it's highly absorbent and has a timeless quality about it. Unfortunately, natural linen isn't really that suitable for regular travel as it's not exceptionally durable and creases easily. Rohan's new Travel Linen is said to solve both these problems by introducing sophisticated modern fibres to the blend to make the new fabric much lighter, more durable and considerably more resistant to unsightly creasing.

Furthermore, the fabric is said to be easy to wash and will dry overnight and will retain its shape after washing.

Bayer introduces new midsole material with improved durability

22 April 2005

At Simac 2005, Bayer MaterialScience AG will present a further development of its density-reduced polyurethane for midsoles called Bayflex Active Lightweight. It not only makes sports and leisure shoes lighter, it also makes them last longer. The development team has succeeded in reducing the density of the foam to 230kg/m2, making it 30% lighter than standard polyurethane foam.

Despite its low weight, the polyurethane mid-sole offers a cushioning function on its own without the need for any extra air or gel cushions. The material's ability to absorb and transfer energy supports the flexing action of the foot and ensures fatigue-free walking and running - a particularly important quality characteristic for sports shoes.

In addition, after 200,000 simulated steps in Bayer's testing laboratory, the new soling material still had 68% of its compressibility, which is a record in this weight category and also ensures that the shoes retain their damping properties over long distances.The lightweight polyurethane is also said to perform impressively in production.

Apart from a few minor machine modifications, it can be processed in the same way as conventional polyurethane. Moreover, it is suitable both for the economical direct moulding process and for unit sole production. In direct soling, the material's adhesion properties simplify the production process because it bonds permanently and without adhesives to leather, thermoplastic polyurethanes or polyurethane at the initial foaming stage. It can be easily coloured by colour injection shot by shot, and yields soles with accurate mould detail reproduction.

Avery Dennison elects new director

22 April 2005

US-based pressure-sensitive labelling materials, office products and retail tag, ticketing developer and marketer, Avery Dennison Corporation, has elected Patrick T. Siewert as a director of the company, effective April 15, 2005.

Siewert, 49, is president of The Coca-Cola Company's East and South Asia Group, based in Hong Kong. He is responsible for managing operations in a diverse group of 19 East and South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

Elscint to acquire Mango Israel Clothing & Footwear

22 April 2005

Elscint Ltd. has executed a definitive share purchase agreement for the acquisition of 100% of the equity and voting rights of Mango Israel Clothing & Footwear Ltd., the Israeli distributor and seller of the international retail brand Mango. Mango operates eight retail facilities in various cities in Israel.

Elscint has agreed to pay an aggregate amount of €2.85 million for the acquisition of the rights and an option to operate an additional retail facility.

K2 sales increase 15% in Q1

22 April 2005

American branded consumer products company, K2 Inc. has reported a 15% increase in net sales for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005, rising from $277.4 million in 2004 to $318.3 million. Net income for the 2005 first quarter was $2.3 million compared with $10.7 million for the first quarter of 2004.

Gross profit in the first quarter of 2005 increased to 32.3% of net sales compared with 31.2% in the comparable 2004 period.

Richard Heckmann, chairman and CEO, said, "Our results in the first quarter of 2005 exceeded our original guidance due to strength in both our Marine and Outdoor and Apparel and Footwear platforms. Stearns and Shakespeare generated double digit sales growth in several product lines including children's flotation devices, ski vests, fishing rods and reels, and our new line of premium fishing line. Adio skate shoes and

apparel and Ex Officio's Buzz-Off apparel brand also had double digit sales growth in the quarter. Off-setting these gains were softness in in-line skates and paintball which we had previously forecast."

K2 brands include Shakespeare, and Pflueger in the Marine and Outdoor segment; Rawlings, Worth, in the Team Sports segment; K2, Volkl, and Marker, in the Action Sports segment; and, Adio, Marmot and Ex Officio in the Footwear and Apparel segment.

Apparel helps Oakley to post record Q1 sales

22 April 2005

Oakley, Inc. has announced record results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005. First quarter net sales increased 10.2% to $141.8 million, a first quarter record, compared with $128.6 million in the first quarter of 2004. Net income for the first quarter totalled $7.4 million, compared with net income of $4.2 million earned in the first quarter of 2004.

Combined first quarter gross sales of the company's newer categories, consisting of apparel, prescription eyewear, electronics, footwear and watches, grew 16.1% to a record $60.6 million. These sales accounted for 40.4% of total gross sales.

Oakley chief operating officer, Link Newcomb commented, "Based on our strong first quarter results and the expectations for our planned introductions, we now expect full year 2005 net sales growth near the upper end of our previously issued guidance of 10 to 15 percent and earnings growth in the high end of an increased range of 15 to 20 per cent over 2004."

Oakley started producing high performance sunglasses; however, the company has expanded its product range to include performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, electronics and watches to consumers in more than 100 countries.

Lutz Vetter named new export manager at Vaude

22 April 2005

Lutz Vetter (34) has been appointed as export manager for the Mountain Sports Specialist, Vaude. He will take over the direction of international sales starting May, 2005.

Lutz Vetter previously worked for many years on sporting goods labels Reusch and Quiksilver. As country sales manager at Reusch, he was responsible for the development and execution of market specific strategic sales initiatives in many regions of Europe and Latin America. At Vaude he will continue to expand the international sales network and promote international sales, which now account for some 40% of Vaude's total sales.

Regatta to sponsor Urban Escapes

22 April 2005

British outdoor brand, Regatta, has been confirmed as one of the main sponsors at the forthcoming Urban Escapes show, to be held for the first time June 17-19, 2005 at the Lee Valley Showground, UK.

Regatta will be sponsoring the Village Green, the main meeting point of the event with a large 'big top', seating area and entertainment.

Bayer develops new lightweight polyurethane for safety boots

22 April 2005

With the aim of making safety boots lighter, Bayer MaterialScience AG has now developed a new density-reduced polyurethane ester system called Bayflex Safety Lightweight, which, depending on the construction of the sole, enables shoe manufacturers to produce safety boots that weigh up to 30% less than before.

The material and technology concept for the lightweight polyurethane is based on a foaming technique optimised by Bayer MaterialScience and Klöckner Desma Schuhmaschinen GmbH, Achim, Germany. According to Bayer, not only does the system reduce the density of the rugged sole material to 350 kg/m2, manufacturers also benefit from all the advantages that polyurethanes have to offer in the production of midsoles. For example, the lightweight safety boots can also be manufactured by the economical direct moulding method.

"Despite its lightness, the innovative material naturally has all the qualities you would expect of materials used to make safety boots," says Dr. Erhard Michels, a shoe expert in the Polyurethanes Business Unit at Bayer MaterialScience. With its claimed high mechanical strength and excellent resistance to tear propagation and swelling in aggressive media, Bayflex Safety Lightweight protects the midsole from damage under tough environmental conditions and gives the foot permanent protection. The sole can also be given an

antistatic treatment for work in electromagnetically sensitive rooms.

Deckers Outdoor reports record Q1 results

22 April 2005

Deckers Outdoor Corporation has reported record financial results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2005. Net sales increased 45.2% to $64.3 million versus $44.3 million in the same period last year. Net earnings for the quarter increased 65.1% to a record $8.9 million compared to earnings of $5.4 million last year.

Deckers Outdoor Corporation designs and markets functional and fashion-oriented footwear developed for both high performance outdoor activities and everyday casual use. The company's brands include Teva, Simple and UGG.

Johnson Golf Brands launches new golf footwear line

22 April 2005

Following the successful introduction of its 2004 models, Johnson Golf Brands, Inc. has launched its new spring 2005 New Wave golf footwear line. Featuring patented comfort technologies, the new line incorporates full box toe styling and is said to offer great comfort and traction technology.

The 2005 spring line includes three models, Pipeline, a classic saddle, two-year waterproof, full grain leather upper, New Wave, a synthetic leather six-month waterproof classic saddle and Fleet, a synthetic leather six-month waterproof athletic model.

"We spared no expense in crafting great looking, super comfortable shoes for the avid golfer," said Kevin Johnson, managing director of New Wave.

"We incorporated European styling and exceptional comfort with our ProFlex comfort footbed, to create a line of shoes unsurpassed in great looks and comfort. We used a patented, proprietary injected EVA outsole with Duran for great support and stability. Replaceable, Stinger Spikes provide great traction in all weather. We have athletic and classic styles to fit every need."

Johnson Golf Brands, Inc. was founded in 2004 by golf industry veterans Donald Johnson and Kevin Johnson. The company manages four brands including New Wave Footwear, Back Bay Golf, Island Authentic and Johnson Private Label.

Rompaleder and Rebac develop anti-infective leather

22 April 2005

Netherlands-based Rompaleder Ltd, in conjunction with its German licensee Rebac GmbH, has developed a method of applying an anti-infection product into shoe leather to reduce foot infections. Representatives of both companies will present this new product at Lineapelle in Bologna next week.

The product employs a biophysical method using Rebac’s highly developed equipment to create a permanent anti-myotic and antibacterial atmosphere inside the shoe. It reduces the risk of re-infection and also solves the problem of offensive odours. It is claimed that this method can banish bacteria and fungus from shoes permanently.

As 60% of the world’s population and 90% of athletes suffer from mycosis between the toes and on the feet, it is believed that there is a large market for this product. Fungus and bacteria are also a big additional risk for sufferers of diabetes (now the world’s second most common disease). People who wear the same shoes each day, such as soldiers, or workers who wear safety shoes, often suffer with fungal and bacterial diseases. Sportsmen and women, especially runners and football players, often wear the same shoes for months on end; and spend hours surrounded by contagious fungus and are bacteria every day in areas such as swimming pools, gymnasiums, showers and dressing rooms. If shoes are treated with an anti-infective product, the risk of infection and re-infection is reduced.

According to the Rompaleder and Rebac, this method can, in principle, be applied to all types of leathers, including military, everyday, sports, and safety shoes.

VF, Varvatos create new partnership

22 April 2005

Designer of luxury men's and women's sportswear, tailored clothing and accessories, John Varvatos, has joined forces with VF Corporation to create a new partnership to be called John Varvatos Enterprises, Inc. Varvatos will serve as CEO and president of the new company.

VF, a global producer of branded apparel, obtained the John Varvatos business as part of its 2003 acquisition of Nautica Enterprises, Inc. Under the terms of the agreement, concluded in

March, VF sold a 20% interest to Varvatos in the formation of the new company.

"We see enormous potential for John's business and are delighted with this new partnership," said Eric Wiseman, vice president and chairman of VF's Outdoor and Sportswear coalitions. "John is a highly respected talent in the fashion industry and we are honored to be a part of his vision and success."

John Varvatos luxury goods are sold through department and specialty stores, as well as in four John Varvatos retail stores, located in New York, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and Short Hills, NJ.