

# The Daily Dirge



Serious journalism for a world beset with woe. | Friday, March 2, 2007

## A Cry to Limit Chinese Imports Rings at Paper Mill

LUKE, Md. — For years the residents of this economically distressed hollow in the Appalachians have watched textile mills, glass factories and tire makers close down one after the other. Now its lone remaining big factory — “the last man standing,” as the production manager at the paper mill here put it — is threatened by imports of cheaper paper made in China.

“We’re still the economic engine for this whole area,” said Scott Graham, the production manager, referring to the river valley and forested hills surrounding the mill. “But our operations cannot compete with these below-cost imports.”

It is a familiar story in the struggle of the American industrial base to cope with globalization, but this one may have a different ending.

The problems of paper mills here and elsewhere around the country have

become a test case for a possible new confrontation between the United States and China, which many industry officials and members of Congress hope could lead to new tariffs on imports not only of Chinese-made paper but also of steel, furniture, textiles and plastics.

In coming weeks, the Commerce Department is expected to decide whether to impose duties on high-gloss paper known as “coated paper” — the kind made here in Luke — that is imported from China. Many trade specialists in Congress and in the industry expect it to do so. Indeed, China has gone to court to block the decision in advance.

If imposed, the duties would set an important precedent, reversing 20 years of settled American trade policy in which the United States refrained from making accusations that “nonmarket economies” like China were granting illegal subsidies. In its court case, China argues that changing that policy without legislation or a full regulatory hearing would be illegal.

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“She will be missed,” said director Fred Gates, “but the show must go on. It’s still a great crew and a great show.”

Although Ms. Hemming’s departure is not unanticipated, its suddenness was. Usually, when a lead has to depart, they give a few weeks notice, rather than the week Ms. Hemming gave. Due to her frequent absences from the show, tickets to performances where her appearance was confirmed were already sold out and selling for two to three times face value on the street. When news of her imminent final departure was released, these prices skyrocketed. Balcony seats to her final performance sold for upwards of \$1000 and pirated videos of these final performances are already circulating. The theatre has fast-tracked plans to issue its own video release of one of these performances. Critics, however, are not all convinced that she is really leaving. “Seriously, its an age-old stunt. You leave for a few weeks, wait for them to get desperate and then negotiate a much more favorable contract. Nathan Lane did it and so will Hemming.”

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## Cabaret waves goodbye to Hemming

NEW YORK, Ny - After a run marked by stunning reviews and increasingly common unexpected absences, Cabaret lead Natalie Hemming is leaving the show.

Ms. Hemming cited pressing family concerns and health problems in a statement released by her agent, but has issued no other comments regarding her departure.

## General dismissed after claims of mistreatment at military hospital

WASHINGTON — Following disclosures of poor facilities and lengthy delays for soldiers receiving outpatient care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Maj. Gen. George W. Weightman was fired.

In a brief release, this was because Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey “had lost trust and confidence” in

Gen. Weightman's ability to improve the situation.

The revelations about the poor treatment facing some outpatients at Walter Reed have resulted in considerable embarrassment for the Army and have prompted two investigations and several congressional inquiries. There have, however, been reports of repercussions being leveled against soldiers who spoke to the media regarding the conditions of the facilities.

## **Horoscopes**

Our apologies: Due to unforeseen circumstances the normal horoscope column in *The Daily Dirge* will not be run this week. It should return, however, in short time.