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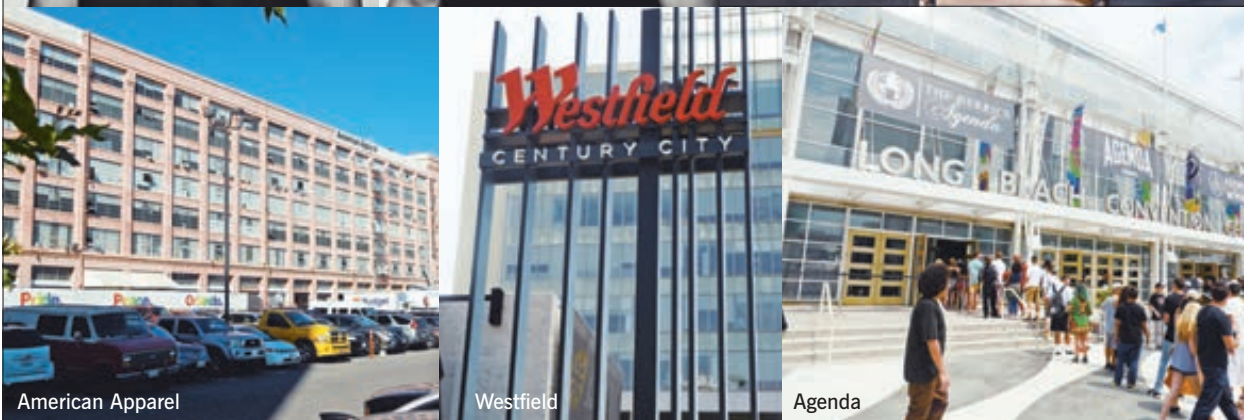
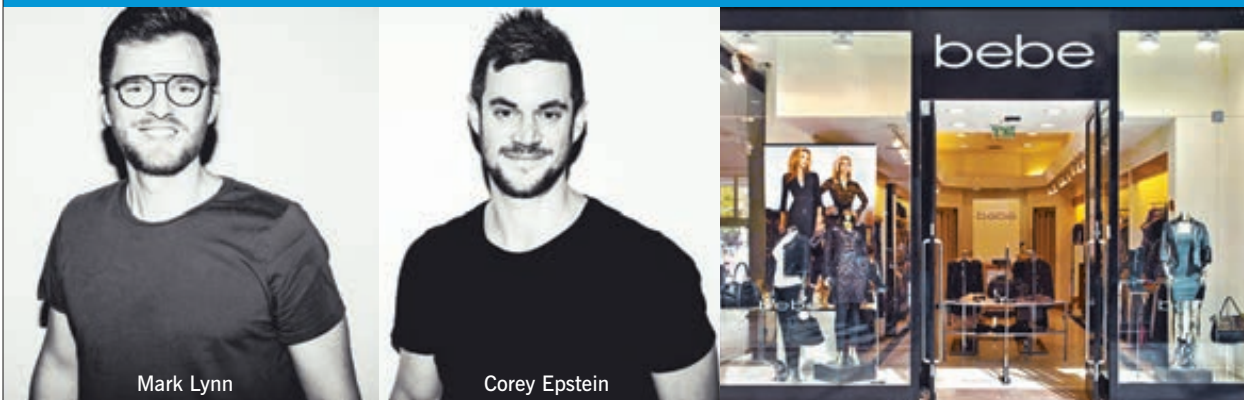
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THE PEOPLE, COMPANIES AND IDEAS THAT MADE NEWS IN 2017

From high-profile bankruptcies and companies reinventing their brand to revamped shopping centers and new beginnings for entrepreneurs, the year has been filled with news that has kept the apparel industry evolving.

American Apparel was bought by a Canadian enterprise, launching American Apparel founder Dov Charney in a new direction with his latest venture, called Los Angeles Apparel. The nonprofit Fashion Business Inc. closed its doors, but its founder turned around and started a new company, called Fashion for Profit. The ever-innovative Agenda trade show revamped its event and opened the doors to consumers, and longtime contemporary clothing firm BCBGMaxAzria is without its founder, Max Azria, after being bought by a brand-management company. Our look at the movers and shakers that influenced the local apparel scene begins on page 3.



UCLA Economists Predict a Healthy 2018 With Clouds on the Horizon

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

The economic world has been pretty rosy in the last few years with consistent growth, falling unemployment rates and rising wages.

That picture of health will continue through 2018, but UCLA economists are seeing some headwinds approaching in 2019.

"There is a momentum coming from the recent strength in 2017, strong equipment spending, the likelihood of a tax cut and a consumer who is benefiting from higher asset prices and the prospect of higher wages," said UCLA senior economist David Shulman, one of the economists who wrote the recent "UCLA Anderson Forecast for the Nation and the Economy," which was released Dec. 6.

One of the more recent movers and shakers to the economy includes a giant jump in equipment purchases, up 8 percent in the two most recent quarters. That is expected to continue into next year and help push the country's gross

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FIBER & FABRIC

Cone, Lenzing and Unifi Partner for Future Black+ Denim With Recycled Materials

By Alison A. Nieder *Contributing Editor*

Fiber makers **Lenzing** and **Unifi** have teamed up with fabric mill **Cone Denim** to introduce **Future Black+**, a denim made with Unifi's recycled **Repreve** fibers and **Lenzing Modal**.

A pair of jeans made from Future Black+ contains up to 17 recycled plastic bottles, according to the companies. The colorfast, fade-resistant fabric is a mix of Repreve recycled fibers with the soft hand of Lenzing Modal fibers.

Future Black+ denim is made by dope dyeing the fiber. Introducing color during the fiber-production process saves energy and creates more-permanent colorfastness because the dye permeates the entire fiber rather than just the surface. According to company tests, denim made from Future Black+ retained its color even after more than 20 washes.

"Lenzing has always been committed to sustainability

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Agenda Introduces Digital Marketplace

The **Agenda** trade show is going digital.

The 14-year-old event and **NuOrder**, a Los Angeles-headquartered business-to-business e-commerce platform, announced they would introduce a digital extension of Agenda at the upcoming Jan. 4–5 show in Long Beach, Calif., and at the Feb. 12–14 run of Agenda in Las Vegas.

Agenda's digital marketplace will become a crucial part of the Agenda experience, said

da. People need to touch and to feel product. They need to shake hands. We extend that to the other 360 or so days a year," he said.

"Retailers going to trade shows only have two to three days to conduct business. They can run out of time and not see 20 other brands. Retailers can map out a show better," Wells added, noting he hopes the digital marketplace will complement the physical trade show.

The digital marketplace, which does not have a separate name from Agenda, will start with 50 brand sponsors and 500 VIP retailers. All retailers will be welcome in the market, Wells said.

Eventually, the market will be rolled out to include many more brands. To participate in the digital marketplace, brands will be required to exhibit at the physical Agenda. The Agenda digital marketplace will be separate from NuOrder's digital marketplace, where 800 brands and 300,000 buyers participate.

At the digital Agenda marketplace, brands can upload catalogs and line sheets to NuOrder's platform to work with retailers at the

physical show and then after the show. Retailers can browse brands through social media-style profiles that will contain credit applications as well as feeds from **Instagram** profiles run by brands.

Agenda's launch of an online trade show comes after trade-show vendors have been complaining for some time now about declining buyer attendance throughout the market. Jason Bates, a former trade-show producer and founder of the **Derelict Showroom** at the **California Market Cen-**

ter, said Agenda's new venture should find an interested market.

"There's a huge amount of cost savings not having to get trade-show booths and not having to travel," Bates said. He said the idea of a digital trade show was pitched to him when he was producing **Class**, a trade show that took place in 2011 in Santa Monica, Calif. While there was interest in the ideas and news stories covered the idea of a virtual trade show, the concept didn't take off. But times have changed, Bates said.

"I don't know if brands were technologically up to speed and if the technology was there, but now there may be more of an appetite," he said.

UBM, which produces the sprawling **MAGIC** trade shows in Las Vegas, has been running the virtual trade-show site *shopthefloor.com*, which has been in existence since 2013. Mike Alic, managing director of UBM Fashion, said more than 3,000 brands run profiles at the e-market.

In 2018, ShopTheFloorPremium will de-

but. It will offer new features such as Sales-Match, which helps brands find retailers who would be open to their products based on each business's criteria. Other new features: Lead Insights, which allows brands to see and request connections with retailers who view their digital showrooms, and Leads365, a smartphone app that allows vendors to scan trade-show badges and business cards and import the info to their ShopTheFloor account.

NuOrder's digital marketplace for Agenda has been going through a test phase since November. One brand in the test phase got 15 leads from retailers during November, Wells said.

The digital marketplace will be an integral part of the Agenda experience, Levant said. It will not feel separate from the physical trade show. "There's a lot of talk about experiential retail. We've done a lot to make Agenda more experiential, less transactional," Levant said. "It is as important to be digitally focused as well as experientially focused. This is a great way to do it."—*Andrew Asch*

COURTESY OF AGENDA AND NUORDER



DIGITAL MARKET: Home page for Agenda and NuOrder's e-marketplace seen on various devices

Aaron Levant, Agenda's founder. As digital commerce becomes more central to all businesses, it is crucial for trade shows to do more than produce a website. "In the long run, if we don't do it we'll be irrelevant," Levant said of the traditional trade-show business model.

But the physical Agenda, which runs twice-a-year shows in Long Beach and Las Vegas, will continue to be healthy, said Heath Wells, NuOrder's cofounder and chief executive officer. "We can't replicate Agen-

Surf Expo Adds New Category to Trade Show

Surf Expo, known for showcasing all kinds of apparel and accessories related to surfing and other water-related sports, is adding a new section called Bluewater.

Bluewater, which will debut at the next Jan. 25–27 show in Orlando, Fla., will feature products for the inshore and offshore fishing aficionados. Anchoring the new section will be legacy companies such as **Salt Life**, **Bimini Bay** and **Yeti**.

"We are excited to return to Surf Expo and to be in the new Bluewater section," said Larry Laska, Salt Life's director of marketing. "Bluewater is the ultimate destination for those who live the salt life to see the latest innovations in saltwater apparel and gear."

Featured products in the new section will include performance and lifestyle apparel, accessories, outerwear, footwear, sportswear, T-shirts, sunglasses and other items.

The new section will have a Bluewater lounge and will feature a flats skiff by **Hell's Bay Boatworks**.

"For years, Surf Expo has been a top trade event for brands rooted in the inshore and offshore apparel market," said Roy Turner, Surf Expo's show director. "Recent show trends have seen a new group of brands and retailers emerge, especially in performance apparel. Creating this stand-alone category will address the growing market needs and provide our retail buyers with more opportunity."

Bluewater will be centrally located on Surf Expo's show floor bordered by the Paddle, Surf and Resort categories.

Surf Expo is a longtime boardsports and beach/resort lifestyle trade show held in January and September. It is owned by **Emerald Expositions**, based in San Juan Capistrano, Calif.—*Deborah Beltrum*



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Calendar

Dec. 8

Fashion With a Cause
California Market Center
Los Angeles

Holiday Sample Sales
California Market Center
Los Angeles

Dec. 9

2017 Santee Winter Wonderland, hosted by the LA Fashion District BID
11th Street between Santee Street and Maple Avenue
Los Angeles

Dec. 15

Holiday Sample Sales
California Market Center
Los Angeles

Dec. 22

Holiday Sample Sales
California Market Center
Los Angeles

Jan. 4

Agenda
Long Beach Convention Center
Long Beach, Calif.
Through Jan. 5

Jan. 7

Accessories The Show
Intermezzo Collections
Children's Club
Fame
Moda
Jacob Javits Center
New York
Through Jan. 9

There's more
on ApparelNews.net

For calendar details and contact information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

Submissions to the calendar should be faxed to the Calendar Editor at (213) 623-5707. Please include the event's name, date, time, location, admission price and contact information. The deadline for calendar submissions is the Tuesday prior to Friday publication. Inclusion in the calendar is subject to available space and the judgment of the editorial staff.

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After Decades on the Contemporary Clothing Scene, BCBGMaxAzria Declares Bankruptcy and Is Sold to a Brand-Management Company

When Max Azria established his **BCBGMaxAzria** brand in 1989, he was immediately off to the races in the world of women's contemporary clothing.

Tapping into his French and Tunisian roots, the brand was named after a French saying, "Bon chic, bon genre," a hip Parisian phrase meaning "Good style, good attitude."

For decades, the Los Angeles label was very popular with high-end department stores and boutiques. Later, BCBGMaxAzria branched out and opened its own chain of stores that by 2006 numbered 550 worldwide.

It also acquired the French label **Hervé Leger** in 1999 and started up **BCBGeneration** for a younger, more price-conscious customer.

But the recession of 2008, the blossoming of fast-fashion retailers and the advent of online shopping took their toll on the company as debt mounted. At one time, BCBGMaxAzria had \$685 million in loans owed primarily to **Guggenheim Partners Investment Management** and its affiliates.

In 2015, Guggenheim Partners swapped its debt for 80 percent equity in the company, eventually pushing Max Azria out the door. On March 1, the company filed for Chapter

11 bankruptcy protection.

This summer, **Marquee Brands** paid \$108 million for the company's intellectual-property rights for all three brands. **Global Brands Group** paid \$23 million to be the licensee for Marquee Brands with the intention of continuing to manufacture the brands' clothing collections at the same factories that were used by BCBGMaxAzria. Global Brands is also operating some of the BCBGMaxAzria stores in the more profitable locations.

Marquee Brand executives said they acquired the brands because they thought they still had legs. Chief Operating Officer Cory Baker said the BCBG customer is still a loyal shopper, and Marquis planned to keep the contemporary look of the brand, which would continue to sell from \$100 to \$400. In the past, the typical customer has been between the ages of 20 and 35.

Special attention will be given to the Hervé Leger brand, which was slightly neglected and is an under-penetrated luxury brand with an international market. The new owners see Hervé Leger growing with more licenses for eyewear, footwear, luxury fragrances, handbags and lifestyle categories.—*Deborah Belgun*

Bebe Closes All Its Stores After Selling Half Its Label

For decades, **Bebe Stores** struggled as its losses mounted every year. Top executives came and went but still no solution.

So this year, Bebe pulled the plug on its retail chain, closing 168 stores and laying off 700 employees as its operations wound down. Revenue now comes exclusively from royalty fees from wholesale licenses.

The chain, known for its contemporary collection of feminine and flirty dresses, had a long track record as a successful endeavor. It was founded in San Francisco in 1976 by Iranian-American businessman Manny Mashouf, who in later years transferred his design studio and much of the company's operations to Los Angeles.

For years, the company was running in the red. In 2016, Mashouf sold half the brand for \$35 million to **Bluestar Alliance**, a New York brand-management company that has snapped up labels such as **English Laundry**, **Nanette Lepore** and **Catherine Malandrino**. But that didn't fix the financial problem.

In the middle of this year, Bebe terminated all the leases on its mostly mall-based stores at a cost of \$65 million and decided to revamp its business model. Its leases were mostly in malls owned by **Simon Property Group Inc.** and **General Growth Partners**.

Bebe also sold its distribution facility northeast of San

Francisco for \$22 million and put its Los Angeles design center up for sale.

The Bebe stores may be dead, but the contemporary label isn't. Last August, with Bluestar in the driver's seat, a new collection of sexy dresses was launched with new sizes and new categories such as bridal and professional attire.

The video and photography for the campaign were shot by Emma Summerton at the famous **Chateau Marmont** on Sunset Boulevard.—*D.B.*



After Bankruptcy, Quiksilver Changes Name and Goes on the Offense

About a year after emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, **Quiksilver Inc.**, which had been one of the world's dominant surf brands since the late 1970s, changed its corporate name.

In March, it announced that its new corporate name would be **Boardriders Inc.**

Like Quiksilver, the new company is headquartered in Huntington Beach, Calif., and serves as the parent to Quiksilver brands **DC Shoes**, **Roxy** and **Quiksilver**.

But the new name is also meant to show the world that the long-running surf company is embarking on a new chapter, said Dave Tanner, managing director of **Oaktree Capital Management L.P.**, the investment management firm that structured Quiksilver's exit from bankruptcy.

"The company has spent the last 18 months focused on rebuilding its foundation from the bottom up, and the results are showing. While we will always maintain the discipline

of our new ways of running the business, we are excited to begin to turn our focus toward serving our customers and consumers within the board-riding community in new and innovative ways. While our industry dynamics continue to be challenging, this is a company that is now prepared to be playing less defense and more offense," Tanner said.

Quiksilver announced that it had plans to open a Boardriders shop in Malibu, Calif., last fall, but the store has yet to open.

Meanwhile, Boardriders recently made a proposal to acquire all of the outstanding shares of rival **Billabong International Ltd.**

In a Billabong press release, the company's board agreed to grant "due-diligence access" to Boardriders so the surf company could kick Billabong's proverbial tires and submit a formal proposal. This due-diligence process will take a number of weeks.—*A.A.*

After Gordon Bros. Bid, Wet Seal Reemerges

After a tumultuous period of proxy fights and bankruptcies, teen retailer **The Wet Seal** seemed to be about to call it quits.

In January, Wet Seal announced it would close all its physical stores. The news spelled the end of a retailer that had been selling teen fashions since 1962 and had been a familiar presence in malls for more than 50 years.

In 2013, Wet Seal, based at the time in Foothill Ranch, Calif., operated 464 stores for its Wet Seal division and 62 stores in its **Arden B** division, which closed in 2014.

But in March, Wet Seal got a reprieve. **Gordon Brothers**, a Boston-headquartered finance company with a focus on restructuring distressed companies, announced it had outbid its rivals to acquire the intellectual property of Wet Seal for \$3 million, said Ramez Toubassy, president, brands for Gordon Brothers.

"Despite the increasing challenges facing teen retailers, we at Gordon Brothers strongly believe in the long-term viability of the category," Toubassy said in a statement. "Our plan for Wet Seal is to rebuild and reposition the brand and develop a unique new business model to best position it for future success."

Post deal, Wet Seal went on a hiatus, but on Sept. 8 the retailer sent a message on its **Twitter** feed: "You've been patient but the wait's almost over! ... We're coming for ya!"

According to its website, the company is now headquartered in downtown Los Angeles. It currently sells tops, dresses, outerwear and accessories at www.wetseal.com. Wet Seal's **Instagram** account promises that in the future the retailer will be offering shoes and denim.—*Andrew Asch*

Ilse Metchek, California Fashion Association

Looking for apparel industry statistics? Call Ilse. Business intelligence? Call Ilse. Advice about the impact of upcoming legislation on apparel manufacturing or trends in domestic versus offshore production? Call Ilse.

Ilse Metchek, the president of the **California Fashion Association**, has an encyclopedic knowledge of apparel-manufacturing practices and a vast contact list that includes everyone from apparel makers, finance executives and attorneys to textile resources, customs brokers and international trade organizations. If she can't answer your question, no doubt she knows someone who can.

The insider's insider, Metchek has been with CFA since it was founded in 1995, after a career spent as a designer, a manufacturer and executive director of leasing at the **California Market Center** (then called the **CalMart**). When she's not keeping CFA members informed about key industry issues or helping to promote their projects, Metchek organizes and presides over business seminars on topics such as intellectual-property issues, financing and export opportunities, fashion technology, and consumer-behavior trends.

This year, Metchek presented B2B seminars on the state of the industry at the Las Vegas trade shows, the **LA Textile Show**, the **Fashion Industry Human Resources Association**, the **YMA Scholarship Fund's** "Hearst Summer Institute" in New York and to several international trade delegations looking to break into the U.S. apparel market.

She is an informational resource for press, lawmakers and educators looking for insight into the apparel industry on hot-topic issues such as California's strict made-in-the-USA labeling requirements or recent court decisions that are poised to affect how the apparel industry conducts business.

There's also a philanthropic side to CFA, through its sister organization, the **California Fashion Foundation**, which supports a number of causes as well as hosts an annual scholarship luncheon and an annual Christmas party for neighborhood children.—*Alison A. Nieder*

Agenda Seeks New Format for Trade Shows

The fashion business has gone through major changes, but the basic model for fashion trade shows has not budged, said Aaron Levant, founder of the **Agenda** trade show and senior vice president of trade-show producer **Reed Exhibitions**.

In July, he changed the format of the 14-year-old trade show by introducing a consumer day at Agenda in Long Beach, Calif. It may be the only major consumer day produced by a trade show in North America.

At the consumer day, called **Agenda Festival**, 15,000 people spent \$45 for advance tickets to shop at more than 500 booths, to dine at food trucks and to listen to a hip-hop concert headlined by Tyler, the Creator and Ludacris at the **Long Beach Convention Center**.

For fashion, attendees were treated to exclusive items such as airbrushed socks from **Stance**, a brand that popularized the sock as a fashion item at action-sports shops; monogrammed windbreakers and bags from accessories

brand **Herschel**; and sterling-silver jewelry from the lifestyle line of the athletic brand **Champion**.

The event was deemed a success, and a sophomore run of Agenda Festival will be produced at the January show.

The consumer day was inspired by the success of **ComplexCon**. Like Agenda Festival, it is a unique mix of a consumer-style trade show, hip-hop musical performances, art galleries and a mecca for high-end sneaker obsessives.

Reed built the show with media platform **Complex**, which is helmed by urban style pioneer Marc Ecko. When the sophomore ComplexCon ran in November 2017, 50,000 people attended the event. Tickets cost \$75 to \$100, with VIP passes priced up to \$400.

After ComplexCon's inaugural event in 2016, Bobby Hundreds, born Bobby Kim, founder of leading streetwear brand **The Hundreds**, enthusiastically endorsed the idea of producing a trade show-like market for fans.

"Why are the trade shows restricted from the kids? Why insulate brands from the community that supports them?" he wrote in a 2016 blog.

After the 2017 show, he confessed mixed feelings on the event. "On one hand, the festival was an undeniable success," he wrote. "I used to describe ComplexCon like an Agenda meets Comic Con. But now, I'd say it's a massive rave or **Disneyland** on a blackout day. Rivers of people drifting around aimlessly, stupefied."

Levant and his colleagues are looking for other ways to offer alternative programming at other trade shows. During the February run of Agenda in Las Vegas, Agenda will produce the **Assembly Conference** with two other trade shows: **Capsule** and **Liberty Fashion & Lifestyle Fairs**. A brand statement described it as a conference for retailers and brands that will feature educational seminars, networking opportunities and keynote speakers.—*Andrew Asch*

Hitting the Denim Blues, True Religion Reorganizes After Bankruptcy

Los Angeles premium-denim companies that sold their expensive dungarees to fashionistas for hundreds of dollars were flying high until a few years ago when many companies saw sales slide precipitously.

One of those was **True Religion**, the Los Angeles denim brand whose blue jeans were known for the horseshoe design embroidered on the back of their pants. Chinese counterfeiters became so aggressive in knocking off their jeans some 10 years ago that the company hired counterfeit investigators to confiscate fake True Religion jeans sold at swap meets and at small stores. The company even trained customs inspectors to recognize the difference between knock-off True Religion jeans and the real deal.

The denim label was doing fine until it hit a rough patch in 2013 and sales took a swift decline. The culprit for missed sales was competition from online sites selling blue jeans for less, department stores that were slashing prices to lure shoppers and the popularity of activewear replacing denim.

A bit of cost cutting in travel expenses, sample spending and a 25 percent reduction in the work force didn't keep the financial wolves from the door.

In July, with net losses mounting, True Religion filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to stay afloat. Several months later, the company emerged from bankruptcy by reducing its term loans from \$471 million to \$113.5 million and extending the loans' maturity dates to 2022.

Citizens Bank, which provided a \$60 million loan for the company to continue operating while it reorganized, provided an additional \$60 million exit loan for cash to execute its growth plan.

At the time of filing bankruptcy, True Religion said it wanted to close 27 of its approximately 140 stores. One of its commercial retail creditors was **Malibu Village** in Malibu, Calif., which was owed nearly \$107,000 at the time of the bankruptcy filing.

True Religion is hardly the company it used to be when cofounder Jeff Lubell launched the venture in 2002. When Lubell sold his company in 2013 for \$835 million to **TowerBrook Capital Partners**, True Religion had a profit the previous year of \$46 million on revenues of \$467 million. For fiscal 2017, the company had a net loss of \$78.5 million on \$369.5 million in revenues.—*Deborah Belgium*

Frances Harder Launches Fashion for Profit

After 18 years of teaching fashion executives how to make money, Frances Harder turned around and took some of her own advice.

In October, the educator created a new company, called **Fashion for Profit**. The venture takes its name from her book "Fashion for Profit," which recently published its 10th edition.

This comes after Harder closed **Fashion Business Inc.**, a nonprofit she created in 1999 to help emerging designers and new apparel businesspeople get off the ground. It shuttered in July.

FBI offered classes and webinars as well as advice at a reasonable price. But Harder said the costs of running the nonprofit were increasing and competition for nonprofit funds was getting tougher.

The Fashion for Profit group will offer seminars on entrepreneurial basics such as writing a business plan. It also plans to offer short-term, certified training programs. Some will be offered in a classroom; others will be conducted online at www.fashionforprofit.com. Fashion for Profit will also offer consulting services and be putting together design classes as well as entrepreneurship classes for Chinese students.

On the trade-show front, Harder will continue to produce seminars on sourcing at **MAGIC** in Las Vegas. She also will continue to produce seminars at **DG Expo**, which organizes trade shows for designers and small manufacturers in several cities including San Francisco, Dallas, Miami and New York.

Unfortunately for fashion-show fans, FBI's annual fashion show will not make the transition. But Harder said there are plans to produce a fund-raiser runway show for **California State Polytechnic University, Pomona**.—*A.A.*

The Wraps Come Off Westfield's \$1 Billion Revamp of Century City

An Italian food hall that is packed with customers. A slate of unique stores. Furniture that looks like it should be in an interior designer's living room.

Those are all the new elements that the **Westfield Corp.** incorporated in its \$1 billion renovation of the **Westfield Century City** mall in Los Angeles, which debuted in October.

The mall-development and management company hoped the revamp with a **Tiffany** price tag would take a property that was already functioning as an A-level mall and turn it into something spectacular. While mall companies traditionally commit to major renovations, the current era bought more urgency to this project. Mall traffic has been declining in the past few years, and competition from e-commerce has made many doubt the traditional mall model.

For William Hecht, chief operating officer of Westfield's

American operations, the massive renovation of Westfield Century City is a rethinking of the purpose of retail centers and what attracts people to them.

"We're going to give people a reason to come to the center at least two to three times a week," he told the *California Apparel News*.

The traditional mall mix was reshuffled. At Westfield Century City, there's a **UCLA** medical office, which offers urgent-care services. There's also an emphasis on tapping into Los Angeles' current obsession with hip eateries. Lines for the **Eataly** Italian market and restaurant, which officially debuted on Nov. 3, reportedly took more than an hour.

Westfield sought to dazzle with experiences. The mall devotes space to the Atrium performance area for bands, Broadway-style reviews and brand events such as the **M.A.C. Snow-**

ball premiere in early December. Also at the mall, star designer Kelly Wearstler crafted looks at the shopping center such as lounge areas with teak furniture and Moroccan tiles.

For apparel shoppers, Westfield Century City offers a mix of high-end department stores such as **Bloomingdale's**, **Nordstrom** and a redesigned **Macy's**. It also offers stores not open at many U.S. malls such as Canadian-headquartered retailers **Aritzia** and **Oak + Fort**. Westfield Century City also is the address for new looks for stores such as jeweler Loree Rodkin's design of the **Sama Eyewear** boutique, which was unveiled Dec. 5.

Bernard G. Jacobs, a stylist, likes how Westfield Century City is open relatively late. "It stays open later than Rodeo, which is key for me," he said. "When [Rodeo] stores close at 6 p.m., I can run out of there and have three more hours of shopping."—*A.A.*

DSTLD Commits to Crowdfunding and Pop-Up Shops

Los Angeles-based direct-to-consumer label **DSTLD** is continuing its brand-building efforts by rolling out a series of pop-up shops across Southern California. The first was at the Culver City, Calif.-based mixed-use retail center **Platform** earlier this year, and the most recent pop-up, which will be open through the holidays, is on La Cienega Boulevard.

In the future, the company plans to continue to open pop-up shops around Southern California as well as in New York.

The temporary retail spaces give consumers a chance to view the collection in person and get to know the brand's ethos—upscale "essentials" including jeans, leather jackets,

wool coats and accessories. The stores also drive traffic to the DSTLD website (www.dstld.com). Rather than take their purchases home, customers' items are shipped to them.

Since the company was founded in 2014 by Corey Epstein and Mark Lynn, DSTLD has been building the brand by leveraging the data-rich benefits of e-commerce. The company uses real-time data to determine what to keep in the line and how to plan the assortments by size and color.

The company is also committed to a crowdfunding model since it first began taking advantage of provisions in the JOBS (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) Act, which gives

small U.S. businesses new opportunities to raise capital from the investor market.

The first round of fund-raising from small-scale investors was successful, and the company has embraced the method as its core financing strategy. In August, DSTLD opened up its second round and plans to build its roster of investors, which includes "brand advocate" customers who want to own a piece of the company. Investors are given access to a personal dashboard that allows them to track DSTLD's business and track the progress of the brand.

—*Alison A. Nieder*



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A New Clothing Chapter for Dov Charney, American Apparel Founder

Irreverent Los Angeles clothing manufacturer Dov Charney picked up this year right where he was decades ago.

After being fired in 2014 from **American Apparel**—the company he founded in Los Angeles in the late 1990s—he tried to buy the faltering business out of bankruptcy.

When that failed, he went on to plan B. This year, he revved up a new operation, called **Los Angeles Apparel**. It follows the same business model as American Apparel—making basic clothing in Los Angeles using workers who earn a decent wage.

In a 100,000-square-foot building in South-Central Los Angeles, some 350 garment workers are churning out basic blank T-shirts, sweatshirts, cotton bodysuits and swimsuits sold to

screen printers, the wholesale industry and to consumers via the Los Angeles Apparel website.

Earlier this year, Charney inked an exclusive distribution partnership with **TSC Apparel**, a Cincinnati T-shirt distributor that sells to wholesalers and concert promoters.

For Bob Winget, president of TSC Apparel, it was like déjà vu. He was one of the first companies to distribute American Apparel when it was a new line known for being completely manufactured in Los Angeles at a time when T-shirt makers were going to China and other Asian countries to make goods at rock-bottom prices.

“We were one of the original distributors of American Apparel,” Winget said. “We dealt with that company for 20 years,

and we had a lot of success with them.”

When Los Angeles Apparel opened, TSC Apparel didn’t hesitate to be part of the new enterprise. Much of the equipment inside the Los Angeles Apparel factory was purchased from Charney’s old American Apparel factory, and many of the workers came from American Apparel, too.

In his new venture, Charney said, he isn’t doing anything different than when he started American Apparel. “I am going to do what I have always done, which is run the show off the seat of my pants,” he told a Los Angeles audience earlier this year.

Charney’s goal is to eventually employ 1,000 workers and to change the world, one T-shirt at a time.—*Deborah Belgium*

American Apparel Reaches the End of an Era With Sale to Gildan Activewear of Canada

The **American Apparel** brand was born in Los Angeles when Dov Charney set out to make a basic T-shirt manufactured in Los Angeles by workers who received a fair wage and benefits.

American Apparel’s business took off, eventually employing thousands of workers in an old building near downtown Los Angeles’ produce markets. At one point, annual revenue rose to \$634 million.

But the company hit a roadblock when federal immigration officials stepped in to verify if everyone on the payroll had legal documents to work in the United States. The inspection resulted in American Apparel in 2009 having to lay off 1,800 workers—or one-quarter of the factory work force—who could not prove they were in the country legally. It was difficult to hire replacements quickly and production suffered.

More financial problems ensued. In late 2014, Charney was fired by the company’s board of directors, and his job as chief executive officer was turned over to Paula Schneider. But the new American Apparel executives had a tough time right-

ing the ship. With major loan payments due, the Los Angeles clothing manufacturer filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2015. It quickly emerged from bankruptcy but turned around in late 2016 to file for bankruptcy protection again.

While the company was in bankruptcy, several companies bid for American Apparel’s brand name. The winner was **Gildan Activewear**, a Canadian clothing manufacturer whose labels include **Alstyle Apparel**, **Anvil**, **Golden Toe** and **Peds**. It bid \$88 million to buy the company’s intellectual-property rights plus some American Apparel merchandise and equipment.

Gildan decided not to keep the 3,400 American Apparel employees who worked in the brand’s large factory. They were laid off early this year and 110 American Apparel stores later closed their doors.

Gildan is now using a few Los Angeles contractors to manufacture American Apparel clothing for consumers who want a “Made in the USA” label, but most of the collection is being manufactured in Honduras, where Gildan employs 25,000 workers.—*D.B.*

Gerber Technology Brings Ideation Conference to LA

Gerber Technology has been hosting its user conference in various cities around the country since 1998, but this was the first year the Tolland, Conn.-based maker of apparel equipment and software brought the event to California.

The conference—which has been called **Ideation** since 2013—was held earlier this year in San Francisco and in Los Angeles.

The concept behind Ideation is to give Gerber customers an opportunity to find out about new Gerber products and get in-depth demos of new software. The conference also gives Gerber a chance to discuss industry trends with customers and introduce new industry partnerships.

In past years, the conference has been held in New Orleans; Nashville, Tenn.; Scottsdale, Ariz.; Miami; Dallas; Las Vegas; and New York.

This year’s West Coast conferences drew not only West Coast Gerber clients but also companies from Asia, said Bill Brewster, Gerber’s vice president and general manager of enterprise software solutions.—*Alison A. Nieder*



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Forecast *Continued from page 1*

domestic product to a 3 percent expansion through the second quarter.

However, by the middle of next year, GDP growth will probably slow to 2 percent, which has been the standard annual rate of growth for the last couple of years.

Another positive force on the economy will be the government's rising defense budget as the administration gets more aggressive in dealing with North Korea, situations in the Middle East, and concerns about Russia and China. Defense spending, which declined over the last seven years, will see a rise of 2 percent next year and 2.7 percent in 2019.

That bodes well for California. "California still has high-value defense spending taking place in California even if many of the companies have left the state," Shulman said.

The drone industry is one of Southern California's strong new economic growth areas, and **Northrop Grumman** recently hired 1,000 people at its aircraft plant in Palmdale to work on the Air Force's B-21 bomber. By the mid-2030s, the Air Force is expected to purchase 100 of the stealth jet bombers, which can slip behind air-defense systems.

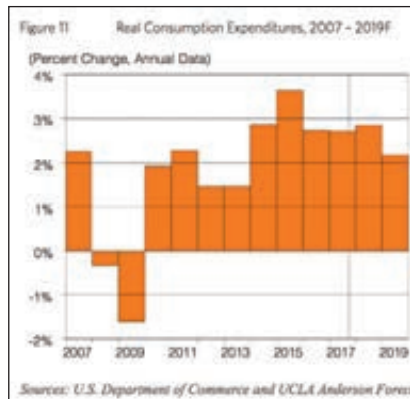
But the cloud on the horizon is the fact that the U.S. unemployment rate is expected to dip to below 4 percent from its current 4.1 percent. With a labor shortage in the offing, employment growth could plateau, reducing GDP growth to 1.5 percent in 2019.

"The economy grows by adding people to increase productivity," Shulman said. "With full employment, it is harder to add people."

Consumers will continue to keep their wallets open and make purchases. Real-consumer spending will rise next year to an annual rate of 2.8 percent, up from 2.7 percent this year. But with car sales expected to lose speed, consumer spending will inch down to 2.2 percent by 2019.

"However, as long as stock and house prices remain elevated, the consumer, or at least the high-end consumer, will remain in good shape," Shulman wrote in the report.

Economists were holding out hope for the budget consumer after **Walmart** reported that its same-store sales for the most recent quarter were up 2.7 percent.



The Federal Reserve is expected to announce another interest-rate hike this December, after two previous hikes this year, showing the Fed's confidence in the economy. By the end of 2019, benchmark interest rates could be up to 3 percent from the current 1.375 percent. Next year could see three more increases, UCLA economists said.

The California housing problem

Rising interest rates and the new tax-reform law being shaped by Congress could have a huge effect on economic growth in California, according to Jerry Nickelsburg.

Housing is already expensive in the state, but with property-tax deductions being limited to \$10,000 a year and state and local taxes no longer being deductible from federal tax returns, many future homeowners will see their disposable income shrink.

"Let's take the potential homeowner, a millennial software engineer looking for that first house. Prior to the tax change, he or she deducted state taxes from federal taxes, and their disposable income allowed them to pay a mortgage for one of those very nice California bungalow homes in the San Gabriel Valley," Nickelsburg wrote in the UCLA Anderson Forecast. "When they are not able to deduct their state taxes, adjusted gross income is higher and the federal tax bill is higher. This is the idea of getting rid of the deduction—higher revenue for the feds to pay for tax cuts elsewhere. But our millennial has lower after-tax income and now the bungalow is out of reach."

This could lead to lower housing prices down the road as

more homes sit on the market waiting for eligible buyers. But it is also a deterrent to attracting workers to the state.

"To continue the very rapid growth in employment likely requires domestic or international immigration to the state or both," Nickelsburg noted. "With [President] Trump's policies decidedly reducing international immigration, net domestic migration to California would be required."

In October, California's unemployment rate stood at 4.9 percent, down from 5.3 percent the previous October. UCLA economists are predicting that with the new proposed tax bill pushing equipment deductions to the first year of purchase, companies will have more money to hire and the state's unemployment rate will fall to 4.6 percent by the end of 2019.

Free-trade free fall

Despite a healthy outlook for 2018, economists are worried about the North American Free Trade Agreement negotiations going on right now among the United States, Mexico and Canada.

President Trump has threatened to pull out of the free-trade pact if certain concessions or changes are not made. The most recent negotiations in Mexico City did not go well, and observers are concerned that, if the next meeting in Montreal in late January hits a speed bump, Trump will get frustrated and step away from the negotiating table.

"There is a big risk that Trump could pull out of NAFTA, and that could cause a recession in late 2018 or 2019," Shulman said, noting that Trump pulled out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact and the Paris climate agreement this year. "There is \$1 trillion in gross trade volume a year between Canada, Mexico and the United States."

Most affected would be the U.S. auto industry, where parts made in the United States and Mexico cross the border several times to manufacture a car.

Last year, the United States imported \$4.5 billion of apparel and textiles from Mexico, making it among the top 10 suppliers to the U.S. market. In turn, the United States sent \$5.9 billion in textiles and apparel to Mexico, according to the U.S. Commerce Department. ●

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FIBER & FABRIC

Fiber & Fabric *Continued from page 1*

and making our manufacturing process as eco-friendly as possible," said Tricia Carey, director of global business development for denim at Lenzing, the Austrian maker of Lenzing Modal. "By partnering with Cone Denim and Unifi, we were able to work with like-minded companies to create an advanced product that saves resources throughout the manufacturing process."

Cone introduced the fabric at the recent **Kingpins** trade shows in Amsterdam and New York. Future Black+ joins Cone's **TruTone** fabrics line. Kara Nicholas, vice president of product design and marketing for Greensboro, N.C.-based Cone Denim, said the collaboration between Cone, Lenzing and Unifi furthers Cone's commitment to be "a sustainability leader and denim innovator."

"Color retention in black denim is an increasingly important trend for consumers and a perfect fit with our TruTone fabric story, focused around black and indigo-like navy fabrics that offer supreme color retention plus all of the added benefits of the environmental story," she said.

In addition to Repreve's recycled content, Lenzing Modal has a significantly lower environmental impact than conventional dyed fabric, according to the company. Lenzing Modal is made using a manufacturing process that uses fewer chemicals, less energy and 64 percent less water during the dye process, the company said.

"By combining Lenzing Modal fiber with Repreve, we are able to satisfy some of the biggest consumer demands for the marketplace," said Jay Hertwig, Unifi's vice president of global brand sales and premium value-added sales.



Cone Denim's Future Black+ fabric is made with Lenzing Modal and Unifi's recycled Repreve fibers. The fabric has a soft hand, good stretch and retains its color through more than 20 washes.

Next-gen Tencel

Lenzing recently introduced another sustainable fiber to its offerings. **Refibra** joins Lenzing's other brands, including Lenzing Modal and **Tencel**. All are man-made cellulosic fibers made using a closed-loop process.

Dubbed the "new generation of Tencel," Refibra is made from wood pulp that includes cotton scraps from cutting operations. Using recycled man-made cellulosic material reduces the need to extract additional raw materials and lowers the impact on natural resources.

"Denim apparel has a high impact on the environment, and consumers are seeking alternatives with the environment in mind. Lenzing is offering a viable solution with Refibra-branded lyocell fibers to provide innovation with reduced environmental impact," said Lenzing's Carey.

DL1961 is among the first companies to use Lenzing's Refibra fibers in its Pre-Fall 2018 collection. Although DL1961 has been using Lenzing's Tencel fibers in its denim since 2012, Refibra is new for the New York-based brand.

"It is our responsibility as a company and as leaders in the denim industry to make sure we are always in pursuit of better processes and materials that reduce our environmental footprint all while providing our customer with newer, more technologically advanced denim season after season," said Maliha Ahmed, chief executive officer of DL1961. ●

10 billion bottles

Based in Greensboro, N.C., Unifi recently recycled its 10 billionth plastic bottle. The company plans to recycle 20 billion bottles by 2020 and 30 billion bottles by 2022.

Unifi will launch the Repreve Champions of Sustainability Awards to recognize companies "committed to manufacturing sustainable products with Repreve performance fibers."

"Unifi could not have reached the 10 billion-bottle milestone without the commitment from our customers to provide earth-friendly products, and the Repreve Champions of Sustainability Awards give us the opportunity to thank our partners who helped make it possible," said Unifi Chief Executive Officer Kevin Hall. "A vast difference can be made if more companies recognize the impact they have on our planet and take steps to reduce it. The Repreve Champions of Sustainability Awards are meant to honor and inspire companies to source responsibly and take sustainability strategies to the next level."

The winners of the award will be announced at the **Outdoor Retailer** trade show in January.



10 BILLION BOTTLES: Unifi recently recycled its 10 billionth bottle and has set new recycling goals for the coming years.

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Artistic Milliners Introduces Sustainable Indigo Dye Process

A dirty secret of the denim business is the amount of water, chemicals and energy it takes to get that classic indigo blue. Pakistan denim mill **Artistic Milliners** hopes to change that with **Crystal Clear**, a newly introduced process that the company is calling “the cleanest indigo dyeing process.”

Artistic Milliners partnered with dye chemical maker **DyStar** and Dutch denim brand **G-Star RAW** to develop Crystal Clear, which uses 70 percent fewer chemicals and no salt in the dyeing process.

“We are really proud of our collaboration with DyStar and G-Star RAW in developing the most sustainable denim fabric ever made at Artistic Milliners. In this fabric, we have applied a new dyeing formula which is hydro and salt free; we call the process Crystal

Clear,” said Omer Ahmed, Artistic Milliners managing director, in a company statement. “This is perhaps the most radical change to the indigo dyeing process since its industrialization. Even though this method is in its infancy, we are hopeful that in due time it will be adopted by the denim industry at large as there is an unprecedented environmental/water-saving potential in using this method.”

Founded in 1949, Artistic Milliners is a vertical textile mill that manufactures premium-denim fabrics and apparel. The company is based in Karachi and has offices in seven cities, including the **Artistic Lab Research and Innovation Center** in Dubai.

For more information, visit www.artisticmilliners.com.

—Alison A. Nieder

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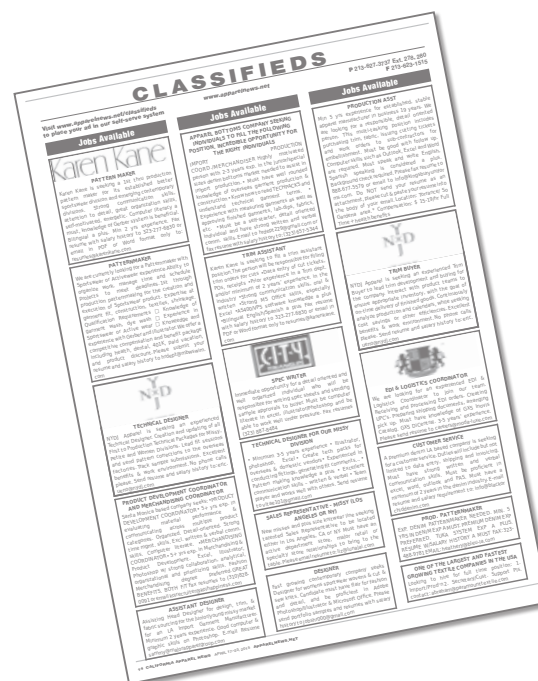
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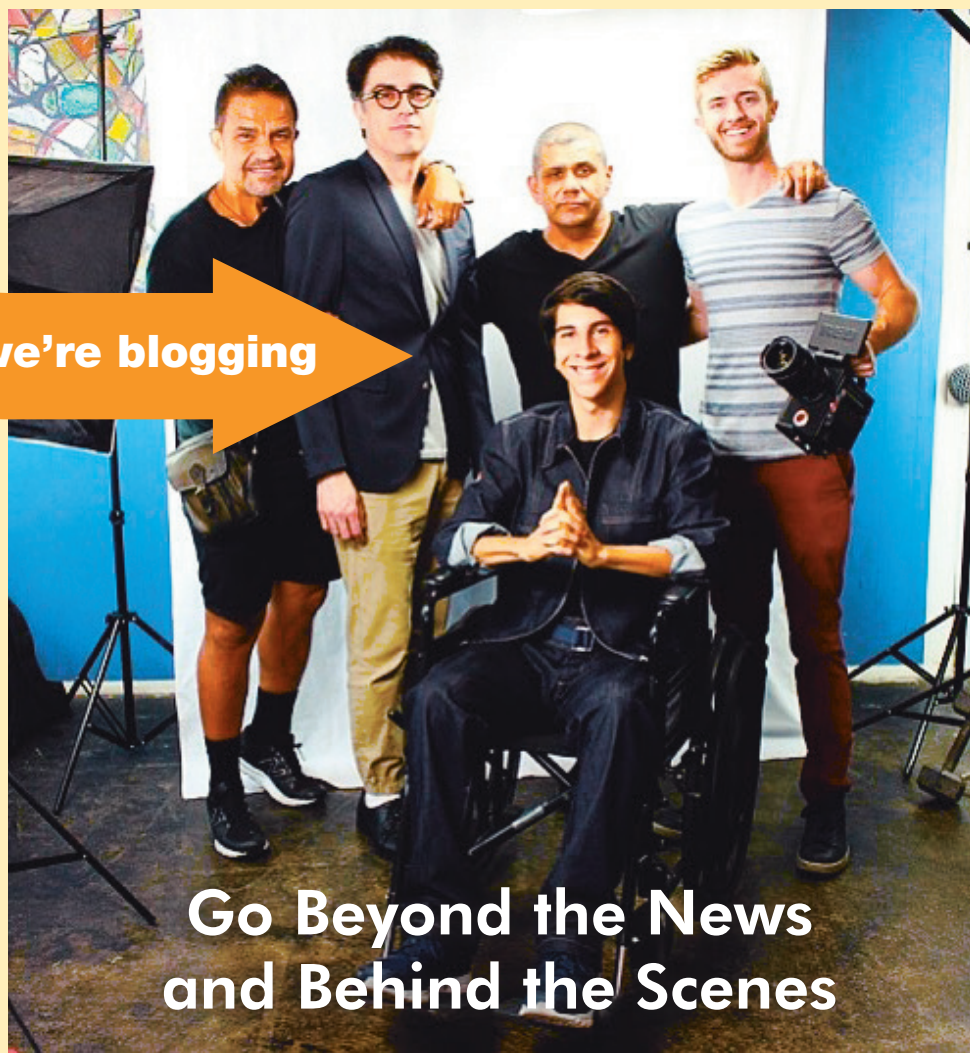
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