

Valley Business FRONT

VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE BUSINESS JOURNAL

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SEPTEMBER 2021

Virginia Tech Carilion's
Telemedicine Cart

Naturopathic
Doc Hamilton

Direct Primary Care
Doc McCarthy

Mobile Occupational Therapist

Healthcare Innovations

Wildlife Out of Home

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An Extraordinary Cart

Elham Morshedzadeh
Virginia Tech School of Architecture
and Urban Studies



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WELCOME TO THE FRONT

There are lots of rabbit holes to go down when it comes to taking a look at health care, which is the focus of our September issue. We have stories on alternative health care approaches, from mobile Occupational Therapy clinics to more naturally-based practices and others that bypass the insurance route; to remote telemedicine solutions – even to the health benefits of Yoga, mentally and physically. With a resurgence of the COVID-19 largely due to the Delta variant and the still-unvaccinated, health issues – and their impact on the business community – aren't likely to go away anytime soon. No doubt you've seen more people masking up again lately, even on a voluntary basis. It's back in schools as well with the weight of a new state law behind it. We'll all have to delay that pandemic victory lap.

Finally, we want to give a shout out to the many wonderful, dedicated columnists who contribute to Valley Business FRONT on a regular basis. We hope you take the time to read the vital information they disseminate on a monthly basis, on how to grow your operations, how to protect assets, and how to manage effectively. And much more. Happy reading.



Tom Field
Publisher



Gene Marrano
Editor

““

Most children simply want to feel connected. – Page 18

““

Everyone is a puzzle. – Page 12



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**Delivering Better Healthcare
Access to the Underserved
— VIA A CART —**

By Gene Marrano



““
Venture capital
is not 'adventure
capital.' — Page 21

Cover photo of Elham Morshedzadeh submitted.



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SEPTEMBER



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Shannon Dominguez



Nancy Harvey



Doug Kidd



Anne Sampson



Michael Shelton

Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Advisory Board comprised of a selective group of diverse business professionals who support our mission and have an interest in how our business journal best serves our local communities and region. As a sounding board throughout their term, board members have been given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. You will note that the Board is comprised of experts in many different business / industry "fronts." This is intentional, as we are reporting on all the areas that affect our regional economy and are important to you. Although the members are encouraged to keep FRONT updated on their own industries and the key players, they aren't limited to their area of specialty, as all commercial enterprises ultimately collaborate to impact our quality of life here in this part of Virginia. An additional contribution by the Advisory Board involves direct input on the various FRONTLists we present throughout the year. In keeping with our policy of being "the voice of business in the valleys" we ask each reader to join us as an editorial partner by contacting us with your ideas. You know more than we know about your business—or you certainly should—and that inside knowledge shared with our readers will make us all better at what we do.

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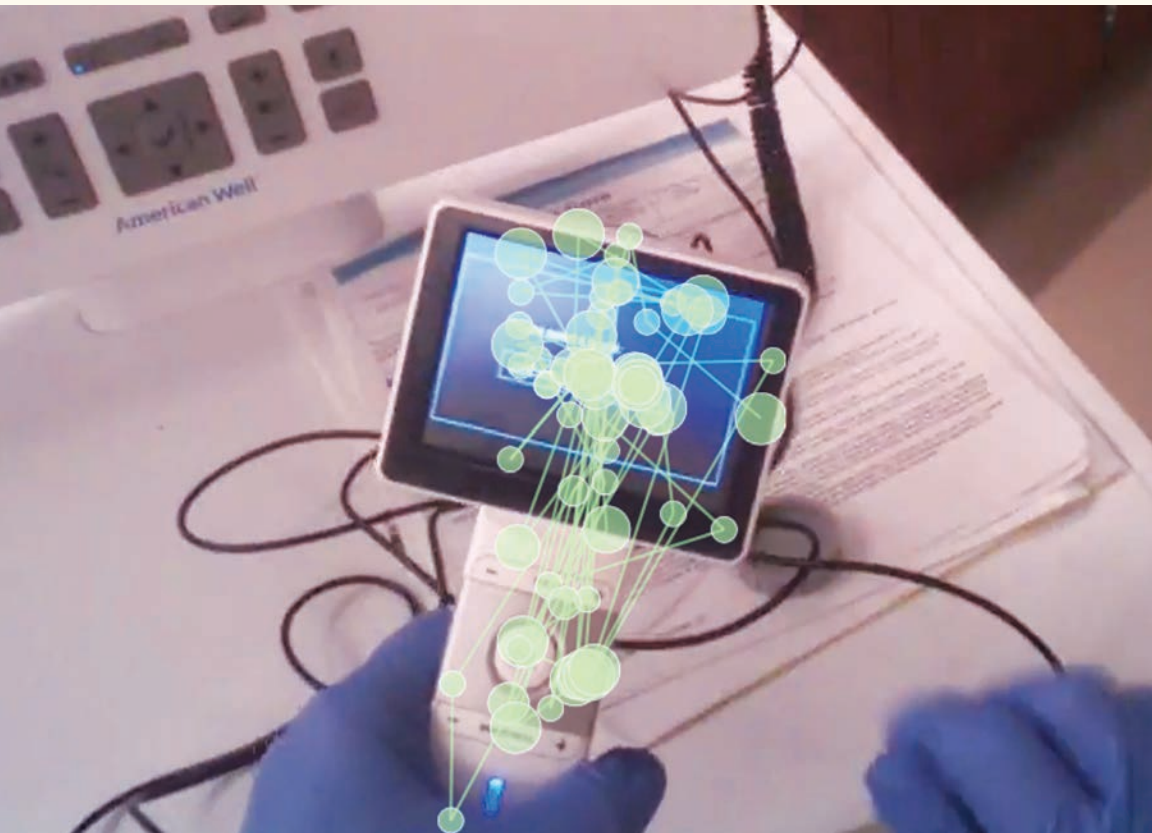
“”
There is a
'Valley of
Death'...
We bridge
that chasm.

— Page 60

Biographies and
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on each contributor
are provided on Page 52.

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Delivering Better Healthcare Access to the Underserved – VIA A CART –

By Gene Marrano

“Before spending lots of money on equipment ... know how to deal with it.”

Virginia Tech and Carilion are partnering to develop an improved training methodology for a Telemedicine cart that can be used in rural and underserved communities at small health centers. The health information gathered there from patients is then fed back via the internet to Carilion Clinic for diagnosis. These carts can cost upwards of \$20,000 says Dr. Elham Morshedzadeh, assistant

professor of industrial design in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS).

“It’s actually a box that wheels around and includes several peripheral devices and monitors that doctors and nurses can use to do a complete physical exam,” she notes. It’s a step up from the normal telemedicine audio or video call – more common these

says in the aftermath of COVID-19 – because of the connectivity. That enables healthcare professionals on the other end to listen to a heartbeat, look at a person's skin for telltale signs of illness, or peer into a throat or nose, "from miles and miles away".

The problem is, says Morshedzadeh, the training to use those carts efficiently, to glean the most vital health data from them, has been lacking. Before Carilion purchases perhaps hundreds of these telemedicine carts for more remote clinics in its service area, the training methods and even some design features need to be tweaked. A team from the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg and at Carilion Clinic's simulation lab, formally the Carilion Clinic Center for Simulation, Research, and Patient Safety, (located adjacent to the Dr. Pepper Park music venue in Roanoke) are working through those issues right now.

Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality technology will be employed to help practitioners in the more remote field health centers to work with patients, first addressing the difficulties those healthcare professionals have experienced with the carts. The plan says Morshedzadeh is to start rolling them out in earnest next year once all the bugs have been worked out and Carilion cuts the check to purchase them.

For example, a stethoscope attached to the telemedicine cart can be used to listen to a heartbeat – with that audio sent digitally back to Carilion Clinic back in Roanoke for diagnosis. The carts are complicated says Morshedzadeh, "lots of buttons and parts, a pretty complicated process," which is where the initiative to provide a better training procedure originated. The instruction manual that comes with the telemedicine cart is not really a training guide, she adds.



Elham Morshedzadeh, PhD, Virginia Tech

(Co-PI) Dr. Wallace Lages (left) and his student Danni Farugh (right) show the first augmented reality prototype to (Co-PI) Dr. Andre Muelenaer (center).





Summer 2020 / Team Science: Standing from left: Michelle Morris; Dana Werlich; Dr. Andre Muelenaer, Sitting from left: (PI) Dr. Elham Morshedzadeh and Olivia Menezes.

The Virginia Tech-Carilion Clinic project includes individuals from:

CARILION CLINIC
Center for Simulation, Research and Patient Safety (SIM Center); IT department

VIRGINIA TECH
College of Engineering; College of Architecture and Urban Studies; School of Visual Arts & Creative Technology


“We are creating the training system that can be sent with the cart as well, so these nurses can get a very tailored [methodology].” The goal is that after just 30 minutes of training, those expensive carts can be used more efficiently to send patient health data back to the physicians located elsewhere. User research taking place at the Carilion “Sim Center” in Roanoke – which employs real patients and healthcare providers – is observing how the carts are being used to perform physicals without that special training (but with input from Carilion’s IT department).

Where are nurses making mistakes for example, or having difficulties with equipment on the cart? What devices are employed more frequently? That data is being used to create “a proper training system,” says Morshedzadeh, a native of Iran. Carilion has had one cart in the field for over a year, “but nothing worked,” and the nurses at remote clinics didn’t trust it, she says. Trust in the diagnosis running through those telemedicine carts – for the patient, the nurse practitioner and the physicians on the other end of the line – is the ultimate goal. “Building trust is very important for the success of this type of technology.”

Morshedzadeh’s team includes colleagues from the School of Visual Arts & Creative Technology and the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech – and a half dozen or more undergraduate students in three fields are also in the mix. The Tech-Carilion multi-disciplinary collaboration can lead to brainstorming as well: “we spend an hour after

[any demonstration] just discussing what we saw." A new colleague from Radford University's school of nursing is now on board as well, and nursing school students could join the effort as well.

Sometimes what they thought would work doesn't. "That's the benefit of doing research ... with real people. This whole process is all about communicating, hearing each other and respecting each other's profession." It's about practical results and better healthcare in this case as well, not just a What If? school project. Morshedzadeh is also involved with a new Health Design and Policy Lab, with a focus on public health.

Funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is supporting the cart training system research, with a due date in December. Developing some type of certificate program to signify that a user has been properly trained is one future option. It's really very simple, says Morshedzadeh: "before spending lots of money on equipment ... know how to deal with it." 

THE TELEMEDICINE CART PROJECT TEAM

Elham Morshedzadeh, PhD, Assistant Professor, Industrial Design Program, College of Architecture and Urban Studies, Virginia Tech

Melinda Schriver, MHA, MBA, Director, Digital Health, Carilion Clinic

Wallace S. Lages, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Visual Arts, Virginia Tech

Andre Muelenaer, MD, Jr, MD, MS, Professor of Practice, Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics, Virginia Tech, Professor of Pediatrics, Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

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Lydia Hartzell, Digital Health Senior Consultant, Carilion Clinic





Submitted

Dr. Dave Hamilton

Helping the Body Heal Itself

By Jennifer Poff Cooper

Naturopathic medicine is an up-and-coming form of treatment that individualizes patient care.

“Everyone is a puzzle,” said Dr. David Hamilton, Naturopathic Physician, and putting together the pieces is his favorite part of the job. “We meet people where they are,” said Hamilton, whose practice is called Of The Earth Wellness.

Part of that is addressing not just patients’ health concerns but integrating the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, which all need to be in balance, according to Hamilton, a Tidewater native who completed his undergraduate work at Lynchburg College (now Lynchburg University). He began

medical school at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) in Blacksburg but took a leave of absence for family reasons.

He found that getting back there required “jumping through a lot of hoops,” so when a mentor suggested naturopathic medicine, he was intrigued. He investigated the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine in Arizona and found the first two years were exactly like a traditional medical school. He moved west in 2008 to enroll in their four-year, federally accredited doctoral program.

His first job was taking over for a doctor on sabbatical in Charlotte. Dr. Hamilton established a practice there, but he and his wife were interested in urban farming and found a place for themselves - and their chickens and goats - in Elliston. Now, his primary practice is in downtown Roanoke, with hours in Charlotte every other Monday. He is the only naturopathic doctor in southwest Virginia.

One difference between traditional medicine and naturopathic medicine is the time spent with patients. Hamilton said his initial visits can last two hours. Whereas a traditional doctor sees 40-50 patients in a day, he sees three to twelve.

A naturopathic doctor's main training is in family medicine, chronic disease, and preventative medicine. Hamilton sees lots of families from ages "birth to death," including doing well baby checks. His typical patient is someone who has exhausted their avenues with established medicine. Many are women. Many have multiple issues, and he can help them see how their internal systems work together.

"We think inside and outside the box," Dr. Hamilton said.

While Appalachia has a history of herbal medicine, Virginia and many other states in the southeast do not fully license naturopathic physicians. That means being unable to prescribe medicine or perform procedures such as stitching wounds. Not having that full scope of practice is frustrating, said Dr. Hamilton, especially when some traditional practitioners will not accept his referrals.

However, Hamilton can work with other traditional practitioners on most cases. His time at VCOM created alliances that have helped him "infiltrate the system," he says, for times when his patients need referrals for specialists or MRIs, for example. He said, "There is a place for everybody."

Virginia does not allow naturopathic doctors to work with insurance companies either, so Hamilton has a sliding scale


DR. DAVID HAMILTON'S SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Naturopathic medicine
- Herbal medicine
- Clinical nutrition
- Homeopathy
- Physical medicine
- Autoimmune
- Food allergies
- Pain management
- Diabetes
- Thyroid disorders
- Eczema/psoriasis
- Acute infections
- Anxiety
- General wellness
- Diet and lifestyle management

fee structure and interest free payment plan for those who need it, and says he rarely has a problem with payments. He encourages patients to take advantage of health savings accounts (HSAs) in which their savings are pre-tax. Hamilton is able to be profitable by keeping his expenses low, with a small office space and no staff at this point, plus, because of the restrictions on his scope of practice, he does not use expensive equipment such as syringes and gloves.

Hamilton said another challenge is getting the word out about naturopathic medicine. Word of mouth is king, but he has also visited farmer's markets and advertised in magazines and on radio. Education is a big piece of what he likes to do, including Facebook Live videos and herbal medicine making classes. "Just because it's natural doesn't mean it's safe," he said.

As for the future of naturopathic medicine, Hamilton says that more traditional doctors are shifting to see naturopaths as an asset because they themselves do not have as much time to sit down with patients.

Dr. Hamilton also likes to keep things small and intimate so that his patients feel like family. In fact, if you phone him, he picks up the phone with "Dr. Dave here." 



BUSINESS OPERATIONS

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:

When it comes to running a business, you shouldn't try to do it alone.


Send your questions or comments to Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com

Use your resources

When I started my business nine years ago, I was a one-person show. I did everything myself and believed I had to have all the answers. Over time, I learned there were many resources and people available to help me succeed. The more I utilized those resources, the more my business grew.

Here are some of the FREE resources I used (and still do!) to help me achieve steady growth and success:

- **Small Business Development Center (SBDC).** I have relied on SBDC for help and advice throughout the life of my business. They provide FREE counseling on just about any small business operation. The local SBDC in Roanoke has helped me with setting up my LLC/S-Corp, reviewing contracts, setting up my books, and developing a marketing strategy. It's the first place I refer entrepreneurs to who are interested in starting a business.
- **SBSD Scaling4Growth Course.** Last year during COVID, I took this program to help me develop a 3-year growth plan for my business. I was introduced to numerous small business resources, and I developed a network of fellow CEOs who I can call for advice. Offered by the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD), this FREE course requires an application, and some minimum requirements apply. Other local programs, such as RAMP and The Gauntlet offer similar structured programs to assist small businesses achieve growth.
- **Peer/Advisory Group.** For the past 8 years, I've met every week with a small group of fellow business owners affiliated with my franchise. It's a safe group to share ideas, get advice, and ask for help. There are numerous peer groups in the Roanoke Valley you can join (for a fee), or you can form your own for FREE.
- **Team members.** Surround yourself with employees, contractors and outside service providers who want to help your business succeed. Learn to effectively delegate responsibilities to others. The benefits are immeasurable when you can lean on your staff, suppliers, and customers for help.

We live in a society where independence and "going it alone" is often valued. But developing a network of advisors and team members is a much more effective way to run a business. 


“There were many resources and people available to help me succeed.”

5 tips for reducing small business costs

People often believe they're saving money with penny-pinching or quick-fix approaches that wind up costing a lot more in time, money, and opportunities than they know.

These five tips will help you be smarter, wealthier, and less stressed out as you strive to make your small business more successful.

- 1. Eliminate credit card debt.** One of the most expensive ways to borrow money is with credit cards. Consider securing a line of credit for short term needs or term loan to pay off all credit card balances. Better yet, get help with billing so you're not floating out-of-pocket expenses on client work.
- 2. Create a budget.** Few small business owners take the time to craft a yearly budget and review it against actuals each month. If you don't know where (or whether) your money is coming or going, you're at a disadvantage.
- 3. Rethink office space needs.** The pandemic accelerated a shift that was already coming. Now's the time to reassess your needs. Can space be shared with sales reps who are mostly on the road or employees who are spending some days working from home? Is it time to downsize? Maybe just-in-time isn't working with production delays and you need more warehousing square footage? "Business as usual" isn't what it used to be.
- 4. Refinance loans or lines of credit.** Borrowed money is cheap today. If your loan is more than a few years old, ask your bank if they can do better or shop around for a better deal to pay off current loans. Check on lines of credit too. Banks vary a great deal in what they charge for this service so, again, shop around.
- 5. Contract out specialty work.** Most small business owners delay hiring their first professional service provider. It costs a lot in time, frustration, and money when you try to do everything yourself. Many regret not delegating sooner after a first contractual hire. Whether it's legal, financial, or marketing help, the right expert can save and/or make you money with better and faster results.

Reconsider how you're handling business operations. Now, more than ever, it pays to be smart and adaptive. Consider some of these simple ways to make business life easier and more rewarding. Schedule a free strategy session with me if you need help. 

“Many regret not delegating sooner.”



FINANCIAL FIGURES

By Michael Shelton

Executive Summary:
Being a small business owner is hard. It's even harder when you try to do it all.

Michael Shelton is a financial retirement counselor. Reach him at michael@discover360 Financial.com



Shawn Nowlin

Amy Higgs

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST GOES MOBILE WITH “OT ON THE GO”

By Shawn Nowlin

Salem Occupational Therapist takes her practice on the road. Her mission is also a personal one.

Many people know someone with a child that has some sort of disability. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one of the most common disabilities in the United States is spina bifida, a condition that impacts the spine. Cerebral palsy, autism and down syndrome are also more common disabilities. A Salem woman whose child was born with autism eventually led Occupational Therapist Amy Higgs, OTR/L, CAPS, CLT to take her practice on the road.

Born and raised in Connecticut, Higgs initially attended UCONN for a nursing degree, but changed her major after two years to pursue a bachelor's degree in

Occupational Therapy from American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts. Following graduation and passing the board exam, Higgs worked with adults in the physical disability setting. Higgs never dreamed she would be working with children until the birth of her son, Andrew, who was diagnosed with autism.

“The experience of being a mom and not knowing how to help my son was overwhelming. I began a quest which led me right back to my field of Occupational Therapy. I met an occupational therapist in Roanoke who provided me with information on sensory integration – and that was the right fit for Andrew. I then knew my



purpose was to help other moms with their children who were having difficulty.”

This journey led Higgs to start her own pediatric practice, OT on the Go LLC in 2018. What’s unique about this pediatric practice, she explained, is the mobile sensory therapy gym. Higgs takes pride in serving families with a limited income who often are unable to get to a therapy clinic. Currently, she reaches into Rocky Mount, Botetourt, Salem, Roanoke City, Roanoke

County, Floyd and the New River Valley. Currently Higgs is searching for an OT who wants to develop a partnership to reach into even more localities.

Those with disabilities represent all backgrounds and ethnicities. Not every family is fortunate enough to have all of the resources they need. People who have done the research often discover that occupational therapy is an option for any child experiencing struggles with

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developmental delay, impaired motor skills or sensory processing.


“Sensory Integration is the framework of my practice,” Higgs said. The interior of her OT on the Go vehicle features bright primary colors and suggests a playground of sorts. “Therapy looks like play, but it is working on the underlying foundation of development. These sensory and motor factors can impede problem solving, learning, behavior and self-care for activities of daily living and academics.”

Adds Higgs, who also employs a therapy dog at times, “as an occupational therapist with 21 years of experience, my passion is helping children overcome challenges to function in an ever-changing world.” She has certifications in DIRFloortime (therapy for children on the Autism Spectrum), Rhythmic Movement Training, Lymphedema (to deal with swelling in legs and arms) and Total Listening Program (a neuroscience-based online music listening therapy), among others.

Whenever Higgs is asked what she does for a living, she often responds, “I love what I do, [helping] children and their families achieve their optimal potential through

play. I love meeting and working with OT students, occupational therapy assistants and other [OT therapists]. We have the unique ability to analyze activities and offer solutions to increase the person’s ability to complete tasks that are meaningful to them.”

One of the best things about the field of occupational therapy, noted Higgs, is that it’s so versatile. Occupational therapy can be offered in many different scenarios – and having a mobile therapy office adds to that versatility. Teamwork is vital in OT; Higgs works closely with parents, case managers, psychologists and teachers. In some cases, she teams with physical therapists regarding functional mobility issues. “My experience has taught me that most children simply want to feel connected, do better and learn,” she said.

Because she works for herself, Higgs notes that, “I can set my own schedule and I have freedom to complete the child’s plan of care in a unique way that fits them,” she said. “I enjoy seeing children overcome many obstacles and helping families work through the process - getting to a place that is more manageable.” More information can be found at www.otonthego.org. 

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BEST PRACTICES

By Will Hall

Executive Summary:

Could the restrictions of 2020 be making a comeback on the horizon?

William R. Hall III is Chief Executive Officer for Beacon Partners Consulting in southwest Roanoke County. Reach him at will.hall@partnerwithbeacon.com

Preparing for new COVID restrictions?

Unfortunately, what we know is the Delta variant is surging and cases are back on the rise. Though the vaccine provides some defense, it is not the end-all-be-all. Politics aside, what should small business owners be on the look for, as we move back towards winter and the potential of even more restrictions?

As a business owner if you made it through the first one, you know things were touch and go for most businesses. There was a small subset that pivoted and/or created a pandemic business that thrived. However, for the majority, their businesses felt a significant impact on the employee front, the balance sheet, and the bank. What can we do as small business owners to better insulate us from those similar issues should the second wave of restrictions occur this winter?

Have a plan: Sounds oversimplified right? Well, what we do know is there the first time we managed through it there was no data, no history and it was uncharted waters for most small business owners. Now, we know what worked well and what didn't. We have had time to assess the "I would have done it this way," and can be better prepared should we find ourselves in another lockdown situation.

Become leaner: One thing we know now is that businesses can operate on less revenue with fewer expenses. If you dig into your financial statements and look at things you may have signed up for when times were good or coming out of the pandemic, you might be able to cut costs. It's better to run lean than lose everything, it's not going to last forever.

Ensure you have a staffing plan: One of the most challenging pieces both in the pandemic and coming out of it was staffing. I found that most of the business owners I talked to didn't predict that staffing would become so scarce. Even today, most businesses are still fighting employee shortages. Knowing what you know now, tweak your model. How could you operate more efficiently?

Logistics: Ensure that you have a strong operational plan to deliver your product or service to your clients if we go back into lockdown. We didn't know before what it would look like, but we all do now. How can you make it work ... that's the question you need to answer.

Hopefully, we won't see a full lockdown again, however one of my favorite quotes is "failing to plan, is planning to fail." So, make sure you are prepared in the event it happens. 📌

“” There was a small subset that pivoted...

Find your angels

The previous article in this series discussed how having a vibrant startup ecosystem is central for a strong innovation economy; how entrepreneurial leaders can help forge connections to potential customers, talent, and capital. This article will explore the issue of capital access.

Over \$160 billion of venture capital (VC) investment was made in U.S. companies in 2020. Through the first half of 2021, \$140 billion of new venture investments was reported, putting the VC market on a pace to eclipse the \$200 billion mark in 2021. While the “holy-trinity” of VC states - California, Massachusetts and New York - still dominate the national landscape with over 73% of 2020 VC disbursements, investment is flowing to other states like Virginia, which saw about \$1 billion of venture capital flow into companies in 2020, according to Crunchbase. The CIT GAP Funds, the Launch Place Seed Fund and VTC Ventures are examples of firms active in our region.

“Angel investors” are another growing source of startup investment; wealthy individual investors who individually or within groups make investments in companies with high return potential. While a great deal of angel investments goes to the technology, medical and healthcare sectors, investments are made in a wide variety of other categories. The Small Business Administration estimates there are now over 250,000 active angel investors in the U.S. funding around 30,000 companies annually. Angel groups operating in Virginia include Common Wealth Angels in our region, 757 Angels in Tidewater and Shenandoah Valley Angels.

The institutional venture capital and angel markets are large, liquid and active throughout the U.S. Great startup opportunities generally get funded, sometimes even by early customer adoption, which can be the least dilutive. The key to successful fundraising is proper planning and preparation. Raising a round can take 6 to 12 months. Work with a mentor who understands the VC and angel markets to obtain guidance on how to pitch your startup and to get help making connections with venture and angel groups. Understand that venture capital is not “adventure capital.” Funders expect founders to understand both the opportunities and risks that face startup businesses. Founders must be able to articulate how they have addressed (or expect to address) major risks. Having a good core team and customer traction are other keys to a successful capital raise. Like most things in life, proper planning and a lot of perspiration will lead to success. 

“Angel [investment] groups operating in Virginia include Common Wealth Angels in our region...”



INNOVATION

By Greg Feldmann

Executive Summary:
Do your homework to understand which fund sources align with your company's stage of development, industry, and capital requirements.

Greg Feldmann serves as CEO of Verge, a collaborative strategic alliance established to grow the region's innovation economy, technology and life sciences sectors. Visit VergeVA.org.



Dr. Matthew McCarthy

MEDICINE 2.0

By Jennifer Poff Cooper

Direct Primary Care is “outside the conventional” model says one NRV practitioner.

If seeing your primary care physician for a one-hour appointment sounds like a pipe dream, it's not. Blacksburg's Matthew McCarthy, DO, LLC, a Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.), employs an innovative model of healthcare that allows a direct relationship between the patient and physician without involvement of third-party insurance, drug, or hospital corporations.

It's called direct primary care, a national movement of over 3,000 doctors who are “jumping outside the conventional,” said Dr. McCarthy, whose practice is aptly named, Direct Primary Care of Blacksburg. “This model most honored what I wanted to do with my skill set,” he said.

A monthly membership fee buys unlimited access to the physician, so folks do not have to worry about the number of calls, texts, or visits they are using. His fees are \$75/month for an individual, \$120 for a couple, and \$180

for any size family. All ages are welcome. “We take babies as soon as they pop out. We also sign death certificates,” he said. McCarthy always wanted to be a family practice physician because of the role models he watched while growing up, including his family doctor and the local ER physician.

For medical school McCarthy chose the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine at Virginia Tech, partly because of its focus on primary care. He graduated in 2012, then did a three-year family practice residency through the LewisGale system.

Afterwards his family decided to stay in Blacksburg where it was already plugged in to church and community, particularly important with young children. Having grown up in Athens, Georgia, he appreciated a college town. McCarthy also touted the advantage of having networked with local specialists through VCOM.

"It was a logical place to start a practice," he said.

Since beginning his practice, McCarthy has added a nurse practitioner, Trish Miller (FNP); their skill sets complement each other, with her now overseeing many women's issues. Between the two of them they cap their patient load at 825 – far below the national average of 2,000-3,000 patients per provider. One of them is always on call for advice.

Dr. McCarthy sees six to ten patients per day. Each patient is scheduled for one hour. He even makes some house calls, toting along his 100-year-old black leather bag. Every first new baby visit is a house call, and "it's a lifesaver for some of the elderly," he added.

How can he make a profit with this model? McCarthy has minimal overhead. He performs every job from secretary to procurement to janitor.

"When the toilet clogs, I'm the guy. The joys of small business," he laughed. McCarthy has a wide range of skillsets: at the onset of the pandemic, he did a podcast to dispense medical advice.

There is also an umbrella group, Atlas MD, which helps direct primary care physicians with the business side of their practices – areas like legal and marketing that are not taught in medical school.

McCarthy's patients fall into three categories: those who have good insurance but want the level of care he offers, those who are uninsured, and those who have catastrophic health insurance with a high deductible.

For the last group, McCarthy likened direct primary care to car maintenance. You budget for gas just like you can budget for the monthly care fee, but in both cases, you


keep insurance to assume the risk of what you're not planning for. "This is the most efficient way to manage health care."

McCarthy's favorite parts of his practice are twofold. First, he appreciates the relationships – being a trusted member of people's medical teams and getting to know the details of their lives.

He also enjoys the scope of medicine he practices. There is a good variety, and it's never boring. "When the front bell rings, I never know what will come through the door."

He can perform most procedures that urgent care facilities do. For more complicated cases, he can make local referrals and also has access virtually to ninety-seven specialists. In one case, a child had a complex hand fracture which Dr. McCarthy was able to manage with this virtual team of specialists, saving the family from traveling to see a pediatric hand specialist. Exploring new methods pushes his skill set and bolsters his confidence, he said.

The practice grows mostly from word of mouth. McCarthy maintains that people don't pick a physician off of a billboard. People will talk about him whether good or bad, so the best advertising is done in the exam room taking diligent care of a patient.

McCarthy emphasized that he is not denigrating traditional medicine: "There are fantastic doctors in the system, but that type of medicine is not fun for anyone. What I am selling is a relationship with someone who can help you get what you need." Dr. McCarthy, DO, feels that direct primary care will grow one patient at a time - as people recognize its goal is to work for the patient and not the system. "The sky's the limit." 



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NO BAD HIRES

By Jennifer Leake

Executive Summary:
Emotional Intelligence used to be a "nice to have." Now it is a must have.

For more information and guidance on each of these steps, listen to our short podcasts at [SalesHiringStraightTalk.com](https://www.SalesHiringStraightTalk.com).

Emotional Intelligence at work

Everyone has emotions. It's a part of being human. Whether we realize it or not, emotions have a daily impact. Not only on us, but on those around us. Both in the workplace and in our personal lives. There are pleasant feelings such as valued, appreciated and happy. There are unpleasant feelings - angry, anxious and stressed. The way we feel determines how we engage with others. When you feel appreciated, you give more effort. If you feel anxious, your behavior might be more reactive. This is known as Emotional Intelligence (EI) or Emotional Quotient (EQ).

EI is a set of skills that help to better perceive, understand and manage emotions in ourselves and others. No matter what the job function is, we all have interactions with other people. The capacity to understand emotions, to be aware of them and how they impact the way you behave and relate to others, will improve your "people skills." Ultimately, you are more satisfied and successful.


Studies show that elevated levels of EI boost career success, mental health, relationships and happiness. Higher levels of EI are an antidote to work stress and builds personal resilience. Maybe your job requires dealing with hostile or difficult customers. You manage employees or interact with team members in the workplace. IQ isn't your best tool in these cases, EQ is.

EQ used to be nice to have. Today it is a must have. Emotions influence, both productively and unproductively, our decisions, behaviors and performance. Companies may hire for IQ ... but they will promote for EQ.

What you need personally and in your workplace:

- **Self-Awareness:** Being aware of the way you feel and the impact your feelings have on you and others.
- **Awareness of Others:** Perceiving, understanding, and acknowledging the way others feel.
- **Authenticity:** Openly and effectively expressing yourself; honoring commitments; and encouraging this behavior in others.
- **Emotional Reasoning:** Using your knowledge of feelings (both yours and others), combined with facts and other information, when decision making.
- **Self-Management:** Managing your moods and emotions, time and behavior. To continuously seek personal improvement.
- **Positive Influence:** Positively influencing the way others feel through problem solving, providing feedback, and recognizing and supporting the work of others.

The results? Increased sales and customer service. More collaborative teams. Improved leadership and culture. More mentally healthy workplaces

Do you know what your employees are feeling or where they need help? Want to learn more on how to hire for and develop emotional intelligence? Visit www.AssessmentPros.com to learn more about EI and the BEST JOB EVER People System. 

Bridging the gap between knowing and doing

Most of us spend some, if not most of our day on autopilot. Wake, morning routine, work, evening routine, sleep, and repeat. Habits and routines are beneficial but it's very important to maintain awareness throughout our day. The first step in building a bridge between knowing what you need to do and actually doing it is awareness. Begin by focusing on the thoughts that run through your mind during the day.

I challenge you to pause and check-in with your thoughts for five minutes, 2-3 times a day over the next few days. Ask yourself, "What are my thoughts?" and "What are my fears?" If you're like me, you might be surprised at these revelations.


When you pause and notice these subconscious thoughts, you gain an awareness that empowers you to start changing your internal narrative, and therefore, you begin to bridge the gap between knowing and doing. Driving your internal narrative is the base for your bridge between knowing and doing and can start you on the path to more purposeful actions and thoughts.

As you begin, you may notice thoughts lurking beneath the surface: "Can I do this? ... "Am I good enough?" ... "What if I fail?"

If you find these or similar thoughts popping up, you are not alone. Statista* reports that 35.1% of entrepreneurs in the United States report a fear of failing. Our thoughts hold immense power. Everything we see in our physical world began with a thought. If we are subconsciously entertaining negative beliefs about ourselves, our success, and/or our business, these thoughts influence our actions and impede us from realizing our highest potential.

The second step to bridging the gap between knowing and doing is reprogramming your subconscious paradigms. Most of our internal thoughts and motivations, these subconscious ideas, come from our paradigms, our systems of belief. We develop these as we have experiences in our societies, religions, and the influential people around us during our childhoods. These paradigms don't always carry throughout our adulthood to align with our goals and aspirations; thus, a reprogramming is often necessary.

What do you want to accomplish? What are your goals? Take time to visualize yourself accomplishing your goals and what it looks like when you do. This is a key tool to reprogramming. When fiercely focused on goals, our thoughts bring power that seeks and breeds exponential success.

Don't believe me? Experiment with the challenge above and notice what comes up. 

* <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268788/fear-of-failure-start-ups-in-leading-economic-nations/>



SMALL BUSINESS TOOL KIT

By Shannon Dominguez

Executive Summary:
*Check in with yourself
once in a while.*

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Dan Smith

Zakk Moorman is especially fond of bats because “that’s where the money is.”

Hunting Down Critters

By Dan Smith

Zakk Moorman is not exactly the enemy of small, furry pests that attack your home, but he’s not their buddy, either.

Zakk Moorman discovered shortly before graduating from Radford University that a biology degree likely wouldn’t get him anywhere until he earned a master’s. He’d had enough of school at that point and had to go to Plan B. That turned out to have strong elements of biology in it and didn’t require additional college.

While he was in school, he worked in the building trades and became familiar with the structure of homes. That would play well into his working with a friend to found Star City Pest Control and work there for more than two years. A falling-out with his colleague led him to open his own company, Moorman Wildlife Management, in April



Submitted

Moorman often works in tight spaces.

and he's in the process of establishing the service throughout the Roanoke Valley.

Moorman came by the trade naturally. His grandfather was a park ranger and fur trapper and he taught young Zakk a lot of the tricks of the trade, among them that "every situation is different" and understanding

the animal pests is crucial. "I've pretty much been doing this since I was 10," he says.

Is it a black snake or a timber rattler you're dealing with, for example? How easy will it be to access the pesky animal? How dangerous? What kinds of protection will Moorman need to wear during the work?

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He primarily deals with bats, flying squirrels, raccoons, beaver, foxes, ground hogs, skunks, squirrels and "I don't handle anything that the Department of Wildlife Resources says I shouldn't." That means the big boys:

bears, deer, big cats (which the department denies exist here) and other pests that can present more of a danger.

He is especially fond of bats because "that's






where the money is." The cost of ridding pests can vary widely (\$1,000 to \$25,000 depending on what is needed, he says) and getting a good quote can't be done on the phone. Hunting bats requires a full suit of protective equipment—including breathing gear—because of the funguses they carry, and their waste can be dangerous.

"People think we're going to have to burn their house down to get at the bats," he laughs, "but it's a matter of creating a one-way door to get them out. Clients can stay home while we're working. We're non-invasive."

He rarely is forced to kill pests. "We evict

them; send them packing," he says. Many of the animals—birds, snakes, for example—are protected by state law. Bats, he insists, "are a natural pest control and are actually desirable." Though not in your house.

Moorman and his wife, Taryn, a dental hygienist, have been married for a bit more than a year. "She pushes me to be the best version of myself every day and I am very thankful for her," he says.

At this point, Moorman is "as busy as I want to be," but he hopes that during the next five years he will have enough work to hire a couple of employees. 



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WELLNESS

By Nancy Harvey

Executive Summary:

More Americans are seeking out yoga for many reasons including general health, strength, relaxation, and healing.

Nancy S. Harvey, MSN, RN, FNP-BC, MS, C-IAYT, operates Guiding Star Yoga in Roanoke. GuidingStarYoga@gmail.com

Benefits of Yoga – it’s a physical and mental health thing

As a yoga practitioner for 25 plus years, I have experienced the benefits of yoga physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It started in a gym yoga class as I was recovering from a complicated surgery. Not only was I struggling with generalized weakness and pain, but I was also struggling with depression and alteration in self-image due to the surgery. I started in the back of the class moving slowly and gingerly. Using the breathing techniques, I found that I let go of negativity and pain. I slowly moved to the front of the class, feeling better than I did before the surgery. I know that yoga helped me through that crisis.

As a health care provider, I needed more than my own personal anecdotal evidence of benefit. In the past fifteen years the field of yoga research has grown significantly, with well-designed studies published in peer reviewed journals documenting the potential benefits of yoga in areas of pain management, mental health, substance abuse recovery, and musculoskeletal disorders. Increasingly, science is beginning to confirm the benefits that we, yogis, have known from our own practices. The International Association of Yoga Therapists summarized benefits that have been documented by research, the physiologic, psychologic, and biochemical effects (Trish Lamb, www.iayt.org/page/HealthBenefitsOfYoga).

Physiologic: stabilizes autonomic nervous system equilibrium; decreased pulse and respiratory rates; cardiovascular efficiency increases; gastrointestinal function normalizes; musculoskeletal flexibility and range of motion increases; posture improves; endurance increases; energy level increases; sleep improves; immunity improves; pain decreases; dexterity and fine motor skills improve; steadiness and balance improves.

Psychologic: mood improves and subjective well-being increases; self-acceptance and self-actualization increases; social adjustment increases; anxiety and depression decreases; attention and concentration improve.


Biochemical: decreases glucose, total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, cortisol and inflammatory markers; increases HDL (healthy) cholesterol, red blood cell measures, lymphocytes, thyroxine; increases oxytocin, prolactin, vitamin C; oxygen levels in the brain increase.

Marlynn Wei, MD, JD reported on a survey done by Yoga Alliance and Yoga Journal noting that the number of Americans practicing yoga has grown by over 50% in the past four years to over 36 million in 2016. More than 15% of Americans have done yoga in the past 6 months. More than a third say they are very likely to try yoga in the next year. While the majority of yoga practitioners are women (70%), the number of American men doing yoga has more than doubled from 4 million in 2012 to 10 million in 2016. The number of American adults over 50 doing yoga has tripled over the past four years to reach 14 million. Increasing numbers of Americans are participating in this ancient practice and are experiencing what is confirmed by science. 🙏

Fall into fashion for cooler weather

It's that time of year when summer is winding down, but it's been so incredibly hot at times recently it's hard to think of a wardrobe that might embrace the inevitable cooler temperatures around the corner. Throw in the fact that business has just gone through one of the most confusing periods that we can ever remember as it relates to business wardrobe. Videoconferencing is here to stay, but many folks are finding that they are client facing again and image is more important now than ever. Some folks are beginning to suit up again while others have embraced the new normal of business casual.

Outfitting your wardrobe with pieces that can be used multiple ways has never been more important. Investing in a quality suit at this time, you might consider choosing a fabric that can also be split up and utilized as separates for example. Do men consider anchoring their business casual look with sport coats? My clothing advice at this time would be to invest in a couple of corner stone pieces in your wardrobe that can be used in multiple fashions. For both men and women one example would be a blue textured or pattern suit. Consider putting a brown horn button on the jacket and you can utilize the blue coat in multiple ways while pairing the slacks with other outfits as well.

For both men and women, button up shirts with contrasting button and buttonhole colors with matched fabrics on the interior have become the rage. Banded collars are also showing a revival! Now is the time to add a few items into your closet, and when you do, make sure that you can use it in multiple ways! Have fun out there. 



STYLE NOTES

By Doug Kidd

Executive Summary:

Now what? Consider your selection for the fall to include extremely versatile clothing.

Doug Kidd is with Tom James Company. He is an image consultant and clothier. Reach him at d.kidd@tomjames.com



Summit View welcomes tenants >

Stik-Pak Solutions, a contract packaging company at the Summit View Business Park in Franklin County, has cut the ribbon on their new 10-million-dollar, 50,000 square foot building. "We are so glad that they have chosen Summit View as the new location for their home. As they continue to grow and expand, we look forward to bright things ahead," said **Chris Whitlow**, the Franklin County Administrator. "It's a symbol of the potential for Summit View Business Park, but also the Roanoke Region," noted Roanoke Regional Partnership executive director **John Hull** at the ribbon cutting. "It's a great investment that's [prompting] more lead generation and more opportunities. It's a testimony to what this region can do to support development."

The other tenant at the 550-acre park just off US 220 between Boones Mill and Rocky Mount - the Valley Star Credit Union headquarters was expected to cut another ribbon in late August. Sixty people are currently employed at the Stik-Pak facility. Still under development, the 550-acre Summit View Business Park in Franklin County will eventually feature recreation amenities like trails and event space.

"It's been a lot of hard work," said **Kennon Marshall**, the CEO for Stik-Pak Solutions. "A lot of support from the community; the quality of the employees we're getting in



Franklin County is just amazing. I never thought I'd be blessed with the quality of the employees I'm getting right now." Marshall is a second-generation CEO. Stik-Pak Solutions is a contract packaging firm and relocated to Franklin County from Pennsylvania over a decade ago.



Gene Marrano

FloydFest returns with a bang in late July >

"After surviving and navigating a year off, our goals were to host a safe event, facilitate healing and catharsis through live music and art, and to bring back a sense of community and humanity for our family of FloydFest patrons, both old and new," wrote **Sam Calhoun**, Chief Operating Officer, FloydFest/ Across-the-Way Productions, Inc./Blue Cow Arts in an e-mail to Valley Business FRONT. "We are thankful for the support of our patrons, staff, volunteers, vendors and artists, who both entrusted and energized us to get back to doing what we do best: host extraordinary live-music experiences."

Jordan Sokel with Pressing Strings, out of Annapolis Maryland, said after their main stage gig at this year's FloydFest that it was "awesome. We've had such a good time at this festival. It's really cool, really well run. It seems like they are fresh on it. We've been trying to get on [to FloydFest] for a long time. Finally [co-founder] **Kris Hodges** became aware of us and asked us to come out and play"

There were rumors about having to relocate with a 20-year lease up for renegotiation, but adds Sam Calhoun, "as we began planning and preparation for FloydFest 2022 and beyond, I can assure you that we're not going anywhere, and that we plan to be a cornerstone of the Southwest Virginia — and national — music scene for at least the

next two decades. Right now, we're poring over patron survey feedback and critiques in order to fine tune our event, and developing programming, art, tickets, logistics and a theme for our November 1, announcement of FloydFest 2022. 'Onward' has been our mantra for the past two years [with a COVID hiatus in 2020], and we're up for the challenges that lie ahead, no matter what may come. This is what we do, and we are grateful to be able to do it in this region."







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Chris Sanchez, executive director – Christiansburg Institute

Black legacies matter

"It's more than the building." That's how one alumnus describes the 100-year Christiansburg Institute (1866–1966) and the current nonprofit organization striving to save it.

"It's the story," he continues.

And what a story was shared at a screening of a documentary presented at Roanoke's Grandin Theatre on August 3rd. Produced by Michael Hemphill and Buzz television (buzz4good.com) that is broadcast on Blue Ridge Public Television, the event—cosponsored by AAF Roanoke ad club and its public service initiative—drew a sizeable crowd on this Tuesday evening; including folks connected to Christiansburg Institute (CI), videographer Dan Mirolli, and the design agency (Spectrum Media Solutions) that was instrumental in producing the website to share the mission and fundraising effort.

CI executive director Chris Sanchez, featured prominently in the two-part documentary, exhibited unquestionable passion in the effort to restore and repurpose a remaining, central building of CI so that the story can be preserved, the legacy of the school protected, and future purpose realized through the building of a cultural center, museum, recording studio, and event venue.

Most viewers of the documentary will probably find the highlight to be the segments when we simply listen to the alumni and family members who have deep roots with the school. These older men and women shared stories of pride from such a long time ago; the details are surprising. They named the teachers they had, the academics and skills learned, the respect for teachers and fellow students, the comradery, even the extracurricular activities like the band, cheerleading, and football team. All of the stories culminated in CI's impact on their lives. It's not "as if" these former students and graduates were talking about family—they "were" talking about family.

Christiansburg Institute, Inc. is the grassroots nonprofit organization charged with the restoration, preservation, and repurposing of the school, and particularly the

GOOD WORK

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Christiansburg Institute is a nonprofit organization preserving an African American school that contributed immeasurably to the community.



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rehabilitation of the Edgar A. Long building (the last remaining structure, named after the principal). CI, the school, was founded in 1866 for African Americans in the New River Valley. The school taught traditional academic studies (math, science, English) as well as liberal arts curriculum and skill trades. Its timeline could be described as marred by irony. Though it opened after the Civil War (by Charles Schaeffer, a Union soldier and Baptist minister) and progressed rapidly, it was the desegregation movement that caused its ultimate demise (as an operating school) in 1966.

One alumnae says, "I wish they would have left us alone," while an alumnus said it would have been better if integration "would have went in the opposite direction; bringing white kids to our school."

CI today is a story that will not be lost. That's as long as passionate folks like the nonprofit staff, alumni and former families connected to the school, the Black community at large, the entire community at large, and stakeholders ensure the important story and contribution are preserved and carried forward. 



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ON TAP FROM THE PUB

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
*Helping others by
helping yourself.*

Me first

I'm glad people put themselves first.

That doesn't sound very charitable, does it? As I write this, it's a terrible day in world history. We're pulling out of Afghanistan from the international airport in Kabul; and we're all watching the horrific scenes as Afghans are so desperate and fearful of full Taliban return, they scramble across the tarmac, overwhelm the boarding stairs, chase down the taxiing plane, and even attach themselves to landing gear as if there was any chance in holding on the jet flight away.

What's telling to me is the disconnect from the old distress call we thought we all knew: "Women and children first!" Even as the people flee the war-torn, evil-filled land, where sitting at the top of the list of centuries' old atrocities is that society's oppression of women—the oppression prevails. It reveals itself even in the escape attempt. There are virtually no women and children being "saved."

"Women and children first!" is displaced by the most primitive, inhumane, survival chant of all: "Every man for himself!"

Most of us probably think it would be nice to see a man, or a group of men, holding others back. Helping and insisting the mob gives way to a path, where women and children are ushered into the evacuating plane. We've heard of this before; in sinking ships, for example. But that is simply not going to happen here at this airport. Not in this place. Not at this time.

There is a time, place, and way when putting yourself first is serving others. It's similar to grabbing the oxygen mask on a plane when it pops down during decompression. You can't help others if you are incapacitated.

Adam Smith put it this way: "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest."

Selfish, I know.

But underneath that capitalistic business man or woman, that greedy little entrepreneur, is a desire to produce something that people will want, enjoy, appreciate, or need. The butcher, brewer, and baker first must find a way to support their idea and vocation. That includes provisions for their own food, clothing,

continued on Page 40

The Census numbers are in: growth, but not galloping growth

(From News Release) An initial analysis of data released by the U.S. Census bureau last month showed continued population growth in the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes the counties of Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke, and the cities of Roanoke and Salem. According to the 2020 census, population in the MSA grew 2.1% over the previous decade. Statewide, population increased by 7.9%, a lower growth rate than the previous 2000-2010 Census.


"We're pleased to see that the region continues to grow," says Matt Miller, Director of Information Services for the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, who performed the analysis. "And while the growth rate was lower than in previous years, this tracks with trends we are seeing nationally."

The City of Roanoke, with a 3.1% growth rate, saw its population increase to over 100,000 for the first time since the 1980 Census (to 100,011). At 4.9%, Roanoke County saw the largest population growth of the jurisdictions covered by the Commission. Overall, the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission area – which stretches from Franklin County to Alleghany County – saw a growth of 1.6%.

"This data affirms trends we've seen the last few decades," added Miller. "Small but consistent growth in our urban areas, and loss of population in our rural counties, cities, and towns."

(From Me) So ... what does it all mean? For one there's little chance of this region becoming a Charlotte any time soon (housing growth in Roanoke City for example was up less than 3% since the 2010 census). But is 2.1% in the MSA enough population growth to attract outside talent and larger employers to the area? Roanoke City crept up over the 100,000 mark again just barely, after dipping below that magic number over the past few decades. "That's good news," says Roanoke Mayor Sherman Lea Sr. "That tells me we need to continue to go forward with the things that we are doing. We think the investment and the development [especially residential] we've had downtown has made a difference."

Virginia is already more ethnically diverse than it was a decade ago; in Roanoke the Hispanic/Latino population rose about 3 percent since 2010. "It tells me that we are changing the Commonwealth in many different ways and not only that, we have a much higher of multiracial Virginians. We're truly becoming a melting pot in many ways," says Democratic Roanoke Delegate Sam Rasoul.

Is it enough population growth to sustain major economic development gains? Will improved infrastructure – on I-81, more rail service, broadband expansion – make a significant difference? What will the 2030 Census numbers tell us? 



THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE

By Gene Marrano

Executive Summary:
"Small but consistent growth" ... is that what we want?

“
”
Enjoy the liberty to self-prevail.


Field / On Tap

from Page 38

shelter. That includes the responsibility of providing for their own families. Most want their customers, their communities, their markets to like the product or service they produce.

Putting yourself first so that you're capable, competent, and present to serve others is a noble endeavor. You're following the age-old mantra that "you can't help others if you can't help yourself" and in a rather ironic fashion, you're ultimately "doing unto others as you would have done to yourself."

My fellow men and women, who work and produce and contribute to our society are able to do so, by first, being equipped and willing to serve. That's not a bad model. It's been proven to work.

Enjoy the liberty to self-prevail. There may come a time when self-sacrificing is your only option. God help the individual who has no choice. 

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FRONTReviews >

Readers and patrons of the business journal are invited to submit reviews (along with an optional photo) to news@vbFRONT.com. We've expanded our reviews to include books, music, art, performances, culinary—with a preference for local productions. Reviews must be original, include the author's name and location, and should be brief, under 350 words.

““
Don't unlock
that door,
Judith!

For younger audiences

The Ghostly Tales of Virginia's Blue Ridge Highlands (2021 Arcadia Publishing) is a youth-oriented reboot of a book Joe Tennis wrote some time ago (2010) for a more adult audience, *Haunts of Virginia's Blue Ridge Highlands*, again replete with ghost tales from old theaters, hotels, graveyards and the like. For good measure Tennis, a veteran newspaper journalist and freelance writer, took the opportunity to add some stories he didn't get into the previous volume.

5 of the 11 stories in the new book are first timers. It's just over 100 pages long and can easily be read in about an hour. The first four stories are set in the Roanoke area, in Christiansburg, and down to Mountain Lake Hotel in Giles County. That's where the "ghostly Mary," daughter of the man who built the hotel in the 1930's, "seems to show up in Room 100," and a cabin near the lake, "a face in the window," says Tennis. People swear they have seen Mary in the dining room. The Bolling-Wilson Hotel in Wytheville is also haunted apparently.

In Roanoke at the Grandin Theatre there are stories of odd noises, include a baby crying; The Black Sisters were apparitions seen at the old Montgomery Female Academy, on the site of the former Christiansburg High School. "I help the younger readers, the kids who read this book, to try to piece together the puzzle

and decide, is there a ghost." Tennis isn't out to scare anyone he notes. Ghosts ride elevators, they flush toilets. It's a fun read ... and just makes you wonder. The Ghostly Tales of Virginia's Blue Ridge Highlands is available at some local retail shops and online. "The people that you're talking to ... this is usually a lifechanging event," says Tennis.

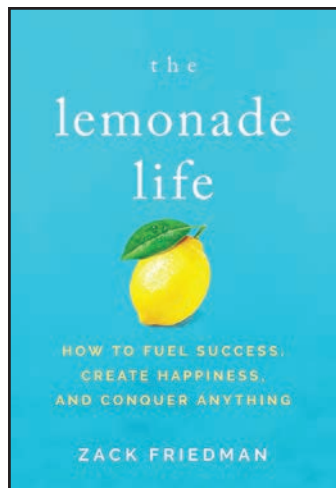
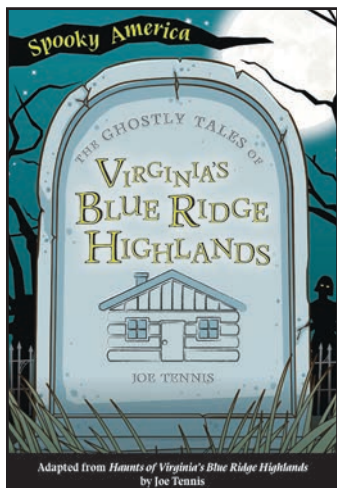
—Gene Marrano

Mind games at the opera

Opera Roanoke's 2021/22 season should be a memorable one. The productions, yes; but the campaign itself as well. It's a clever one—playing off patrons' mental prowess.

Our lineup begins with just plain "mental." The root word applies as we dare open our minds and the castle door of Bluebeard. November brings us Bela Batrok's *Bluebeard's Castle* and what lurks in the deep recesses of bride Judith's betrothed. "Don't unlock that door, Judith!" The psychological opera-thriller plays Friday night, November 5th and Sunday, November 7th at Roanoke's Jefferson Center, Shaftman Hall.

Next, we have "elemental," as we learn from Lawrence Brownlee's artistic expression of what it means to be a black man living in America Today. In *Cycles of My Being*, the tenor shares an hour song cycle from



the collaboration of composer Tyshawn Sorey and poet Terrance Hayes. The performance is at Jefferson Center on Sunday, April 24th.

Our third mental exercise is “monumental.” Giuseppe Verdi’s *Messa da Requiem* is—in three words—a *magnus paciscor*. (Roughly, “a big deal” in Latin.) You won’t want to miss this powerhouse, with four soloists, double chorus, and large orchestra. In describing this classic masterpiece, Opera Roanoke says of Verdi’s *Requiem*, it “serves as an invitation to our community to reflect on what we have all gone through, what we may still be dealing with, and that we are still here together.” Reserve your seats for Friday, May 13th and/or Sunday, May 15th, also at the Jefferson Center.

—Tom Field

Perfect for the college-bound

In Zack Friedman’s debut book *The Lemonade Life: How To Fuel Success, Create Happiness, and Conquer Anything* (HarperCollins; 2019), the CEO of Make Lemonade (personal finance company) and Forbes columnist explains that people choose to live their lives one of two ways: the Lemon Life or the Lemonade Life. The Lemon Life is about settling for something less than their full potential, and it’s built on excuses, entitlement, chasing, and pretending. However, he believes that

there is a better path—and it’s called *The Lemonade Life*.

“The most successful people have one thing in common: the power to flip five internal switches,” Friedman says. “When activated, these five switches are the secret to maximize potential, fuel success, and lead a happier life.”

Friedman’s essential playbook describes why college is the perfect time for young adults to challenge themselves to start living the *Lemonade Life* and how everyone has a shot at greatness no matter their circumstances.

[NOTE: One synopsis provides this intriguing tease: “Learn from the entrepreneur who failed 5,126 times before becoming a billionaire, the fourteenth-century German monk who helped reinvent Domino’s Pizza, the technology visionary who asked himself the same question every morning, the country music icon who bought more than one hundred million books, and the ice cream truck driver who made \$110,237 in less than one hour.”]

—Noelle Brown

The reviewers: **Gene Marrano** is editor of FRONT; **Tom Field** is publisher of FRONT; **Noell Brown** is a publicist in Los Angeles with Rogers and Cowen.



Going public >

PowerSchool Holdings, Inc., a provider of cloud-based software for K-12 education in North America, announced an initial public offering of 39,473,685 shares of Class A common stock at a price to the public of \$18.00 per share in late July. The shares of Class A common stock began trading on the New York Stock Exchange in late July. Power School has a location in Roanoke, where it bought out locally based Interactive Achievement several years ago. PowerSchool says it “connects students, teachers, administrators, and parents, with the shared goal of improving student outcomes.” They claim to support over 45 million students and 12,000+ customers in the U.S. and Canada.



The Old Man and the News >

Friends of **Dan Smith** celebrated his 75th birthday on July 31; including three other old men from the timeline of our regional business journal, now running in its 33rd year. Left to right: **Tom Field**, Blue Ridge Business Journal general manager and Valley Business FRONT owner-publisher; **Dan Smith**, BRBJ editor (1988–2008) and FRONT founding editor, Virginia Communications Hall of Fame winner, and current freelance writer; **Gene Marrano**, BRBJ writer, local news correspondent, and current FRONT editor; **John Montgomery**, BRBJ general manager and Play-by-Play sports journal publisher. Toasts and roasts were shared, as well as gratitude from various writers who Dan encouraged and supported over his professional legacy.



MontCo ribbon cutting >

Thrive Payments, a company based out of Wakefield, Massachusetts offers a variety of different payment solutions designed to grow businesses. The late July ribbon cutting included Christiansburg Mayor Mike Barber, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador team, other key leaders and community members.

Dress up >

This stunning display at Roanoke's **Taubman Art Museum** is entitled "Divas Ascending" by installation artist E.V. Day. The dresses and accessories are suspended by monofilament attached to steel rings, with pieces entitled Hats (Magic Flute, Casonova, Turandot); Manon-Ghost Angel (Manon, Massenet); Skirt Chaser (Don Giovanni, Mozart); Violetta (La traviata, Verdi); Mimi-Rigor Mortis (La boheme, Puccini); Carmen (Carmen, Bizet); Merry Widow (Merry Widow, Lehar); and Cinderella (Peasant/Princess) – retired wardrobes from New York City Opera.



Gauntlet graduate pivots business at The Lake >

Exercising and staying healthy requires more than just focusing on the gym. **LAT Training**, a personal wellness start-up located near Smith Mountain Lake, offers a new unique approach to wellness. The company went through The Gauntlet, a Vinton-based mentoring program and competition this spring and left with a new outlook. **Laurie Andrews**, founder and CEO of LAT Training, says they offer a personalized virtual training program that exercises the mind, body, and spirit to promote complete wellness and a healthy lifestyle, as well as in-person training sessions for clients: "I think that's what separates us from a lot of other companies. We're seeing more and more, it's on demand and it should be personalized. That's what we do. Between every single session we make sure the person has different goals to meet." LAT Training will hold a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony at their new location in Moneta in September.

Inspired to Enhance levels up again >

Inspired to Enhance, a fast-growing beauty and grooming salon business, won 3rd place in The Gauntlet Business Competition in May and is expanding again following their recent grand opening of a second location in Lexington. They have now relocated from their salon in Salem to a more accessible space in Valley View Mall, occupying the former Regis Salon. A grand opening was held in late July. "This is a huge move for us. We have been praying for more parking and that prayer has been heard and answered. In addition, we are excited to provide economic advancement through employment, as we can now support up to ten additional stylists and barbers," said **Allyson Davoll**, CEO of Inspired to Enhance.

They have also acquired the upper-level salon at Valley View, formerly known as "Hair Plus," and will start renovating that space soon. Davoll has plans to expand into a vocational cosmetology school, "Inspired to Enhance Hair Academy," by the end of 2021. After attending Virginia Union university, with a focus on business and marketing, Davoll continued to follow her passion of cosmetology and quickly advanced into management positions in Washington, DC, motivating her to start her own beauty business consulting agency, called Inspired to Enhance Consulting Group.



"Work to do," says outgoing VCCS Chancellor >

The Chancellor of Virginia's community college system has announced his retirement but not without first putting a new education initiative in place. **Glenn DuBois**, chancellor of Virginia's Community Colleges, announced while at Hotel Roanoke for the annual **Virginia Community College System** Chancellor's Retreat in August that he will retire at the end of June 2022 from the position he has held for more than 20 years. The State Board for Community Colleges will conduct a national search to find the next Chancellor.

While in Roanoke DuBois also rolled out a COVID-delayed program called G3 he said was aimed at closing the equity gap amongst low-income students. "You've got a lot of people out there that are working poor. They're adults and they can't just stop what they are doing for three years, but they're in a job that they hate or they're not making enough money, or both. They need some help. We're actually pivoting more and more towards that population." G3 is designed to fill help positions in Healthcare, IT and skilled trades, including construction and manufacturing. Students may qualify if their income falls below \$50,000 a year for an individual, less than \$100,000 for a family of four. "We had to check ourselves," said DuBois, "we had too many students, particularly students of color falling through the cracks – they are not succeeding in the numbers that we like. We have work to do."





“Game Changer” for LewisGale >

LewisGale Medical Center in Salem says it is the first hospital in Virginia to commercially use a new robotic "bronchoscope" that allows for a clearer vision when trying to reach cancerous lung nodes during a biopsy procedure. LewisGale Health System market president **Lance Jones** helped demo the MONARCH Robotic Bronchoscope in early August: "the impact to patients with lung cancer is significant. Often recognized as the silent killer, this truly allows us to diagnose it much earlier and give them life-saving treatments that may not be available as their disease progresses [further]." The American Lung Association says the survival rate for lung cancer is lower than other forms of the disease in large part because it is hard to detect at an early age. Jones called it "a game changer." LewisGale says the new technology could enable earlier, more accurate diagnosis and more treatable lung cancer.

New voice of Dawgs has local roots >

After going dark a season-plus ago due to the pandemic, the **Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs** are back on the ice next month at the Berglund Center. The new broadcast play by play voice (available online through the Southern Professional Hockey League website) and media manager for the Dawgs is **Mitch Stewart**, who attended Lord Botetourt High School and then called hockey games for Penn State while attending school there. "I grew up going to Express games and Dazzle games (the defunct D League basketball team); the Avalanche before they were the Red Sox. The minor league teams in the area have always played a part in my life. It's pretty surreal to get involved with that myself. The Rail Yard Dawgs open the season in mid-October after sitting out the 2020-21 season due to pandemic seating restrictions at the Berglund Center that made suiting up financially unfeasible. Some other SPHL franchises did soldier on and play, however.





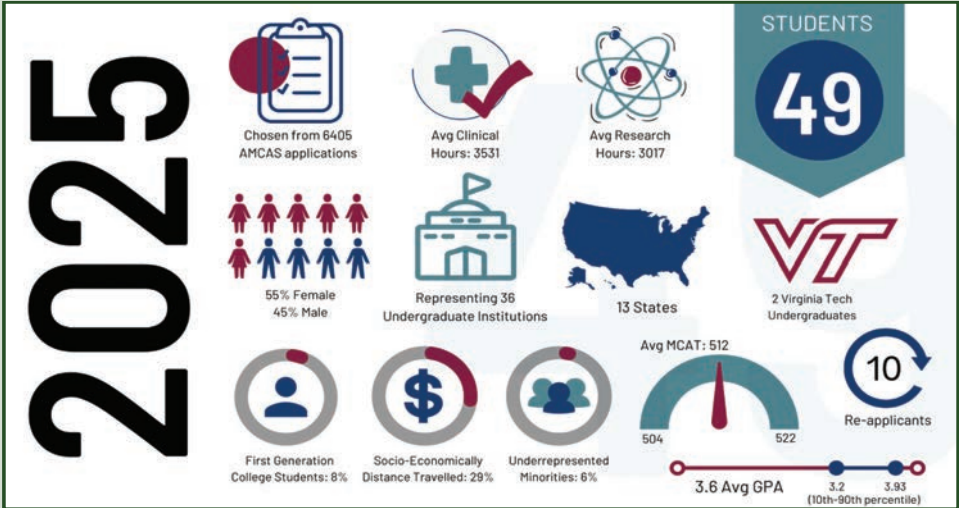
Good tunes for a good cause >

Feeding Southwest Virginia was on hand in early August at the final virtual session of the "Tuesday Tunes" benefitting Feeding Southwest Virginia" at local venue, 3rd Street Coffeehouse in Roanoke. It was the culminating event of a fundraising campaign that helped to raise over \$21,000 for Feeding Southwest Virginia since May of 2020. The event featured local artist Greg Trafidlo and Friends and included a headline surprise performance by Grammy Award-winning folk artist Tom Paxton, who made the trip to Roanoke for the occasion. The concert was broadcast live on Facebook, but also in attendance were many of the over sixty artists who donated their talents to the Tuesday Tunes concert series over the past 16 months. **Pamela Irvine**, CEO and President of Feeding Southwest Virginia, noted that, "and we are so excited to help them celebrate their success in helping us provide over 100,000 meals to our neighbors through the Tuesday Tunes virtual concert series."



Vinton welcomes BoB >

Bank of Botetourt has opened a new branch in Vinton, and celebrated its grand opening and ribbon-cutting on Aug. 19. Right across from the Vinton Library (410 South Pollard Street), bank president **Lynn Hayth, III** noted that Vinton had been on the radar for several years. In attendance were Vinton Chamber of Commerce staff, town mayor and staff, state representatives and economic development leaders, construction and architect project contributors (Hughes and Associates; G&H Contracting), and of course, bank personnel. The branch manager for Vinton is **Paula Robins**.



Meet the VTC Class of '25 >

After being chosen from a record number of applications and the first-ever group to go through an entirely virtual interview process, the members of the **Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine's (VTC SOM)** Class of 2025 has begun their medical education in Roanoke. More than 6,400 people applied for a spot in the class, which was almost a 50 percent increase from the prior year. The national average was up about 18 percent, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). From the record number of applicants, VTC SOM invited 305 people to interview for a position. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the entire process moved to a virtual format.



Greenway getting closer to completion >

A ribbon cutting for a new bridge that is part of the **Roanoke River Greenway**. The Barnhardt Creek bridge connects sections between Roanoke city and Salem near Peter's Creek road. **Liz Belcher**, the Greenways coordinator who retired at the end of July, was there: "we started working pretty hard on this [segment] about 8 or 9 years ago," said Belcher, "to try and accumulate the funding. We're fortunate to get a bunch of VDOT grants and we also had over two million dollars in private donations." Donors who contributed over \$50,000 are also recognized on a plaque at a plaza constructed that new segment of the Greenway. The plaza is home to the "Freewheelin" sculpture and was named Liz Belcher Plaza by Roanoke City Council. The greenway system is widely promoted as a reason to visit the Star City – and as an economic development driver. One last segment before an 11-mile continuous stretch is realized starts undergoing construction this Fall.

Valley Business FRONT is FRONT'n About at many events each month. Check the social media links at www.vbFRONT.com for more coverage.

FINANCIAL FRONT



Lima



Honts

Bank of Botetourt announces that **Michelle R. Austin** has been promoted to Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. She will maintain her role as CFO, which she has held since 2005, and will continue working from the Bank's Troutville Office. After twenty-seven years with Bank of Botetourt, **George E. Honts IV (Ned)** has been promoted to Executive Vice President and will

continue his role of Chief Lending Officer. Ned is based out of the Bank's Troutville Office.



Pledge

Bank of Botetourt announces that **Stilissa "Lisa" D. Pledge** – Assistant Vice President – Loan Documentation & Compliance Manager, CRA Officer, was among sixty-three Virginia bankers that graduated on August 6 from the Virginia Bankers School of Bank Management at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. The three-year school is sponsored by the Virginia Bankers Association in cooperation with the Darden School of Business at the University.

G. Lyn Hayth, III, President and CEO of Bank of Botetourt said,

"we currently have four employees enrolled in the school and more that will be attending in the near future. We have had twenty-six employees graduate from the program. Bank of Botetourt believes in investing in its employees and the importance of expanding and diversifying their knowledge base."

Lisa Pledge is located at the Bank's Troutville Loan Services Center.

WELLNESS FRONT



Garner

LewisGale Hospital Pulaski has hired **Kevin Garner**, RN, as chief nursing officer for the 147-bed acute-care medical and surgical facility. He will be responsible for all nursing services. Garner brings over

20 years of nursing leadership experience to his new role including working in Med-Surg, telemetry, critical care, emergency room, dialysis, and cardiovascular services. Previously, he served as assistant chief nursing officer for Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage, Alaska.

EDUCATIONAL FRONT



West

Melinda West has been named associate vice president for finance and university controller at Virginia Tech following a national search. West, who served in the role on an interim basis since May 2020, now leads the university's financial and accounting operations. She will

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also oversee the development of financial policies and procedures.



Wrenn

Steven Wrenn has been appointed head of the Department of Chemical Engineering in the College of Engineering, effective November 1. Wrenn comes to Virginia Tech from Drexel University, where he has been a faculty member in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering since 1999. He is currently a professor of chemical engineering in the department and the chief scientific officer of Baltimore-based start-up company Sonnest Inc. Wrenn is also a Hokie alum, having earned his bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech in chemical engineering in 1991.

Have a career announcement?

Send announcements to news@vbFRONT.com

Photos should be color, 300dpi. A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.



Belshe

Lynsay Belshe has been named vice president for enterprise administrative and business services at Virginia Tech. Belshe will provide oversight for the university's safety and security programs and key auxiliary business units. She had been serving as senior associate vice president of operations at Syracuse University.



Cruise

SENIOR FRONT

Warm Hearth at Home has welcomed **Amanda Cruise, RN**, as the new Administrator for Warm Hearth at Home. Cruise has been with Warm Hearth Village, serving as Director of Nursing at Showalter Center since 2017. She will oversee administrative and clinical functions of the



Stathers

agency. Cruise earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Radford University.

Richfield Living, the senior living and rehabilitation organization, has announced the selection of **Kristin Stathers** as Administrator of The Health Center-Roanoke Campus. Stathers has 25 years of healthcare



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CONTRIBUTORS

Shon Aguero is the executive vice president and chief banking officer for Freedom First Credit Union. A graduate of Oklahoma State University, Walden University, SW Graduate School of Banking, Cox School of Business - SMU, and New York Institute of Finance, he moved here from Southwest and Midwest US, and lives in Roanoke with his wife and two children.

Lisa Clause is senior director of marketing and philanthropy at Richfield Living. She is a recent MBA graduate with distinction of Liberty University and has a bachelor's degree in marketing and minor in professional and technical writing at Virginia Tech. She began her career at the Roanoke Times, moved to WSET television rising to national sales manager. She co-owns Fine Line Interiors with her husband, and enjoys gardening, bike riding, and church activities.

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Mike Dame is the vice president of marketing and communications at Carilion Clinic. A graduate of the University of Florida, he spent nearly a decade as a sportswriter for the Orlando Sentinel before transitioning to a career in digital communications that landed him at Virginia Tech in 2005; he joined Carilion in 2008. Mike lives in Roanoke with his wife Valeria and enjoys golf, guitar, spending time with friends and cheering on his beloved Florida Gators.

Shannon Dominguez is Director of Business Development for The Advancement Foundation in Vinton and helps run The Gauntlet Business competition. Shannon has a diverse background in planning, finances, human resources, IT and marketing, and has played a leadership role in business development

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Gene Marrano is FRONT editor and an award-winning anchor and reporter for WFIR Newstalk radio. He recently won best feature award from the Virginia Association of Broadcasters for his Dopesick interview with Beth Macy. He also now hosts and co-produces "Business Matters" on Blue Ridge PBS. [gmarrano@cox.net]

Mary Ann L. Miller is vice president of business banking and community relations at Bank of Botetourt. A graduate of Bridgewater College, she has been in the banking industry for more than fifteen years and currently serves on the board and executive committee as past-president with the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce, a board member with the Daleville Institute, and is vice chair of the board of with the Botetourt Family YMCA. A native of Botetourt County, she resides in Daleville with her husband, Matthew and their son Ira.

Shawn Nowlin is an award-winning writer, photographer and content creator. In addition to the Roanoke Tribune, his byline has also appeared in ColorsVA Magazine and the Salem Times Register, among other publications. Born and raised in Roanoke,

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leadership experience ranging from post-acute to acute care facilities across Virginia. She is a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator, with a bachelor's degree from Bluefield College and a number of certifications.



Stewart

Regional Airport (ROA). Stewart, who is currently vice president and airport manager for Dulles International Airport (IAD), begins on October 4. (He succeeds interim director David Jeavons, and Tim Bradshaw before

that.) Stewart returns to Roanoke after 23 years; his early career included five years as a station manager and

supervisor for Piedmont Airlines at ROA.

Compiled by Gene Marrano

Got A News Tip?
A Response To One Of Our Articles?
A Suggestion On What We Could Cover?

Send your note to: news@vbFRONT.com

MUNICIPAL FRONT

The Roanoke Regional Airport Commission has selected **Mike Stewart** as the next executive director for the Roanoke-Blacksburg

““ Science is beginning to confirm the benefits that we, as yogis, have known from our own practices. — Page 30

““ Before spending lots of money on equipment... know how to deal with it. — Page 10



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Good marks for Goodwill

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International announced Goodwill Industries of the Valleys has been accredited for a period of three years for Community Employment Services including Job Development and Organizational Employment Services. The latest accreditation is the seventh consecutive Three-Year Accreditation the international accrediting body, CARF, has awarded Roanoke-based Goodwill Industries of the Valleys.

Governor appoints some local folks to boards

Governor Ralph Northam announcement the appointment of several people from the region to advisory boards in late July. The Board for Professional Soil Scientists, Wetlands Professionals, and Geologists welcomes

Michael D. Lawless of Blacksburg, Vice President, Draper Aden Associates. The Virginia Manufacturing Development Commission has added Jill Loope, the Director of Economic Development, Roanoke County. The Virginia STEM Education Advisory Board welcomes Dr. Susheela Shanta, Director and Faculty, Center for Engineering, Governor's STEM Academy at Burton Center for Arts and Technology, Roanoke County Public Schools, and Amy Stinnett White, MS of Buchanan, Dean, School of STEM, Virginia Western Community College.

Forbes recognizes Member One FCU

Member One Federal Credit Union has been voted one of Virginia's Best Credit Unions in the fourth annual Forbes Best in State program, the second consecutive year Member One has been recognized in this program. "This designation goes to just over 3% of all

credit unions nationwide and is an honor to receive in any year. However, we are even more proud to receive it after the extremely challenging year we've all been through," said Lori Cauley, Chief Brand Officer for Member One. Forbes joined forces with the market research firm Statista to complete the fourth annual Best Credit Unions in Each State evaluation.

ROA update

The Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport saw a 12% increase in June 2021 traffic versus May 2021. June 2021 saw 46,654 passengers fly via ROA compared to 41,350 in May 2021, an increase of 5,304 passengers. The airport's increase of 5,304 passengers from May to June equates to 177 more passengers flying each day. Leisure travel continues to rebound, which drove traffic up compared to May. The airport saw an increase in June 2021 traffic of 243% on a year-over-

year basis; however, when compared to June 2019, traffic decreased 25%. June 2021 saw 46,654 passengers fly via ROA compared to 62,321 in June 2019, a decrease of 15,667 passengers from pre-pandemic traffic levels.

More funds sought for restaurants impacted by COVID-19

Placing more money in the Restaurant Revitalization Fund was just one of the topics mentioned in a teleconference held by Senator Tim Kaine in early August. Both Senators Kaine and Mark Warner sent a letter urging lawmakers to add more money to a fund to help eateries that was first put in place back in March. Kaine says the money went quickly and many businesses did not receive the help. "A number of businesses that had a clear case for receiving funds under the program applied, maybe they made a small or technical mistake on



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their application, by the time they corrected it there were no funds left." Kaine also said that without such funding thousands of restaurants across the country and hundreds in Virginia were forced to close; both US Senators are trying to keep more closures from happening in the future.

Funding for RVARC

A new source of funding for the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RVARC) will be used to provide more affordable housing in the region – a \$2 million grant for the creation of new housing initiatives. "We are

proud to provide these grants to Virginia's 21 PDCs," said Virginia Housing CEO Susan Dewey. Says Regional Commission Executive Director Jeremy Holmes, "we know the need for affordable housing is significant, and this grant will give us a head starting on identifying creative solutions to that challenge."

Another Carilion location also expanding

Skanska USA, a construction and development firm, has been selected to provide renovation and expansion services for Carilion Franklin Memorial Hospital in

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Rocky Mount. That expansion includes adding two new procedure rooms and updating two operating rooms to help the hospital meet patient needs. "This renovation will expand expert care offerings close to home for our community," said Carl Cline, vice president and administrator of

Franklin Memorial Hospital. The 5,230-square-foot, two-story addition will double the hospital's operating room footprint, providing space for more complex procedures. The renovations include existing pre- and post-operation recovery rooms, sterile processing zones, and pharmacy and compounding lab.

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The project will be completed in three separate phases to allow existing hospital operations to continue uninterrupted.

VT, NASA joining forces

Tech Center Research Park (TCRP), part of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center's enterprise, is partnering with NASA to bring space-related technology to market. NASA's Space Technology Mission Directorate Technology Transfer Expansion (T2X) and Tech Center Research Park's Accelerator Network (AN) programs

will jointly introduce entrepreneurs to NASA's technology portfolio. The program encourages development of new applications for technologies originally designed for the space program and kicked off in Newport News last month. "This collaboration with NASA exemplifies VTCRC's goal of translating research and bringing new technologies to market," says Brett Malone, President & CEO of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center in Blacksburg.

GO Fest on the go

Roanoke's annual GO

Fest is moving—from the River's Edge Sports Complex to the city's downtown, stretching from Elmwood Park to the City Market area. Kait Pedigo, Events Manager for Roanoke Outside, says one big reason is to help many businesses recover from the pandemic: "we know that a lot of our local businesses downtown have just really needed some more foot traffic and it seems like an opportunity, if we were going to do something for the region, this could be it." Not to mention highlighting the Roanoke region's many outdoor recreation opportunities. GO Fest – the GO Outside Festival - returns

in mid-October. This will be its 10th anniversary for an event that was on hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19.

More \$\$ for struggling eateries?

Placing more money in the federal Restaurant Revitalization Fund is on the agenda for U.S. Senators Tim Kaine and Mark Warner, who sent a letter urging their colleagues to allocate more fund to help restaurants, supplementing what was first put in place back in March. Kaine said last month that money went quickly, and many businesses did not receive the help needed.

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"A number of businesses that had a clear case for receiving funds under the program applied [but] maybe made a slight technical mistake on their application; by the time they corrected it there were no funds left." Kaine also said that without such funding thousands of restaurants across the country and hundreds in Virginia were forced to close.

More jobs in Pulaski

Governor Northam's

office announced that The Patton Logistics Group will invest eleven million dollars to expand its trucking, logistics, and warehousing operation in the New River Valley Commerce Park in Pulaski County, creating 63 jobs. Expansion plans call for a trucking operations and maintenance center designed to provide the infrastructure to support a future investment in electric trucks.

New hotel coming to Vinton

The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors has approved a "Memorandum of Understanding" with the Town of Vinton in support of a proposed hotel that will be built at South Pollard Street and Washington Avenue. Jill Loope is the director of economic development for Roanoke County: "[It's a 120-room hotel on six acres in a highly visible location, at a gateway

entrance to the town. The redevelopment project will significantly improve the property with an estimated investment of twelve million dollars," Loope told the Board of Supervisors. Vinton Town Council approved a sale of six parcels it had cobbled together for the new hotel at a meeting in July. The opening date is some time in 2022.

Compiled by
Gene Marrano

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*Celebrity list subject to change.

For ticket information: fsrv.org

Presented by:





Troy Keyser

LOOKING BEYOND THE HORIZON

By Anne Sampson

Valley Business FRONT introduces Troy Keyser, Director of Carilion Clinic Innovation.

"It's pronounced like 'May I have the keys, sir,'" Troy laughs. "My grandfather came up with that, so I try to use it."

Troy brings a unique combination of

education and experience to the new Innovation Department at Carilion, launched in 2020, with a background in Psychology, Philosophy and Health Communication. He is joined by Prachi

Joshi, a biomedical engineer, and Aileen Helsel, a molecular bioscience PhD.

“Our focus is on novel inventions and technologies from our staff that can improve care, efficiency, and administrative practice,” says Troy. “If we face a problem, then other hospitals or patients may as well.” His department looks for inventions that can be transferable to other healthcare systems, nurturing ideas from providers and staff in every area, from patient care to administration, growing them to benefit the local patient population, then scaling outward to other hospital systems.

“We already have 81 invention disclosures (used to determine whether patent protection should be sought), 12 patent applications and three start-ups,” says Troy, “and we have close relationships with Virginia Tech and with the Virginia Tech Carilion Innovation Fund, led by James Ramey.” The fund looks for innovative products outside the Carilion system, that have the potential to be used in healthcare.

An example is a co-development between a Carilion inventor and MetiStream, an analytics platform that uses artificial intelligence to analyze unstructured data and pull out the salient points. In this case, the unstructured data is patient charts.

“Medical records aren’t just X’s and O’s. They’re text, notes written by doctors and nurses,” says Troy. “Imagine having to read through it all and glean the important points.”

Carilion participates in the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP), which requires 180 different data points to be extracted from patient charts. Manual extraction means trained nurses read the charts, a costly and time-consuming solution. With human supervision, MetiStream automates the process, increasing efficiency and decreasing costs, in much the way a search engine scans websites for information that matches search criteria.

“IN BRIEF”

NAME: Troy Keyser

FROM: Vermont

POSITION: Director of Carilion Clinic Innovation

COMPANY: Carilion Clinic

FAVORITE HIKES: Buzzard Rock, Chestnut Loop

FAMILY: Wife, Rebecca; two cats: Fish, who’s 13, and Tallulah, who’s “not the smartest, but so beautiful”

EDUCATION: BA, Drew University (Madison, NJ); Master’s, Emerson College (Boston, MA), in partnership with Tufts University School of Medicine

PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT: Empathy. Curiosity. Kindness. Set aside what you “know” and seek to understand first.

“This is the first time we’ve been able to co-develop and commercialize a Carilion invention with an industry partner, and as the first user, we’ll be able to customize,” says Troy. “The idea came from Dr. Jake (Jacob) Gillen, our Director of Surgical Quality. Seven hundred other hospitals participate in NSQIP who will be able to use this technology. These are the kinds of relationships we broker.”

Carilion hospitals serve as a “living laboratory” for the development of new or improved technology.

“A lot of our inventions are medical device related,” says Troy. “We look at them to see if they’re technically feasible. How do we get from the sketch on a napkin to a physical manifestation?”

To make that leap, the Innovation Department uses a ‘Makerspace’ and real-world testing in Carilion’s Center for Simulation, Research and Patient Safety (Sim Center, for short), to rapidly prototype and evaluate new concepts. They also receive expertise from Carilion’s Human Factors team during the invention development process.

Say an orthopedic surgeon wants to improve a screw used in the treatment of a broken bone. Prachi and a Carilion Innovation Engineer Intern use CAD software to translate the idea into a 360 design, which is printed by one of four medical-grade 3D printers in the Makerspace.

“We can take a clinician’s idea and have a prototype in three weeks, for less than \$100,” says Troy. “We bring it into the Simulation Center, where people can engage with the thing and see if it really works for them. Then we can bring it back to adjust and improve. It’s not an ephemeral whiteboard situation; we’ve gathered information and gotten feedback.”

Dr. Helsel, who focuses on commercializing the technology, then links the invention with carefully selected industry partners, investors or grant programs, to drive further development and commercialization.

“There’s a ‘Valley of Death’ that has to be crossed to get from concept to validated prototype,” says Troy. “We bridge that chasm.”

There is also a royalty stream that returns to Carilion, to be invested in charity care and further research and innovation development.

Troy came to Roanoke in 2018 to develop Carilion’s Innovation, having led innovation at Boston’s Harvard-affiliated Mass General Brigham’s hospital system. He moved here one month after marrying his wife, Dr. Rebecca Rosen, a PhD in Early American English and Native American Literature.

“Since we lived in Boston, I can say that she is ‘wicked smaht’,” says Troy.

The couple enjoy hiking, and didn’t realize they were moving to ‘hiking central’ when they came to the Roanoke Valley.

“It’s remarkable that I can leave my house and be hiking in five minutes,” Troy says. He finds the Blue Ridge Parkway

to be “spectacular, jaw-dropping,” and enjoys driving to Peaks of Otter to hike Sharp Top, or to set up a picnic along the way, with take-out from Mama Jean’s BBQ. Other favorites include Buzzard’s Rock and sunrise hikes on Chestnut Loop. He also wants to reconnect with a childhood love of mountain biking.

“I’ve heard there’s a little mountain biking around here,” he says, tongue-in-cheek.

Troy is effusive in his praise of Roanoke’s greenways, which he finds to be beautiful and dotted with caring details, such as extended sidewalks to increase accessibility, fountains at dog-level and well-planned playgrounds.


The area’s many breweries are favorite stops, especially Beale’s, in Bedford, for their ribs and a pint of Beale’s Gold. A cold-brew coffee aficionado, Troy likes RND in Wasena, hooked from their first pop-up event at Black Snake Meadery.

“We really love living here, it’s very special,” he says.

Troy credits an early summer job, checking in patients at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, in New Hampshire, as the spark that led to his work in innovation. He did check-ins in many departments, and had patients completing forms on a touchscreen device, novel at the time.

“Imagine being in the orthopedic department and handing a touchscreen to a patient on crutches,” he says. “That just doesn’t work for people.”

Of 5000 hospitals in the US, Carilion is one of only 70 to have a dedicated innovation department.

“We are always looking to continuously improve care,” says Troy. “We have fantastic staff who can see beyond the horizon of what’s possible and clearly communicate, ‘This is what ‘better’ looks like.’ Carilion Innovation is here to help those folks get to that next horizon of better care.” 

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