

Valley Business

FRONT

who crossed
the finish
line first
this race?

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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Patent
Protection
Grand
100



Aerial
Shots

*FRONT*List 2011
Racing Ahead

Nancy Agee,
Carilion Clinic

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LENDER

WELCOME to the FRONT

Inside our pages this month we give you a look at the best of you—in our opinion. And that's what it is: our opinion. We consult with business people about who does what best, but we take the responsibility for the selections and we do not have readers write our stories. That's our job. We don't do yours and don't ask you to do ours.

These selections are meant to be conversation starters, not conversation stoppers. There are many worthy candidates in each category, but when you're making award selections there's no way to do it without allowing personal philosophy and preference ("bias," if you prefer) to sneak in. Fortunately, the two of us were made in different molds and our philosophies are different, which, we think, makes our choices more imaginative and better overall.

We've added a few categories this year—as we always do—and subtracted a few. We have our first woman as Executive FRONTLeader (which is, in effective, Executive of the Year), but we don't spend a lot of time on that because women have been in our Top 5 each year the selections have been made and this is not so much a breakout as an inevitability. The selection comes at a time when women comprise more than half the workforce for the first time in U.S. history.

We hope you enjoy the cover story and that you agree with most of it. We know you'll tell us if you don't.

Michael Miller, whose day job is smack in the middle of some of the most innovative technology in this region, begins a new technology column for FRONT this month with an explanation of how technology is an economic development engine. In the future, Mike will use his insider's knowledge to keep you ahead of what's happening and what's coming. His column replaces that of the estimable Janeson Keeley, whose business called for more attention.



Tom Field



Dan Smith

*Some things are worth preserving...
So are your final wishes.*



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*Based on 2010 data

DEPARTMENTS

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Racing Ahead

FRONTList 2011

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SHOT

from Above **Page 46**



the ER

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Festivals!

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Cover photography of Nancy Agee by Greg Vaughn Photography. Art direction by Tom Field. Graphics work by Nicholas Vaassen.

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FRONT

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Michael Abraham



Susan M. Ayers



Michael Miller



David Perry



Nicholas Vaassen



Greg Vaughn

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 65.

Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 16 diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the 18 month rotational term that will turn over every year and a half.

The board will be given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. "We're journalists," says Editor Dan Smith, "and not business experts. This group of distinguished business professionals—whose range in age, experience, level and specialty is impressive—will give us a solid handle on how business runs and what the primary issues and key players are in this region. My guess is that our coverage of business will be especially useful because of this group of people."

CONTRIBUTORS



Anne Giles Clelland



Tom Field



Kathleen Harshberger



Gene Marrano



Anne Piedmont



Dan Smith



Kathy Surace



Kili Teh



Randolph Walker

“Having fun, getting paid for it.

— Page 47

2010 / 11 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford ClaireV (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Woods Rogers (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Seniors)
Cory Donovan NCTC (Tech/Industry)
John Garland Spectrum (Development)
Nancy Gray Hollins University (Education)
Ellis Gutshall Valley Bank (Finance)
Nanci Hardwick Schultz-Creehan (Tech/Industry)
George Kegley Retired (Seniors)
John D. Long Salem Museum (Culture)
Nancy May LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)
Stuart Mease Rackspace (Tech/Industry)
Mary Miller IDD (Tech/Industry)
Ed Walker Regeneration Partners (Development)
John Williamson RGC (Tech/Industry)

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. 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 calling or e-mailing us 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.

“My wife comes in and says, ‘Get out’

— Page 60

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Blog: morefront.blogspot.com
Editor's blog: editrdan.blogspot.com



Nancy Agee, CEO of Carilion, plays our race driver and FRONTcover model. The jumpsuit is from Advance Auto (another FRONTList winner), which we took over to apply other “sponsor” winners. Good race Everybody!

Racing Ahead

FRONTList 2011

In many respects our annual FRONTList is like a race. You have companies and individuals and organizations all suiting up, strapping on their helmets, and for all practical purposes—putting the pedal to the metal as they stomp on the accelerator to move ahead. The race over this past year was pretty amazing. There were a couple of close calls—with a photo-finish; and there were some clear FRONTLeaders who quickly zoomed far ahead of the pack. A lot of drivers crossed the finish line. But as the checkered flag waved, you can take a look here at who crossed first. In FRONT of others, as it were.

FRONTList 2011 >

Executive Summary:
Here they are: the best of the best of this year’s business during the past year. We’re also giving you some of the worst of the worst just for spice.

By Dan Smith and Tom Field



Meridium

Executive FRONTLeader

Nancy Agee took over Carilion Clinic as CEO this year, but she has been one of its most important leaders for years. She is a brilliant businesswoman, but she brings a warmth, humanity and an understanding of how things work to one of the most important executive positions in the region. She is a Roanoke native who grew up in modest circumstances and studied nursing at UVa before going to work for Carilion. Her ascent to the top is the stuff of stories.

Company FRONTLeader

Meridium chose to stay in Roanoke when it could have located world headquarters anywhere else on the globe. Founder and CEO Bonz Hart bought an old—and some would say blighted—furniture building beside Interstate 581 and turned

it into a technology showpiece. He almost immediately invited in some of the most powerful people in the world in technology to show off the headquarters and the city he loves.

Board Member FRONTLeader

Warner Dalhouse, is on so many boards that we won't go into which they are, save to say that they're generally the most important to the region's economy. He is a leader who knows how to twist an arm or cajole a reluctant contributor. His stature in the banking industry, from which he is retired, remains elevated and he uses his contacts,

his knowledge of the workings of business and his solid common sense to lead some of the most successful enterprises in the region.

For the Right Reasons FRONTLeader

Dr. Susan Osborne, Barter Clinic, Floyd. She practices the kind of medicine we miss most in the expensive, hurry-up industry that has become such a drag on the nation's economy. Dr. Osborne takes her time, pays attention, gets to know her patients, charges based on what they can afford, and cares little for the creature comforts medicine affords others.



Warner Dalhouse



Dr. Susan Osborne



Norfolk Southern

Board of Directors FRONTLeader

Norfolk Southern Corporation's board has kept this particular major industry in the black for years, even as the economy tanked. Its recent purchase of 3,000 new light-weight, strong coal cars from FreightCar America added 200 jobs in Roanoke and shows signs of confidence in the future for one of the region's key industries.

Ammunition Plant for many years, lost it in May to an aggressive \$850 million offer by London-based BAE Systems. Alliant has protested the award, but that's pretty standard when the bucks are this big. The contract was for 10 years. Alliant has 18,000 worldwide employees (1,300 in Radford) and revenues from RAAP represented about five percent of its 2010 sales.

Work Environment FRONTLeader

Delta Dental offers flexible schedules and a compressed work week for some employees. Part-time schedules are available for others. It is a family-oriented company where "work culture provides opportunities for career growth, advancement, and development," according to Delta Dental's literature. Performance recognition, discounts at local businesses and casual dress are also incentives, as are

FRONTDeal of the Year

Alliant Tech Systems, which had held the contract to produce munitions at the Radford Army



Delta Dental



Joe Waldo



Stefan Dumas (center) flanked by student Ray Daniel and colleague Steven Rowson with their football helmets.

competitive pay and benefits.

Toughest Legal Case FRONTLeader

Roanoke native **Joe Waldo** and his firm **Waldo and Lyle** (based in Norfolk) had a couple of high profile cases in this region during the past year, helping settle important and controversial eminent domain lawsuits. Waldo is one of the best known eminent domain lawyers in the United States. In the first case, he helped Jay and Stephanie Burkholder settle for \$2.2 million on their Reserve Avenue property in Roanoke (for which they paid about \$169,000). They were fighting a Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority effort to condemn their three-acre tract of land. The other case involved a Wythe County farmer suing over the expansion of an Interstate 77 bridge over the New River that would split his 300-acre farm in half. The property has already been

imposed upon by U.S. 52, Duke Energy and Appalachian Power. Parts of his land had been taken 10 times over three generations until it was stopped by a U.S. District Court judge who ruled in his favor.

FRONTLeading Technology Advance

Virginia Tech's **study of football helmets** may not have a huge impact on the economics of the country, but it could well save the lives and health of a goodly portion of the nation's youth. A Tech research team led by engineer Stefan Dumas developed a rating system for commercial football helmets that left little doubt about which were the safest. Tech was so impressed by

the ratings that it spent \$10,000 to buy 40 new ones from the top-rated Riddell VSR4.

FRONTLeading Economic Development Idea

The renovation of old buildings in downtown **Roanoke**, many of them for living spaces, has produced a population in the center of the city that has become vibrant and in need of services. The growth of Roanoke's core has been slow and steady for the past few years, but the upsurge in development is creating considerable promise for the near future.



Patrick Henry Hotel renovation in downtown Roanoke



Inside the City Market Building



Modea

FRONTLeading Technology for Business

Modea, a Blacksburg “digital advertising agency,” gets this year’s surprising win for the category we used to call “best new digital device.” Leading companies that capitalize on capturing market share by first capturing attention are flocking to progressive media developers, who produce interactive websites and mobile apps. Standing there to provide such a service with creativity and flair—is Modea.

Hiring up heavy hitters, expanding its facilities, and experiencing phenomenal growth as we speak.

Local Official FRONTLeader

Chris Morrill, Roanoke City Manager, has created a new, inviting perception of that office. Morrill’s willingness and ability to work with business professionals, citizens and staff has improved city government in a lot of tangible and subtle ways.

FRONTLeading New Business Trend

Environmentalism that is slowly seeping into the pores of the business community and has become part and parcel of the most significant business decisions made in this region. Whether it is the latest environmentally friendly construction project or finding a new way to recycle or re-use that which had previously been trash, the region is benefitting in a number of ways, not the least of which is economically.



Chris Morrill



Roanoke Symphony Orchestra

Business-Friendly Education FRONTLeader

Teaching entrepreneurship in some of the region's colleges and universities. Learning to be an owner is as valuable as—if not more valuable than—learning to work for somebody else and some of our institutions are finally giving a nice level of attention to entrepreneurs.

Business Entertainment FRONTLeaders

(Best Place to Take a Client/Prospect)

Virginia Tech's Center for the Arts is a crown jewel that has yet to have its grand opening, but is already presenting an impressive range of arts events. This one could well become one of the most important arts venues in the state very quickly.

(Best Arts Organization for Business to Support)

The Roanoke Symphony Orchestra has managed to remain a steady and solvent organization that provides a significant economic boost to the region, despite an atmosphere in which arts organizations must struggle and adjust in order to survive. RSO gives the region a first class symphony with a number of imaginative and traditional offerings during the year.

(Best Arts Event)

Steppin' Out/Blacksburg is one of the most popular of the region's city festivals and one of the least appreciated outside its immediate area. This one has grown to be a

major player in the region and gives the New River Valley good exposure and a darn good time.

Non-Profit FRONTLeader

Roanoke Rescue Mission has been a first-class, business-oriented operation for many years and its front-edge vision of a non-profit's role and responsibility makes it a consistent role model. Director Joy Sylvester-Johnson, who lost her husband and business partner John earlier this year, continues to run the organization with imagination and independence, refusing to even consider government contributions while expanding the ways income is produced.



Steppin' Out



Roanoke Valley Rescue Mission



Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center

Best Meeting Facilities FRONTLeader

Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center Almost goes without saying in a market where there is strong competition from a number of institutions like the Inn at Virginia Tech, the Smith Mountain Lake 4H Center, the Jefferson Center, various college facilities and hotels.

Financial FRONTLeader

Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties translates all of that brain power at the state's center of technology learning and research and turns it into dollars for the university. In a time of state budget parsimoniousness, that is important. VTIP is separate from the university and it pursues commercial application of tech discoveries and helps protect the ownership of them.

Industry FRONTLeaders

Valley Business FRONT covers nine industry fronts each month. The following list presents the FRONTLeaders in each sector:

Legal FRONTLeader

Spilman Thomas & Battle recognized a distinct need in community banking for legal representation and moved swiftly to fill that need. New federal regulations put a lot of stress on smaller banks with no in-house legal counsel and Spilman Thomas filled the gap with 20 lawyers in its Community Banking Group.



Spilman Thomas & Battle



Bradley Free Clinic



Volvo assembly line

Wellness FRONTLeader

The **Bradley Free Clinic** in Roanoke and **New River Valley Free Clinic** provide excellent health care services to the poor, using volunteer medical professionals. These clinics take some of the burden off already overworked emergency rooms—where the poor often end up with even simple problems—and help reduce health care costs for all of us. Its preventive care and teaching helps the poor avoid future health emergencies.

Tech / Industry FRONTLeader

Tie here between **Volvo** in Dublin and **Moog** in Blacksburg. Volvo has been competing against low wages in Mexico and working well with its union to keep jobs here. There has been some impressive manipulation to keep the plant here and to keep it profitable. The workers

deserve a good share of the credit for working hard to make it happen. Meanwhile, Moog has been in Blacksburg for nearly 60 years, beginning as Electro-Tec, but the founders had a disagreement and one of them founded Poly-Scientific. Litton Industries bought Poly-Sci and until about the late 1990s it was part of Litton, which was acquired by Northrop Grumman. NG sold to Moog, a military systems company from New York, and prevented it from closing. Since then, Moog has grown from about 600 employees to more than 1,000, and has a small division in Galax. It is booming with military spending at a high level, but keeps a low profile.

Development FRONTLeader

Leave it to developer **Ed Walker** to walk away with this one. Once again, one of his developments—this one the renovation of the Patrick Henry Hotel in downtown Roanoke—is at the top of the scale. Walker used every tool and trick available to him to save this 1920s jewel and the building even survived a roof fire as it was being filled with residents. Walker's intent, he once said, is to own buildings where "the lights burn all the time," signaling activity. Downtown Roanoke is benefitting significantly from that philosophy.



Ed Walker

Senior FRONTLeader

Development of **MedCottage** for those taking care of elderly relatives has been big national news. It was invented by Salem minister Kenneth Dupin of N2Care. It is a portable, high tech dwelling that keeps the aging relative near, but not too near.

Education FRONTLeader

Virginia Western Community College, with a plethora of new programs aimed at the business and industrial community, and the construction of its first new building in many years, is full to brimming with students and going full bore even with budget cuts from the state in the face of its success. President Bobby Sandel simply refuses to wring his hands, surging forward in the face of difficult times.

Retail / Service FRONTLeader

Advance Auto, Roanoke's Fortune 500 company, has been quietly expanding for many months in its renovated shopping center building. The renovations to a large part of the old Crossroads Shopping Center have been of great significance to the north end of Roanoke and to the energy in a growing commercial area. Advance's jobs have been well-paying and stable as the company moves toward the top of its industry nationally. And on the community service side, Advance sponsors multiple events and puts on that rip-roaring, crowd-pleasing Monster Jam show in January.



Advance Auto



MedCottage



Virginia Western
Community College

Culture FRONTleader

Sarah Elizabeth Timmins, producer of the movie "Lake Effects," filmed at Smith Mountain Lake and released in October, is way out FRONT in a competitive field here. Sarah Elizabeth made this movie happen by pulling in local investors, promoting the region, spreading goodwill like apple seeds and generally willing it onto the screen in less than two years. Sarah E has become a virtual citizen of our region, spending much time at her parent's home on Smith Mountain Lake and sponsoring community events, including one where star Jane Seymour was featured. She recently announced that she and author David Balcacci, an investor in "Lake Effects," will team to make his novel Wish You Well, into a movie. He lives near Smith Mountain Lake.

On the recreation FRONT, small, plastic kayaks—running from \$179 to about \$350 each—are sweeping the

area and filling our rivers and lakes. The boats are easy to maneuver and to transport and you don't need a lot of expensive gear to get going. If you have a boat, a paddle and life vest, you're on. The boats are best on lakes and rivers with water that doesn't have rapids above a Class II, but there's plenty of both in a region becoming known for its outdoor recreation.

Our Own Categories

Readers' Choice FRONTcover

Two things happened for our Volume III "FRONTfavorites" contest this year. First we had the greatest number of responses by far (over 200). We attribute most of that increase to social media.



Second, for the first time, every single eligible cover received multiple votes (all 12). The tally was difficult, because we had six covers in particular, bringing in so many votes, the leader position kept changing among them. In the end, though the Angel (Bob Summers); Queen (Mary Miller); Rosie-the-Riveter (Tamea Woodward); Captain (Joel Shepherd); and Juggler (Lee Ann Minnix) all placed well, our FRONTcover of the year goes to... "Alternative Medicine girl" / December 2010 (Amanda Spikes).



Sarah Elizabeth Timmins' *Lake Effects* stars Jane Seymour (seen here with Roanoke businessman Bart Wilner)




Kayaking



Kathleen Harshberger

Readers' Choice FRONTContributing Writer

FRONTreaders are quite passionate about etiquette and protocol apparently, as **Kathleen Harvey Harshberger** was the clear winner in receiving the most votes for contributing writer, Volume III "FRONTfavorites." Other writers are sought out for this preference or that, but for that consistent need for advice and information on conducting yourself in a professional manner, an awful lot of readers turn to the Etiquette & Protocol column each month. 

Let's Get an Out-of-Town Firm To Do It Award

Sadly, there is no shortage of examples of the belief that if the work is done by somebody from outside this region, it will be better, but perhaps the best is the renovation of the **Roanoke City Market Building** (all the way down to the mosaics at the entrances, which went to an out-of-state artist. LewisGale, meanwhile, hired a local photographer to do a mural for its new senior facility at its Alleghany Hospital, showing it can be done. The building renovation was designed by an out-of-state firm, even though what we consider the best design—the one by Spectrum Design, whose office is just two blocks away—was superior.



All too common site

Not in FRONT and Other Awards


Lipstick on a Pig Award

The notion that throwing \$60 million at the **Poff Federal Building** in Roanoke (most of it going to contractors outside the state, even though the money was meant as a local stimulus) is at best ludicrous. It's an ugly building, a marginally functional building and it has never been anything else. All that money is not going to help. This is a case where starting over, perhaps even in an existing building elsewhere, would likely have been a better choice (think Heronimus Building).

Major Market Disruption Award

Both the **Roanoke City Market** and **Downtown Blacksburg** had a rough go of it this summer (and longer... and it's still not over) with major construction to public, private, and retail properties. With the stalls, backups, and redirection of traffic, the merchants were hurt the most. Some even left or were physically driven out of business. Parking is still a nightmare; and you get tickets on top of your suffering (there's no letting up on that).

Bi-Polar Award

Ok, so this recognition involves the national scene—but it's so prevalent we have to include it here. The political / social / economic climate is in such a turmoil, we have great waves of protest. Such passion hasn't been seen at this level in a long while after decades of apathy. But this past year, and what it surely to only intensify in the upcoming 2012 election season, there is divide that is only getting larger. No one applauds the right to voice opinion and demand change more than we do at the FRONT. But the very people who care the most come from opposite sides. Even locally, from Tea Party demands of fiscal restraint to Occupy Wall Street demands of fiscal revision—it's like the entire citizenry is coming from two opposite sides of the world. What was grass roots is now looking more like a large grassy field at Gettysburg. And with no backing down from liberals, conservatives, libertarians (moderates and centrists don't help here)—don't expect teamwork. We're in for a fight. 



Downtown access restricted from construction



Business entertaining >

Business entertaining is a multi-billion dollar business and represents the largest social activity in the world today. Its roots go back to Greek and Roman times when the ties between personal and professional life were intrinsically bound together. This is still true in some cultures, where business is conducted within a small circle of family or close, trusted friends.

In the United States we usually separate the two, and some find business entertaining to be nerve-racking. Since a meal in public provides a backdrop for so many business interactions, let's take some of the guesswork out of the process.

Extending an invitation:

- The host decides where to meet.
- Be precise about the time, place and purpose of the meeting.
- Be specific about where you meet—for instance, inside the restaurant or in the foyer.
- Phone your guest the day before to confirm the date and time.
- Avoid putting the guest in the uncomfortable position of not knowing the limits of hospitality. By saying something like, "The filet mignon here is excellent," you are letting your guest know it is perfectly acceptable to order such an item.
- As the host it is your responsibility to pay for the meal.
- Some men have a problem allowing a woman to pay. If I know that, I arrive early and ask the restaurant to run my credit card ahead of time.
- Do not jump into a discussion of business right away.
- Remember this is about getting to know a potential client and assessing or exploring the potential for future business dealings. If you already have an association, it is about appreciation for past business and continuing the relationship into the future.

Accepting an invitation:

- There are two reasons for the invitation: to thank you for previous business, or to explore your future potential value to the organization.

Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger


Executive Summary:

Remember, it's not about the food, it's about building the relationship.

- Remember, it is not about the eating, it is about the meeting. You are not invited because your host thinks you are hungry.
- Business entertaining is all about appraisal: your host assessing you, and you assessing your host.
- Ask yourself two questions – what do they want and what is in it for me?
- Then prepare accordingly.
- Avoid difficult to eat foods: lobster, spaghetti, whole fish, and artichokes.
- Be prepared to make small talk before getting down to business.



Its roots go back to Greek and Roman times when the ties between personal and professional life were intrinsically bound together.

After the meal, during desert and coffee, is when most business discussions occur. It is the responsibility of the host to decide the timing of a business conversation. So if your host wants to jump straight into a discussion you, as the savvy professional, will be prepared to do so. *Bon Appetit!* 

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Expressing sympathy >

Dear Getting a Grip: A co-worker lost a family member and we just heard the person will be on bereavement leave this week. I have worked with her only a few times and consider her a casual business acquaintance rather than a close, personal friend. I have been fortunate not to lose anyone close to me yet, so I don't have personal experience to go on about how to express my condolences. And since I don't know her well, I'm uncertain how to best be supportive when she returns to work. Do you have any suggestions?

Dear Express: When co-workers lose someone important to them, there's a truth that can be both liberating and horrifying to learn: Nothing you can say or do will help. A death is irreversible. Whether it's the guy down the hall or your own spouse, you cannot replace what's lost. With death, we are all helpless. So you can do everything for someone and you can do nothing and the result will be the same.

Since we really can't help each other with a loss, what we can help each other with is coping with the loss. In general, these are the socially accepted norms for ways to be supportive of the bereaved, in descending order—in my opinion—from the most immediate and intimate to the most business-like:


- Personal visit to the home with a meal or personal visit to the home without a meal;
- Personal attendance at a visitation or service;
- Letter or card with a personal note sent through the mail;
- Phone call, voice mail, text;
- Private message through a social networking site or a public message through a social networking site;
- Donation, flowers, card without personal note sent through the mail;
- E-mail.

Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:
There is very little you can do to ease the loss, but do what you can.

For a bereaved co-worker on leave, considering options at the end of the list rather than at the beginning respects personal and professional boundaries between the two of you and the individual's privacy.

Getting a Grip: What does a person who has lost someone most feel? Alone. However well-intentioned, telling the person about your own loss or explaining the person's loss in terms of your own religious or spiritual philosophy is all about you. That confirms the sense of aloneness. When you next see your co-worker, this sentence—"I am sorry for your loss"—states that you are present for their reality. Add genuinely-felt eye contact, and you have truly helped, if only for a moment, to the extent that any of us can. 

Need to start "Getting a Grip" on a personal problem at work? E-mail your question to grip@handshakezo.com.

The royal effect >

It would be easy to blame the current trend of casual dress in the workplace on the younger generation. Young designers keep churning out designs that are completely wrong for the office and misinformed college graduates often appear for interviews and jobs in far too casual attire.

One bright spot on the horizon offers hope: Kate Middleton, recent bride of Prince William of England. She understands the importance of dressing well and appropriately for the occasion.

Middleton has been the Duchess of Cambridge for eight short months, but takes her new job seriously. As a royal she represents Britain, whether visiting sick children in a hospital, touring a war-torn foreign country, or glamming it up at a state dinner, and she dresses in a style that represents her country superbly.


Middleton wears classic outfits that always look “right.” She invariably wears body-skimming outfits that stop short of being tight and revealing. Her skirts are often knee-length and her blouses offer plenty of coverage, yet she avoids appearing matronly. She looks feminine and appropriate at all times, and has even made it acceptable to wear pantyhose again.

She chooses garments and accessories that she loves enough to wear repeatedly. For a woman who likely has an unlimited wardrobe budget, she can be remarkably mainstream in her shopping and a great role model.

She shops equally often at designer showrooms and at trendy chains, such as Zara, that typical women can afford. She is an excellent example of how to meld high fashion and fashion for the masses.

Some in fashion circles lament that she is not a trendsetter but, rather, a fashion-follower. Truth be told, trendsetting in the fashion world has gotten out of hand. Too many designers focus on producing cutting-edge, often bizarre, fashion, rather than great fashion that complements women.

For a young woman, the duchess is remarkably confident in her style choices and not easily influenced by trends. We can learn something from Kate about the image we should be projecting at work and in our personal lives. When we accept a job and the lifestyle that comes with it, we have a responsibility to look the part.

With her cool cachet, perhaps Middleton’s style will make classic fashion appear chic to both her peers and to baby-boomers. Her clothing reflects that she takes her job seriously and, in this economic climate, she is an example we should emulate. 



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
A new duchess and a better understanding of what being dressed appropriately really means.



all photos: Susan Ayers

Ann Shawver

Women's work >

Executive Summary:

Public Accounting, once male dominated, is now an area where women have achieved near equality numerically.

By Susan Ayers

Over the years, the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) profession has seen a lot of changes, including additional educational requirements and adjustments in the testing process for the exam. But one of the most noted changes is the increase in the number of women in the profession.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) reports that for more than the last 20 years, women have been 50 percent of all new hires into public accounting. And women have made great progress with regard to advancement and leadership. This is also being seen at the local and regional levels in our area.

"All four officers are women at the Roanoke Area Chapter of the Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants (VSCPA)," says President Ann Shawver, CPA and Director of Finance at the City of Roanoke. And "five out of six members serving on the organization's board of governors are women. The membership is overall male."

Is this the norm for an individual chapter

to have all female officers? Not really, but VSCPA's website reveals that each active chapter in Virginia has a mix of women and men as its officers and enrollment at both the BA and MA levels is split nearly in equal halves between male (52 percent) and female (48 percent) accounting students.

"We have seen an increase in the number of women members at VSCPA," says Member Relations Specialist Courtney Neal. "Over the last five years or so, our membership consisted of 60 percent male and 40 percent female. Today it's 54 percent male and 46 percent female."

While VSCPA and the chapters are legally separate organizations, VSCPA works closely with the chapters to try to help them plan events and notify them of conferences and allows them to use their brand and logo.

The Roanoke Area Chapter holds a monthly luncheon meeting that usually includes a speaker every fourth Thursday at the Shenandoah Club. The chapter dues are \$40 per year for CPAs, staff accountants and administrative personnel. College students majoring in accounting are eligible for free membership.

"It's a good way to stay up to speed and to make contacts that may be helpful to the work that you do," says Shawver. "I've been a member for 15 years."

Founded in 1939, the Roanoke Area Chapter has more than 100 members having diverse



Amanda Johnson



Larry Hurt

areas of practice including public accounting, general industry, government, banking and education.


The Roanoke Area Chapter includes the Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, Lexington and Smith Mountain Lake.

"Everyone in my firm is a member of the Roanoke Chapter," says Amanda Johnson, Accountant at Anderson & Reed, LLC. "The firm is supportive and pays for all of its employees' membership fees."

"The first opportunity for service is to be a Roanoke Chapter officer or board member and run the programs and events of the chapter," says Larry Hurt, CPA and chief credit officer at Franklin Community Bank. "This is an opportunity to serve the profession and the community as well as to meet

people. There are a significant number of opportunities for service at the state level with the VSCPA. Most are committees including some that may be special purpose sub committees and there must certainly be something for everyone."

Hurt has worked in the banking industry for more than 35 years, held three Roanoke Chapter positions as is the norm for the president and has been largely involved on the VSCPA Board.

In conjunction with VSCPA, the Roanoke Chapter offers several resources for its members including high quality Continuing Professional Education (CPE), online learning opportunities, networking events, health and liability insurance, career center, the award-winning Disclosures magazine and VSCPA's political advocacy program. 

"Power To The People"

Wind turbines at the new William Fleming High School Stadium will generate a portion of the power required to run the stadium. When the turbines produce more power than the stadium uses, the excess power will flow backward through the meter into the APCO grid for use by other APCO customers. The Stadium's electric bill is in turn reduced by the amount of power returned to the APCO grid.

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Gene Marrano

Christopher Rhodes: "It's a complicated area. People not knowing what they should protect is one of the issues."

What needs to be protected? >

Executive Summary:

If you have a wonderful idea you'd like to patent and get rich with, don't tell anybody. Not even your attorney.

Christopher Rhodes is not your ordinary attorney. For one thing he has a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Virginia and an undergraduate degree in the same field from Roanoke College. Secondly, he has focused on intellectual property law over the past 10 years, advising clients around the country from offices in Massachusetts and now Roanoke on their protection rights regarding patents, trademarks and copyrights.

By Gene Marrano

He's no ambulance chaser, that's for sure: Rhodes lists his experience (at



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www.rhodesip.com) as focused on such niches as materials science, small molecules, medical devices, biotechnology, methods and systems. From his office on Franklin Road in Roanoke, Rhodes (39) works with his wife Sandra, soon to be a registered patent agent through the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, which is what her husband was before becoming an attorney. She's no slouch either: Sandra Rhodes has several degrees in chemistry and has lectured at schools like UVa and James Madison University.

Christopher Rhodes, a Roanoke native, taught chemistry at the University of Virginia for a while (where he also worked for the UVa Patent Foundation) before going to law school at Suffolk University in Boston. He then practiced law there before returning to Roanoke in 2009, first as a patent attorney

for Woods Rogers. He hung out a shingle as Rhodes IP in April.

His advice for someone with a great idea? "Don't tell anyone. Don't even tell me. Things need to be kept secret in order to be patented. Treat it as a trade secret, because that's what it is." Make sure spending the time and money to seek a patent fits in with long-range business plan; it may not be worth the hassle says Rhodes.

There aren't many patent cases heard locally in the Western District of Virginia; Rhodes says judges here "tend to hold on to them, because it's something different," from the standard federal case. "The law changes on a daily basis," adds Rhodes.

Typical patents (more than eight million have been granted to date) are only valid

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and enforceable for 14 to 20 years from the date of filing. There are three classifications for patents: utility, design and plant. Rhodes calls it a quid pro quo, wherein the government gives a patent holder the right to exclude others for a limited period, in return "you're going to tell the public how to make and use this thing. The ultimate benefit is to society."

Patents have two components: "specifications," which describes what the invention is; "claims," which defines what it is and provides the property rights. Many patents are improvements to existing items, with pharmaceuticals a notable exception, says Rhodes. "As patent attorneys we push the envelope. We want to get those claims as broad as we can, to provide you the most exclusionary rights."


Patents can be registered offshore to provide protection in countries like China, India and Mexico, which are manufacturing centers. The patent owner has "the ultimate

burden of policing that," says Rhodes.

Rhodes says a patent application can languish for several years, with 3-4 years typically passing until a patent is issued.

Expect to spend anywhere from \$6,000-\$10,000 to much more on a patent application, depending on the complexity. About 80 percent of those who approach Rhodes about a patent are affiliated with a corporation.

"Spend a little money doing a search [first]," advises Rhodes, who has shot down some potential clients "within 10 minutes," by searching patent office databases and elsewhere on the 'net. Even Amazon and e-Bay are valuable resources: "If its been done, somebody is trying to sell it."

"It's a complicated area," says the former college instructor, who also conducts seminars locally on the patent process. "People not knowing what they should protect is one of the issues." 



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Carilion's plan to offer heart valve implantation will require close cooperation among medical disciplines, according to (from left) interventional cardiologist Dr. Timothy Ball, cardiac chief Dr. David Sane and cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Scott Arnold.

The end of heart surgery? >

Executive Summary:

"Traditional surgical treatments" may be replaced by a less invasive technique and Carilion Clinic is on the case with its new hybrid OR.

By Randolph Walker

One day, cutting open the rib cage to repair heart problems may be medical history. "Putting people on bypass pumps will be looked at as a historical event," says Dr. David Sane, chief of cardiology at Carilion Clinic.

That day is not here yet, but with the advent of heart valve implantation through catheters, the first rays of dawn may be breaking.

Carilion is busy preparing for Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI), which it aims to offer in a new hybrid operating room by December.

"We see quite a few patients who are elderly, have severe aortic stenosis [when the aortic valve does not fully open], and have comorbidities [multiple disorders] that preclude them from having traditional surgical valve treatments, and there's no adequate medical treatment" for these particular patients, Sane says. "This new technology allows the aortic valve to be



The Sapien heart valve, made of cow tissue enclosed in a metal mesh tube, is threaded through the femoral artery on a catheter and expanded to its full size once it reaches the aortic valve.



Randolph Walker

with traditional medical therapy.

While hospitals have been catheterizing heart patients for decades, TAVI requires a higher level of surgical capability—thus, the development of the hybrid operating room.

The hybrid OR combines the imaging capability of a cath lab with the surgical capability and upgraded sterile environment of an operating room, according to Steve Arner, vice president of cardiac and vascular services.


"The OR is the right environment because you do a lot of cutdown," or opening of the insertion site, says Arner. If surgery becomes necessary, the patient will not have to be moved to another room.

Carilion Roanoke Memorial has six catheterization labs, several angioplasty rooms and three open heart rooms, Arner says.

TAVI is not the only use for the hybrid OR, according to Cole. It will also be used for advanced peripheral vascular procedures, such as treating thoracic and abdominal aneurysms[bulges in blood vessel walls], and renal artery procedures.

Most operating rooms are about 600 square feet, while the hybrid facility will be 975 square feet, Arner says. A new state license was not necessary because this is considered an expansion of an existing facility. Including new equipment, the project is expected to cost \$3 million.

The initial effort on TAVI is being led by Dr. Joe Rowe, a cardiothoracic surgeon and Dr. Timothy Ball, an interventional cardiologist. Carilion is in the process of establishing a valve clinic.

At a recent meeting attended by Ball, Sane and cardiothoracic surgeon Dr. Scott Arnold, the physicians spoke in glowing terms about transcatheter technology and its potential to revolutionize heart treatment. Says Ball: "This technology is going to be earthshaking in how we deal with aortic valve and mitral valve repair." 

replaced without open heart surgery."

The aortic valve keeps blood flowing in the right direction from the left ventricle into the aorta, which supplies the body with oxygenated blood.

The Sapien aortic valve, manufactured by Edwards Lifesciences, is made from a cow's heart tissue. Enclosed in a collapsible metal mesh stent, it is placed at the tip of a catheter which is threaded through the femoral artery. Reaching the diseased valve, it is expanded, pushing the old valve against the walls of the aorta and replacing the old valve's function, says Charlene Cole, a registered nurse and senior director of cardiac services. The cow tissue valve should last 10 to 20 years and does not require the patient to take anticoagulants.

The Sapien valve is available in the United States only for investigational use, but that may be changing soon. In July 2011 an FDA advisory panel recommended approval of the valve for certain inoperable patients, according to a press release on the Edwards website (www.edwards.com). Edwards submitted a PMA (premarket approval) request following a trial which compared transcatheter valve implants



Michael Miller

Tech Scoop

The changing role of technology >

Executive Summary:

"Technology is a tool, not an end in itself. It's an enabler for product development."

By Michael Miller

Soon after taking office, President Obama appointed the first Chief Technology Officer of the United States. While the position, filled by Virginia's Aneesh Chopra, reports through the Office of Science and Technology Policy, it is clearly focused on economic development rather than advancing scientific achievement.

This economic focus is an example of the changing role, or perhaps the changing perception of the role of technology in our society, and it is critical, particularly in our region, that we understand why.

We all learned in school that western society has progressed over the past couple of hundred years from a primarily agrarian culture through industrialization into what is now called the technology age. In fact, the rising standards of living in the industrialized countries, combined with the opening of

borders around the world has produced a shift of manufacturing activity to previously third-world countries where labor rates are still low. This has left the western economies to carve out a position as innovators, constantly inventing the new technologies that power the world's economy.

But what, exactly, is technology and how does it get into the marketplace? I think the best one-liner to describe the way this happens comes from an old-time fiddler friend of mine, who likes to say, "If I had me some ham, I could have me some ham and eggs, if I had me some eggs."

Now, before you turn the page to the next article, think about it for a minute and you'll see what I mean. This statement contains the fundamental principles of the product development cycle in our economy. First, there has to be a potential customer ("me") with a need (hunger). Then there has to be recognition of a product that can fill that perceived need (food, in this case ham and eggs).

It doesn't have to be the only product that can fill the need, just one that has enough desirable attributes to convince the customer to purchase it. Finally, there must be somebody, like an entrepreneur, to figure out how to produce the product and sell it at a profit. The opportunity for technology is, in this case, efficiently obtaining ham and eggs and preparing them for the consumer. When everything works right, you have happy ham producers, happy egg producers, Cracker Barrel Restaurants and satisfied diners.

So where's the technology, you ask? It's hidden in how the pigs and chickens are bred and raised, the feed they eat, perhaps the meat and egg packing operations, the refrigeration system and transportation system that deliver fresh ham and eggs to distribution centers, the design of the cooking facilities at the restaurant that keep the costs low, and pretty much every other step along the way between the pig and your plate. We take all this for granted because it remains hidden from us, but without it the only people able to have ham and eggs at an affordable price would be farmers ... and maybe not even them.

Now let's talk about what technology is not, using a more modern example.


Facebook is not technology. Gasp!

Facebook is an implementation of technology. Facebook is a program, which is also not technology. The system on which the Facebook program runs is technology. But it has nothing specifically to do with the operation of Facebook. It's just a system that you can use for many different applications. It is the fundamental enabler that allows programs such as Facebook or Twitter or whatever to deliver content to your computer or smartphone.

But the product called Facebook is the result of an entrepreneur recognizing that people would like to network together across the globe (the 'hunger') and this opportunity could be provided by employing computer

and communications technology together ("ham" and "eggs"). The real genius of Facebook is the recognition that if you give away the service, there would be so many users that advertisers would pay a lot of money to get access to them, even though I have never known anybody who actually purchased any products from those annoyingly appropriate sidebar ads.

So, we need to understand that technology is a tool, not an end in itself. It's an enabler for product development.

And that is precisely why the Chief Technology Officer of the United States is in the business of economic development and not scientific achievement. 

(This is Michael Miller's first Technology column for Valley Business FRONT. It will be a feature of each issue.)

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A Natural Leader >

Executive Summary:

Novozyme's CEO from Denmark addresses Salem plant at annual meeting with message of brighter future.

By Tom Field

Steen Riisgaard is an evangelist. Not the traveling circuit riding preacher type, but indeed—he seems intent on spreading a message, his business resembles a ministry at times, and he has a following.

The president and CEO of Novozymes—an enzymes and microbial-based product technology company—addressed the Novozymes Biologicals subsidiary in Salem at its annual meeting in October, with a prophetic statement:

“We had a goal to grow the U.S. business by \$100 million in 10 years,” Riisgaard said. “We did that, and want to do it again—but this time, we’ll do it in five years.”

Riisgaard is a believer. He speaks in broad strokes, where you could be too easy to dismiss some of his views as pie-in-the-sky, until you realize this is scientist talking. He doesn't shrink from supplying the numbers, the stats, the facts. And quite frankly, he's one of the few leaders on the global environmental front who has an overwhelmingly positive outlook.

Of course, he's also an industrialist. It's a title no one uses in describing him, because Steen Riisgaard is associated with “sustainability” and “preservation” and “cool / green certifications” and the promising frontier of a “bio-based society.” Nevertheless, Novozymes has been cited as the world's largest producer of industrial enzymes, as well as a global leader in bio-innovation.

As much as Riisgaard speaks of creating a better world, he paints a picture of business and industry making that new world happen.



Tom Field

Steen Riisgaard

“We use ‘Mother Nature’ to address opportunities and challenges,” Riisgaard begins. “We actually turn to the technology of nature before chemistry. When you use nature's own technology, what you have is something that is immediately more sustainable, and you leave nothing behind. Everything is absorbed after we've done our tricks.”

You hear so much of the big picture from the optimistic evangelist, you almost forget



Coming Up...

December 2011

Young Entrepreneurs

What a way to wrap up the year. In FRONTforward fashion, we bring you the region's most promising young entrepreneurs. Energetic minds and bodies who are developing the business landscape in both practical and innovative manner. Do you ever wonder what's on the horizon and on what new frontiers we will arrive? Meet the "new kids on the block" in December's FRONT and get a preview.

January 2012

Body Art @ Work

Tattoos and "body modification" (which can include piercings of all types, branding, hardware implants, and things we haven't thought of yet) are part of the growing cultural phenomenon. Modifying your appearance makes a statement to be sure (and that is no longer restricted to adventurous 18-year olds). But how does it fit in the workplace? We pull up sleeves and take a look in January's FRONT.

FRONTguide

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that there is actual product manufactured at the Salem plant (western Roanoke County), which employs about 130 people. You might think they're pouring in droplets from the fountain of youth or some mysterious elixir in their test tubes. In fact, you might just have to turn to the plant president Patrick Patterson to understand the local plant makes microbial-based products for household, industrial and agricultural applications. The products are used in wastewater treatment, grease removal, turf and plant care, and odor control.

But once the specifics of business operations are revealed, Riisgaard is more than ready to take you back to that new world. He doesn't jump up and down. He doesn't raise his voice. He sits tall and looks you squarely in the eye with calming, direct proclamations—even as his very words seem giddy with delight.

"The future is not an automatic thing," he says. "The future is created by somebody. I want to be part of somebody. You can say Novozymes wants to be part of that somebody."

Riisgaard says 25 percent of oil will be replaced by bio-resources in 10 years. He's also been recruited by various organizations to speak, where he will make statements like "all the things we make out of oil, we will make them out of sugars instead."

Riisgaard is easy to believe. Whether he's the "Steve Jobs" of Bio-Economics, only time

In Brief

Name: Steen Riisgaard
Age: 60
Business: Novozymes
Location: Denmark
Background: Research micro-biologist, Serum Institute of Denmark; Enzymes R&D for Novo Nordisk, Tokyo, Japan; spin-off to Novozymes in 2000; Married, three sons, three grandchildren
Business Philosophy: The future is not an automatic thing; the future is created by somebody, and I want to be part of somebody

will tell. In the meantime, he certainly seems to have mother earth as a big checked "like" on his fan page. The Novozymes plant here in the Roanoke Valley is right behind him. More than \$200,000 and nearly 2,000 volunteer hours were directed to the local greenways in building and expanding the parks. And while a lot of other corporate executives take in a round of golf or hit the town on their visits to subsidiaries in other countries, Patterson said Riisgaard spent the day before the annual presentation hiking McAfee's Knob, visiting the Blue Ridge Parkway, and stopping by Valhalla vineyards.

All part of the missionary trip, perhaps. 

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Kim Mecom (left) and Pam Hardesty.

all photos: David Perry



Kim Mecom talks about the new super track rooms.

Work Spaces

But this is an emergency! >

Executive Summary:

LewisGale Medical Center in Salem is so proud of its emergency room efficiency that it posts its wait times on billboards. All this takes a lot of coordination.

By David Perry

Some health care providers make claims about short waits to see a doctor. LewisGale Medical Center's (LGMC) emergency room in Salem has gone so far as to post its wait times on billboards.

"We can't fudge it," says Pam Hardesty, LGMC's chief nursing officer, of the automatic feed that updates the digital billboards around town. The system "takes a four hour average every 15 minutes" and posts the times patients have been waiting before they're evaluated by a medical professional. Severe emergencies

like heart attacks or strokes receive immediate service, says Hardesty.

LGMC's parent company, the HCA Virginia Health System, has made prompt emergency care a cornerstone of its business. The billboards are but a small part of that. "We had good times and we just wanted to be able to put that out there," Hardesty says.

Providing prompt care begins with the EMS providers in the ambulance communicating with the hospital about the nature of a patient's maladies. Strokes and heart attacks receive top priority and typically bypass the usual check-in process in the ER. "We have good relationships with the EMS," says Hardesty. "They say, 'I think I have somebody that's having a heart attack.' We say, 'Okay, we're going to get our heart attack team in place.'"

"There are a lot of patients that don't even stop (at the entrance to the ER)," says Kim Mecom, LGMC's director of emergency services. "We're an entrance for them to get to the cath lab," where blocked blood vessels can be opened to get blood flowing again. Adds Mecom, "We don't take them off the EMS stretcher. The ER physician kind of looks at them as they walk through, and they go straight to the cath lab, which ultimately is great for the patient because time is tissue."

Chest pain patients benefit from a separate section of the ER reserved just for them. The hospital even employs a chest pain



LewisGale billboard tells the waiting time in the ER.

coordinator, and LGMC was recognized as a Level 3 center by the Society for Chest Pain Centers in March. For “low-acuity” patients with cuts or sore throats, “We’re creating a super track out front where we can have even more patients,” says Hardesty. New construction has resulted in a number of rooms in the front of the ER for low-acuity patients. “Our goal is to keep the low-acuity patients closer to the front,” says Mecom. “In the back you can get lost in the shuffle.”

“HCA measures all kinds of efficiencies,” says Hardesty. “We’re looking at total length of stay, we’re looking at how long it takes centers to triage, how long it takes a physician to treat a patient.”

Says Mecom, physicians “take it personally. They don’t want to go and sit somewhere four hours for anything. They want to give the care they expect and the efficiency they expect.”



ER staff.



Kili Teh

Robert Bennett, George Cartledge III and George Cartledge Jr. of Grand Home Furnishings

A Grand century >

Executive Summary:

Grand Home Furnishings has gone through several names and iterations since its founding in 1911, but it has remained—at heart and soul—a community business.

By Kili Teh

Grand Home Furnishings has several attributes that are paramount to its foundation. Philanthropy has definitely been one of them. Although the company has been known for its charitable efforts since its early days, GHF started the Grand Happiness Foundation in celebration of its 100th anniversary this year.

"Community support has been endemic to Grand Home Furnishings for many, many years," says Steve Davis, vice president of marketing. The foundation is specifically for employees to "decide what organizations in their communities they wish to help through a donation of furniture or volunteer time. We're happy to send them to a women's shelter or children's hospital to renovate, but they've done all kinds of things." Other beneficiaries of the foundation's goodwill include schools and hospices.

Davis says their efforts help create a "warm, homey environment. We've done about 60 of those kinds of activities in 2011."

GHF's early community support measures were carried out through its Cartledge Charitable Foundation, which was established in 1960 and still active today. Unlike the Grand Happiness Foundation's donations of time and furniture, the Cartledge Charitable foundation often involves donations of money or property to non-profit or cultural organizations, says Robert Bennett, executive vice president and co-chief operating officer.

Bennett says its old downtown location, the Hancock building, was donated to Center in the Square. He says the company also donated a portion of its old Harrisonburg store to the library. Some GHF's stores and warehouses moved away from downtown locations in the 1990s, when the store moved toward suburban and mall areas to keep up with new consumer shopping habits.

GHF has 15 stores and two outlets in three states, but it has a longstanding history in the Roanoke Valley. In 1911, the store began as the Grand Piano Company. At that time, it was a music store owned by Paul Hash. In 1945, George Cartledge Sr., Bennett's grandfather, bought the company. The name was later changed to Grand Piano & Furniture Company. Cartledge Sr. scaled back the music offerings, while expanding the furniture.

GHF has been a familiar affair ever since. It started with George Sr., then George Jr., Bennett's uncle, and now George Cartledge III, president and co-chief operating officer and Bennett. Cartledge III and Bennett



The Hancock Building—which was recently returned to its 1920s façade—was home for Grand for many years in downtown Roanoke.

are cousins. George Jr. is chairman.

Bennett says working with several generations of family has “been wonderful. The great thing about our company is that all three generations got to work together: my grandpa, my uncle, my dad, and George [III] and myself. My grandfather instilled in us his values.” Bennett says his grandfather’s philosophy was putting his customers first.

Bennett says the store hands out small Coca-Colas to customers as a symbol of service. “My grandfather brought us up in the company,” says Bennett. I started handing out Cokes when I was six, and George III did as well. I worked in high school for the company. Then I got out of college and worked in warehouse, delivery, service, as a sales person, and then managed a store and warehouse. George III had a similar path.”

Other mainstays help give the store its competitive edge. This includes same-day delivery, a 30-day satisfaction guarantee, good inventory, and special order options.

The store’s goal is to have same-day or next-day delivery in all markets, an idea that came from warehouse employees.

Davis says social media marketing and staying up to date with home fashions trends are vital to staying current. “It really is a fashion industry,” says Davis. “We are constantly introducing new products and retiring products that might not meet our expectations. It’s constantly evolving.” 

Timeline >

1. Grand Piano Company was opened in Roanoke by Paul Hash in 1911 as a piano/music store.
2. 20 years later the company added furniture.
3. In 1945 George Cartledge Sr. (George Cartledge III and Robert Bennett’s grandfather) bought the company.
 - At this time, the name was changed to Grand Piano & Furniture Company.
 - Music related items were cut back to pianos; furniture was expanded.
4. In 1951, stores in Radford and Covington were opened.
5. In 1953, a store in Lynchburg opened.
 - During the grand opening of the Lynchburg store, sales people handed out Coca-Colas. The practice has continued since then and has become a trademark.
6. In 1950s, ’60s, and ’70s, the store expanded through Central and Western Virginia.
7. In 1966, George Cartledge Jr. joined the operation.
8. In the 1980s, George Cartledge III and Robert Bennett joined the store.
9. In the 1990s, the store moved away from downtown locations to mall and suburban areas.
10. 1997, George Cartledge Sr. died at age 87, still working.
11. 1998, the store ceased piano sales and changed its name to Grand Home Furnishings.
12. Today, GHF has 15 stores and two outlets in three states and has 560 employees.



Michael Abraham

Rick Cook: Finding a spiritual center

Whistleblower, philosopher, writer, carpenter >

Executive Summary:

Rick Cook and his wife Karen run the Peace Spiritual Center, an outlet for their devotion to peace, justice, and integrity. He once blew the whistle, but now he renovates homes and writes books.

By Michael Abraham

Richard Cook of Roanoke is a financial analyst turned house rehabber. His level of personal integrity has motivated him to blow the whistle on some of the most egregious and wrongheaded decisions of our nation's leaders at the highest level.

Cook left the Washington D.C. area in 2010 to get out of "the congestion and mental fog of the government environment," he says. "My wife Karen and I wanted to get to a place with a semblance of normalcy that we felt we were compatible with spiritually. We

“ ”

They wanted a teacher to be in space in time for President Reagan's State of the Union address. This decision cost seven exceptional people their lives.

—Rick Cook

always liked the mountains. Two of my children went to Virginia Tech. We traveled in this area quite a bit before we moved here."

Cook retired from a career in the federal government, working in the Carter Administration, NASA and the Treasury Department. He and his wife live in a Victorian home in the Roanoke's trendy Raleigh Court.

As they began purchasing smaller homes to renovate, he formed a close relationship with a neighbor who was a residential Realtor. The neighbor helped him quickly understand the Roanoke market and, Rick says, "I knew carpentry, but began to learn plumbing, heating and electrical. It is going pretty well."

What fame Cook enjoys today has come from the authorship of two books. His first was called *Challenger Revealed*, about the destruction of the Challenger spaceship in 1986. "I worked for NASA," says Rick. "All of us knew that the solid fuel booster rockets had a high probability of causing a catastrophic accident.

"Many engineering compromises were made to be flying that rocket ship at all. Political pressure from the White House forced NASA to proceed in the face of freezing cold temperatures. They wanted a teacher to be in space in time for President Reagan's State of the Union address. This decision cost seven exceptional people their lives. As a public servant and a professional analyst,

I was not going to lie to protect NASA.”


Cook doesn't stop there in his views of the Reagan Administration. "It was the turning point for the catastrophe that has befallen United States since then, where we've seen a string of financial bubbles and collapses, each of which has transferred wealth and power from lower- and middle-class Americans to the rich.

"Manufacturing in this country has been outsourced overseas. America was once the greatest industrial democracy in the world. We no longer have an economic engine that can propel our economy into the future."

In his second book, *We Hold These Truths*, he argues "for complete monetary reform that allows our citizens to escape from crippling debt and rebuild an equitable, sustainable and just society. A key to this

is a basic income guarantee for all people. Local alternative currencies can also help."

Cook and his wife Karen have founded the Peace Spiritual Center where they hold meetings devoted to meditation and spiritual renewal. Their website is www.peace-spiritual-center.org. Cook is a lifelong mediator and now teaches meditation to others. He says, "It's a direct experience of the spirit that smoothes out many of the rough edges of daily life.

"I am a guy who ran away from 'the Machine' to the mountains and found a niche that allows me to survive spiritually. Everything I have done is about searching for the peace and meaning that emanate from one's personal integrity. My goal is to live a life based on that integrity and share what I may have learned with others." 



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David Perry

Robert Sandel: “We will work on your time schedule—whether it’s third shift at three o’clock in the morning, whether it’s Saturdays, whatever.”

Creating a workforce college >

Executive Summary:

VWCC President Robert Sandel found a passivity toward business when he took the job 10 years ago. It’s not that way now. Not by a long shot.

By David Perry

Bobby Sandel saw almost immediately that Virginia Western Community College was in need of a slight attitude adjustment in 2001. He helped that along and with the adjustment came an alliance with business and industry that has benefitted everyone involved.

“It’s been quite a ride,” says Sandel of his 10 years the helm of Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke. As president of Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, he hadn’t had much opportunity to work closely with business and industry.

“When we came to Roanoke, all of that changed,” he says. “It opened up opportunities for me to move this college forward when dealing with industry and business folks. That is my background.”

Sandel spent more than two decades in the South Carolina community college system,

where workforce development was priority number one. He says that while VWCC was doing many things well, the attitude was, “Here we are. If you want to use us, fine. If you don’t, go wherever.”

Sandel worked on developing community relations and enhancing the image of the college, as well as getting to know the region’s key industry players.

“I saw a lot more areas for growth,” he says. He soon set up a Division of Workforce Solutions that would serve the needs of the business community by providing training—on their terms and according to their needs.

“We will work on your time schedule—whether it’s third shift at three o’clock in the morning, whether it’s Saturdays, whatever,” says Sandel.

Another program whose birth Sandel oversaw is Quick Connect, an eight-week intensive evening training program designed to bring in students as entry-level employees with local companies.

These companies know they’re getting reliable workers out of Virginia Western’s programs. “Unfortunately, across the country a lot of people can’t pass background checks or drug tests,” Sandel says. “(The students) have worked with us and we’ve already screened all that out.”

Sandel says the college also has a strong placement office that sends many students

out into the community for internships. "They need [the students]. They need them now, even before they finish the daggone programs."

The college also works with the Virginia Employment Commission and workforce investment boards to retrain dislocated workers, who may be older. In fact, Sandel says the average student age at the college is 28. "I call it 18 to 80," says Sandel of the college's student population.

Between Workforce Solutions, Quick Connect and the internship placement program, Sandel says "It's a synergy between the college and the real world."

While the college still fills the role of sending students on to four-year institutions, Sandel says "60 percent of what we do is work with industry and business."

In an era of less state funding, the college has still managed \$60 million in capital improvements over the last 10 years. Sandel points to Webber Hall, the Roanoke campus' technology center, and the Greenfield Center in Daleville as especially important in the growth of the college's technology offerings. There's also the relatively new Culinary Institute at Virginia Western to point to as a resounding success story.

The college's CCAP (Community College Access Program) uses a unique funding strategy to achieve its goals. The program allows participating local school systems to

In Brief

Name: Dr. Robert H. Sandel

Age: 66

Organization: Virginia Western Community College


Location: Roanoke

Title: President

Background: Robert Sandel is a native South Carolinian and a Citadel graduate. Avid reader; former tennis enthusiast. Robert and his wife Jane, a Salem High School teacher, live near the college in Roanoke.

send their graduates to Virginia Western at no cost. So far, Salem and Roanoke are participants, while the program is being piloted in Botetourt County and getting ready to start in Franklin County. Participating local school systems pay one-third of the cost of CCAP, local industry pays a third, and the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundations pays a third.

However the future is funded, Sandel feels certain that Virginia Western will continue to be a strong partner for the region's business and industrial community.

"Virginia Western is here to fill the workforce needs of our region," says Sandel. "We do the real world." 

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—**Bill Overstreet**

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all photos: Randolph Walker

Pat Richards with his high-wing 1968 Cessna.

Photos on the fly >

Executive Summary:

Pat Richards takes a lot of those sometimes spectacular aerial photos you see and he swears it's easy.

By Randolph Walker

The question Pat Richards most often gets is this one: Isn't it hard to fly an airplane and take pictures at the same time?

"Airplanes are really stable vehicles," he says. "It's easier to fly an airplane and do something else than to drive a car and do something else. You lose 100 feet, you aren't going to hit anything."

One suspects, however, that Richards is merely making it look easy.

Richards, 60, is the owner of Airshots, an aerial photography service based out of Roanoke Regional Airport, serving institutional, corporate and municipal clients from Washington, D.C., to Myrtle Beach to Atlanta.

A native of Saginaw, Mich., Richards came to flying later in life. He owned PR Video on Brambleton Avenue back when there was demand for video and electronics repair. "We saw the disposable stuff coming and we made other plans. Flying was something I always wanted to do."

Richards had served in the military but hadn't flown planes. So he called Roanoke Regional Airport and asked about flying lessons. Four and a half months later, he had his pilot's license.

Some of his early work came from a commercial photographer who hired Richards to take him aloft, and later suggested that Richards learn photography. Richards joined a networking group and got more assignments. Airshots (www.airshotsva.com) was established in 2003.

Much of his revenue comes from contractors. When municipalities or institutions sign construction contracts, they typically require the contractor to provide periodic aerial photographs to document progress. "At different stage of completion, it triggers money—what they call draws," Richards said. "The money doesn't all come up front."



Pat Richards photographs a construction project at Radford University.

If a dispute were to arise between contractor and client, Richards would be able to provide an affidavit stating that a given photograph was taken on a given date and had not been doctored.

Another chunk of business comes from real estate sales or auctions. "A couple hundred bucks for an aerial photo is chump change" if it helps sell a \$2 million property, he says. His base rate is \$175 an hour.


On a recent working flight, Richards photographed a couple of construction projects at Virginia Tech and one at Radford. His high-wing 1968 Cessna 172, a former military trainer, hasn't been specially modified. Richards banks the plane into a circle, opens the side window and hand-points his 17 megapixel Sony digital, adjusting the flight path as necessary, working the rudder with his feet and sometimes putting a hand on the yoke. Typical aerial shots are one thousand feet off the ground.

Richards' competition includes small remote-control helicopters equipped with cameras. However, Richards thinks there will always

be a place for traditional aerial photography. Richards is able to change lenses on the fly, so to speak. Helicopters must be driven to each location, while Richards is able to shoot multiple client assignments on each flight, helping keep the cost affordable.

Not every flight is compensated. Richards donates flights to silent auctions and performs other charity work, including relocating dogs that must be quickly placed in new homes—sometimes many states away—to avoid euthanasia at overcrowded shelters. "It's a nice way to use resources to do a good thing," he says.

Airshots is one of several businesses run by Richards and his wife, Debbie Richards. They also own rental property, run a video surveillance/security company and play in the band at Valhalla Vineyards (he plays guitar and bass, she sings).

In the winter, the Cessna can get cold, but in nice weather, aerial photography isn't a bad way to make a living, Richards says. "Having fun, getting paid for it. How bad can it be?" 

Managing crisis >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *Chris Turnbull, tba's new crisis manager, knows what disaster is. Now he has to translate that knowledge to a slower, safer world.*

In the past couple of years Chris Turnbull, toiling for the World Bank, has worked directly with the Haiti earthquake, bombings, coup attempts, kidnappings and the kinds of daily mayhem we often read about, but rarely see in our little corner of the world.

We had an earthquake recently, but the rest of the experience is distant and resting on the exotic edge of our cultural experience. It's out there for Chris, too, these days. He's back in Roanoke after an absence of something over eight years during which time he was filled to brimming with crises.

His job during those years was to help people and companies prepare for catastrophes and when they came, to help manage the response. He became quite good at it.

But Chris has become something else in recent years, as well: a dad. He likes that role. He missed his four-year-old and his wife and taking off work for an hour to run at the Y and living in a comfortable middle-American neighborhood where people did ordinary things. He missed being a central part of making that small city and that ordinary neighborhood better.

So, he came back to his wife's hometown with a job at tba (the becher agency) as a crisis manager, among other things. tba is an advertising, marketing and public relations agency and Chris' first job out of Roanoke College was with the John Lambert Agency, so this is not new. "I wanted to get back to PR," he says. But he wanted "to work for a small firm so I could branch out and develop skills."

Chris had been looking to make a move toward sanity for a while and when he met with a number of people in the Roanoke area recently, he became convinced this is where he wanted to be. A "happening town" is what he calls it. But it is also one where he's not having to train 10,000 World Bank staff members to deal with a pandemic. He's not managing many crises these days, either, though he can do that when it comes up.

He is, however, helping tba's clients prepare for potential emergencies. He's available for big clients and big emergencies in big cities, if it comes to that, but right now, he's looking at small and medium clients for a small firm in a small city. He won't be on the road 120 days a year and he likely won't have to be on top of 60 catastrophes in two years, as has been the case.

He will help companies look ahead three to five years and form strategies based around who they are and what they want to become. He'll train and if something serious comes up, he'll help manage. Mostly though, he'll help

continued on Page 50



The Real World >

On Tap
from the Pub

By Tom Field
Publisher

She saunters to the car, slides into the seat, slowly releases her stuff in the floorboard. Today is different. No bounce. No brightness. No high chatter. Unlike any other time and every other day, it takes until the whole ride home for me to get the real report. Mailbox after mailbox sweep by like stitches on a scar, and finally, I hear the story.

It's ugly.

Someone hated her. She had never heard someone say that to her. Speaking the words plainly. Looking her in the eye while saying them. She was confused. She had done nothing. A second before hearing those three words, I know what she was. All bounce. All brightness. All chatter.

Welcome to the real world I said—but only to myself.
And then I cried—but only on the inside.

She was six years old. She had made it all the way to the first grade.
She was lucky.

We marvel when it suddenly hits us our children are experiencing something for the first time that we've seen all our lives. The simple flipping of a light switch. The freezing touch of an ice cube. The sight of a bright moon on a dark sky. My daughter wasn't prepared to hear those three words. And I had forgotten that all first time moments aren't always beautiful.

We are designed to appreciate beauty. We are destined to be amazed. There is an innate natural yearning in us to reach the wonder in creation. At least until we're six years old. We know better now, right?

No. We choose to see ugly. We accept bitterness. We embrace cynicism and sarcasm and call ourselves open-minded. We are suspicious of everybody and call ourselves liberated.

The scar-stitched mailboxes that whiz by our side windows could just as easily resemble rows of colored lollipops on a candy story shelf.

But we see what we see.
And we hear what we hear.

We don't need more beauty. We need to see all beauty that's there. And that change of view could be as simple as saying one more kind word, pointing one less finger, not blowing up when someone cuts you off in traffic, smiling at a stranger.

A little bounce. A spot of brightness. Some friendly chatter. 






Chris Turnbull

Smith / My View

from Page 48

managers think in ways they aren't accustomed to in looking ahead and anticipating.

He smiles and says, "There aren't enough crises here to keep me busy," but there will be plenty of other challenges. "We need to examine risks." Strategy and communication will need to be planned. If there's an industrial accident or some other unforeseen event, everybody needs to be ready to pounce on solutions. Public relations is part of the management, but in Chris Turnbull's world, it's a small part. Avoiding or fixing the problem gets much more time and attention.

There have been some good crisis managers in this region in recent years—Terry Jones and Sarah Huddle come to mind quickly—but right now, Chris pretty much has that playpen to himself. He's ready to re-define it. 

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Letters

Outside contractors

Continuing on the FRONT's "hire local" theme, New Horizons interviewed at least six design/build teams to design and construct their new building. Five featured locally-based architect/engineers and general contractors. They picked the one with no local presence. The architect is Baskervill from Richmond.

We were teamed with Lionberger Construction, who is probably the most community-oriented GC in the Valley as far as supporting local charities, etc. Several of Lionberger's and the other competing contractors' employees are New Horizons patients and would have brought a little extra pride to building the facility where they and their families go for medical services.

New Horizons is a great organization and we were very disappointed to not be selected to work with them. Undoubtedly, the New Horizons staff and board members who made this decision acted in what they felt was the best interests of their organization and its patients. They will

undoubtedly end up with a fine facility that will serve them well. What they won't get is a locally-based A/E and GC who will be here, in the Roanoke Valley, to support them in the future.

Richard Rife
Rife + Wood
Roanoke

Have a beer

Kudos on the Craft Beer article (September cover story). Coming from a craft beer haven in Burlington, Vt., it's nice to see it growing tremendously in this region in the past five years.

Michael Quonce
The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
Roanoke

Send letters to news@vbFRONT.com or any FRONT contact of your choosing (page 6). Submissions may be edited. You can see, read, print any current or back issue online at www.vbFRONT.com

“ ”

Don't tell anyone. Don't even tell me

— Page 27

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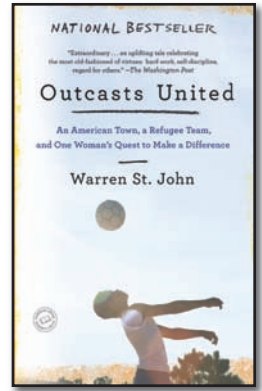
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Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our publishers and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Readers are invited to submit 150-word reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to Editor Dan Smith at dsmith@vbf.com



Role models

In a 1990s Georgia small-town, a young American-educated woman comes to escape stifling family expectations back in Jordan in Warren St. John's *Outcasts United* (Speigel & Grau). Arabic-speaking Luma Mufleh finds her calling in coaching soccer for refugee boys—the "Fugees." Coming from war zones throughout Africa, the Middle East and central Europe, these young "Fugees" find soccer provides focus and relief from being outsiders in a town that doesn't want them.

Author St. John (writer for the New York Times) describes the historical, socio-political background of each war the children left behind, and the individual family tragedies that haunt them. Small-town USA proves a less than ideal refuge, as the families face hostile barriers which Luma helps confront as best she can. Only slightly less vulnerable than the refugees herself, Luma is impressively resourceful, tenacious and brave. She is also an unwavering disciplinarian.

Outcasts United will resonate with Roanoke Valley residents who have experienced the growth of refugee populations our area; this book is the 2011 The Big Read selection. Special events are planned this fall; for details see www.roanokevalleyreads.com.

—Linda Pharis

The best story

In a world where life and business are increasingly digitized, automated and fitted with analytics, Annette Simmons advocates

storytelling. Stories, she says throughout *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins* (AMA-COM/American Management Association, \$18.98), can be a means to finding common ground on which better communication can grow; can help us and our employees tap into the core values of our business; can help us see the full range of subjective interpretations of objective data and stats, which then allows us to see more possibilities and make better decisions.

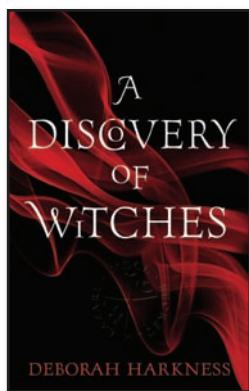
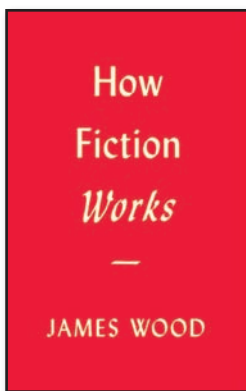
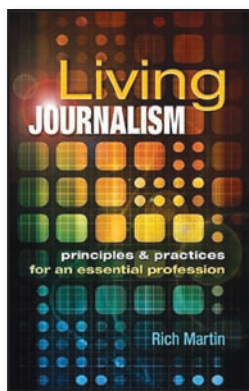
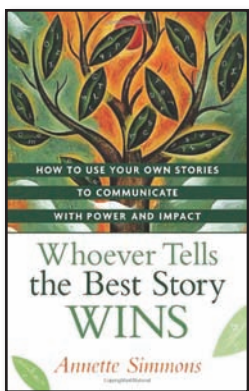
In this work-along book, Simmons not only explains storytelling in business contexts but helps readers develop our own stories in a series of brainstorming/writing/fine-tuning exercises. Simmons wrote her first book in 1997, *Territorial Games*, when I was a college student renting the back apartment of her house. I knew her to be a generous landlady but it's only now that I understand the brilliant mind behind the stylish glasses.

—Sarah Beth Jones

Inside journalism

Rich Martin, head of the journalism department at the University of Illinois and former managing editor of a Roanoke daily newspaper, has written a readable and useful book for journalists, *Living Journalism* (Holcomb, Hathaway, \$23). Rich and I were colleagues some years ago before he got into the executive ranks and I considered him one of the best reporters in the paper's history. He was a pretty good ME, too, editing three Pulitzer Prize finalists.

Living Journalism, a title with a double



meaning, is Rich's attempt to help us all understand that journalism was, is and will continue to be not only relevant, but essential if we are to continue to have a democracy. While much of the book is an "inside baseball" examination of the profession, the overall effect is one of helping all of us understand a crucial element of our republic. A couple of the passages I like best have to do with journalists admitting mistakes and apologizing for them—in person—and another on being skeptical without becoming cynical, a professional hazard.

The book would—and likely will—make a fine basic text and it's a good read for the rest of you.

—Dan Smith

A novelist's guide

While we're talking about writing, James Wood, a staff writer at the *New Yorker* and a literature lecturer at Harvard, has written a precise, often entertaining and always enlightening guide for those of us with novel aspirations, *How Fiction Works* (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, \$24).

In its precision and lack of bulk, the book is not unlike the journalist's Bible *The Elements of Style*. A quick scan by me when I first got the book pointed out a number of basic errors I'd made in the novel I've been polishing for a while and helped smooth out some wrinkles. I'll leave it at that and at an enthusiastic recommendation. Your use for the book will be personal and it

won't mirror mine, so I won't assume that.

—Dan Smith

Fantastic tale

A Discovery of Witches (Viking Adult, \$29.95) is the first installment of the All Souls trilogy written by Deborah Harkness. Best described as an adult *Twilight* meets *Da Vinci Code*, this 800-plus page novel combines magic, history, adventure, and romance.

Renowned history scholar Diana Bishop is a direct descendant of powerful witches. She has pushed away her magic to be normal, but can no longer avoid it when she opens a bewitched manuscript in an Oxford library. The power within the book stirs up the interest of vampires, witches and daemons who proceed to stalk Diana for her power and the book. Enter 1,500-year-old vampire Matthew Clairmont, who protects her so well they wind up falling in love against society's laws. To protect Diana and perhaps the entire magical world, they must find answers. Their adventure will continue in the second book for release summer of 2012.

—Liz Cheney

(The reviewers: Linda Pharis is a writer and painter, retired from public media/museum education. Sarah Beth Jones is co-owner of Nary Ordinary Business Services in Floyd and a freelance writer. Liz Cheney Long has a degree in English from Longwood University. Dan Smith is Editor of FRONT.)

FRONT 'N ABOUT



photos: Dan Smith



Women Chatting >

The first FRONTBurner event, the *Now That We're in Charge* Women's Forum in early October at Hollins University, drew a group of distinguished presenters and a crowd of appreciative business professionals. Here, the morning panel led by **Melinda Cohan** (left) includes (from left) **Nanci Hardwick** of Aeroprobe, **Tamea Woodward** of Global Metalfinishing, **Anna Karbassiyoan** of Sir Speedy, **Susan Still** of HomeTown Bank, **Mary Miller** of IDD, **Nancy Agee** of Carilion, **Nancy Gray** of Hollins University and playwright **April Marcell**. Nancy Agee makes a point with Mary Miller watching and **Maryellen Goodlatte** of Glenn Feldmann Darby and Goodlatte (left) and **Hope Cothran** of Woods Rogers teach a law class.



photos: Tom Field

Latino's Celebrate >

Billed as the largest Hispanic event in Southwest Virginia, the 8th Annual **Latino Festival** was held Oct. 9 at Roanoke's Elmwood Park downtown. Part of lineup from the non-profit multicultural diversity organization **Local Colors**, the event was organized by **HACIENDA**, an advocacy group supporting Hispanic awareness in the Roanoke Valley. The festival, aligned with Hispanic Heritage Month, included presentations by the countries of Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and others.

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



Oktoberfest in Virginia Mountains >

Held over seven consecutive weekends (Sept—Oct), the **Oktoberfest at Mountain Lake Hotel & Conservancy** in Giles County, draws record crowds to celebrate the festival in Bavarian tradition, complete with German cuisine (such as the full roasted pig), an Ompah band (The Sauerkraut Band), Jagermeister samples, and beer-a-plenty. Pictured above, conducting the prize drawing in the packed activities barn Oct. 15, is Indigo, the granddaughter of band member Seth Williamson (of WVTF public radio), who just recently died.



photos: Tom Field



photo: Blacksburg Partnership

Brew Masters >

The 3rd Annual **Blacksburg Brew Do**—a popular craft beer festival by **The Blacksburg Partnership**—was held Sept. 24 at the First & Main complex in Blacksburg. Over

80 beer selections from 28 craft breweries were available for tasting, as well as food from local restaurants, live entertainment and demonstrations. Pictured above are winners from the Homebrew Competition.

Pumpkin Patch >

With crowds that grow larger each year, along added attractions, including food and music, corn maze, "punkin' chunkin", tractor hay rides, farm animals, horse and pony rides, exhibit booths and merchandise, the 18th Annual **Pumpkin Festival at Sinkland Farms** in Christiansburg experienced one of its most beautiful Fall settings on a picture-perfect Sunday afternoon, Oct. 16.




photo: Tom Field

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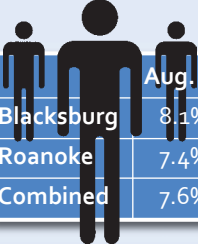
MyFirstCitizensStory.com

Forbes named First Citizens BancShares, Inc., the fourth-best bank in America in its 2011 Best Banks in America list. First Citizens Bank is a subsidiary of First Citizens BancShares, Inc. Normal credit approval applies. Member FDIC

The economy in the Roanoke and New River Valleys continued to show signs of life in August. Unemployed in the region is down from a year ago, and employment is up. Home sales are up and foreclosures also are down from last year.

Unemployment/Employment Real Estate

Unemployment rates in the combined New River and Roanoke Valleys followed Virginia's lead in August: up from July and down from a year ago, but with a much steeper drop than the state's. Virginia's unemployment rate fell 5.6 percent over the year, while the combined Blacksburg and Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Areas dropped 9.2 percent. Within the region, the Blacksburg MSA held steady from July to August, while Roanoke rose 3.1 percent (Virginia rose 4.8 percent).



	UNEMPLOYMENT		
	Aug. 10	July 11	Aug. 11
Blacksburg	8.1%	7.2%	7.2%
Roanoke	7.4%	6.5%	6.7%
Combined	7.6%	6.7%	6.9%

Despite slightly higher unemployment rates over the month, more people were working in August than in July or a year ago. The number of people **employed** in the region in August was up 2.2 percent over the month, and up 3.3 percent from the same month a year ago.

EMPLOYED		
Aug. 2010	July 2011	Aug. 2011
217,921	220,261	225,132

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

The **average home price** in the region jumped nearly 9.2 percent from July, the highest monthly average so far this year. It was, however, 10.1 percent lower than the average home price from a year ago, which also was that 2010's highest average. Whether this price jump is a seasonal spike, or a sign that some of the foreclosed homes have made their way through the market, remains to be seen. It does reinforce the adage that all housing markets are different: nationally, the average home price dropped 1.6 percent from \$220,400 in July to \$216,800. The **number of homes sold** in the region nudged up 1.2 percent from July. The number of homes showing **foreclosure** activity rose from 95 to 105, but fell 42.9 percent from August 2010's 184. Nationally, foreclosure activity dropped 33 percent from last year

HOME PRICES		
Aug. 2010	July 2011	Aug. 2011
\$213,944	\$176,289	\$192,363

HOMES SOLD		
Aug. 2010	July 2011	Aug. 2011
263	342	346

Sources: Roanoke Valley Association of REALTORS, National Association of REALTORS and Realtytrac

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

Also get more stories and pictures at morefront.blogspot.com

Ups and downs of home ownership >

Executive Summary:

The number of school-aged children in our growing regional population continues to decline.

By Anne Piedmont

The good news: the percentage of occupied homes in the Roanoke and New River Valleys is greater than the national average (89.2 percent versus 88.6 percent) according to the 2010 US Census. The bad news: while the percentage of occupied homes has dropped across the board since 2000, it has dropped faster here (3.5 percent) than nationally (2.6 percent).

The percentage of homes occupied by owners in the region, 66.4 percent, is just off the national average of 65.1 percent. But, within the region, the percentage of people living in the homes they own is much higher in the Roanoke MSA (69.9 percent) than in the Blacksburg MSA (59.2 percent) where there are a large number of apartment-dwelling students.

Home ownership is one of those statistics, such as the percentage of married couples, which helps define a community for families and businesses seeking to grow and expand there. A high percentage indicates a stable community; too many vacant dwelling indicates just the opposite. In Detroit, for example, 22.8 percent of the housing units are vacant, with half of those just empty. Franklin County has a similar number of vacant homes, but more than half of those are seasonal or vacation homes. This statistic has been influenced by the boom and bust economy over the past decade. The number of housing units in the region increased by 12 percent between 2000 and 2010. In 2000, 92.4 percent of them were occupied, compared to 89.2 percent 10 years later.

The highest number of owner-occupied homes in the region can be found in Botetourt County, followed by Craig, Franklin, Giles and Pulaski counties, which are the same communities to have the highest percentage of married households. Communities with large numbers of students—Montgomery County, Radford and Salem—along with Roanoke City, with its higher number of young and less affluent residents, have the lowest rates of home ownership. Interestingly, and perhaps because of a high number of affordable starter-homes, nearly 72 percent of the homeowners in Roanoke City have a mortgage.

PERCENTAGE OF OCCUPIED HOMES IN 2010

	Occupied	% +/- from 2000	Owner Occupied	Mortgage
Botetourt County	90.1%	-3.2%	85.6%	67.5%
Craig County	77.7%	-3.6%	79.9%	58.1%
Franklin County	77.7%	-6.9%	78.4%	60.1%
Roanoke County	93.9%	-2.2%	76.9%	69.3%
Roanoke City	90.0%	-3.0%	54.8%	71.8%
Salem City	92.7%	-3.1%	65.9%	65.1%
Roanoke MSA	88.6%	-3.8%	69.9%	67.4%
Giles County	86.7%	-4.1%	75.8%	54.2%
Montgomery County	92.7%	-2.7%	53.3%	65.1%
Pulaski County	85.9%	-4.2%	72.3%	59.4%
Radford City	93.2%	-1.5%	41.6%	64.9%
Blacksburg MSA	90.4%	-2.9%	59.2%	61.8%
Region	89.2%	-3.5%	66.4%	65.7%



5K Race & FamilyWalk Thanksgiving Day

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This year, the Rescue Mission will provide 350,000 meals to hungry families.



Jonathan Roberts

Stuart Lynde: "It's tough—I eat on regulations, permits and environmental monitoring programs."

Feasting on regulation >

Executive Summary:

The environmentalist in Stuart Lynde appreciates regulation; the businessman who runs Environmental Services & Consulting in Blacksburg, not so much.

By David Perry

Stuart Lynde's wife was going to kick him out of the house.

No, he hadn't come home with lipstick on his collar or even tracked mud through the living room. He was doing what any breadwinner would do to support his family—testing biological samples at the kitchen table.

When his Ph.D. studies at Virginia Tech faltered, Stuart lost his research funding and needed money. He says, "I was working out of the basement just to pay the bills. At that time, my wife was pregnant with our youngest. I was processing samples at the kitchen table. The samples were stored in formaldehyde, so I had every window and door in the house open with the heat blasting in the middle of winter.

"My wife comes in and says, 'Get out. You've got until Monday to find a place to work, and it's not going to be here.' That's really kind of how we started."

Stuart's business, Environmental Services & Consulting (ES&C), provides services relating to "ecology, environmental planning, water resources, stream assessment and restoration, and regulatory support," according to the company website. Founded in 1999, ES&C has clients all over the country who mail in samples for testing, while employees (six at the moment) work hands-on in the field in a territory of about three hours or so around the New River Valley. The company's physical location is Christiansburg, but Stuart has kept a Blacksburg P.O. box: "People know Blacksburg because of the Virginia Tech connection."

"We do a lot of work for various government agencies, and we do a lot of work that's related to coal," says Stuart. "That's been our bread and butter over the years. Most of our work comes from out of state. We're working hard to develop more local business," such as ponds and stream restorations.

While Stuart is the company's founder, his wife Katherine, a teacher at Blacksburg High School, is the owner, making ES&C officially a woman-owned business. "It's

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

for contracting primarily," says Stuart, referring to laws that favor minority-owned companies in the government bidding process. "It's a check box if somebody needs it."

The slowdown in development and overall economic malaise hasn't impacted ES&C dramatically, says Stuart (the company has been down an average of three to four percent each of the past couple of years), but he has mixed feelings about the future.

"We make our living on government regulations," he says. With Republicans in Congress and even President Obama pushing for fewer environmental regulations to help spur job growth, that business may be in danger.

"The liberal, environmental side of me is very concerned about that," says Stuart. "The business side of me is less concerned about that." He sees less regulation as an overall positive for his business. "I think as government regulation lightens up a little bit and things start moving again, regulation can't strangle the ability of things to progress."

"It's tough—I eat on regulations, permits and environmental monitoring programs," he adds.


Down the road, Stuart says he'd like to see the company open more offices in the state—perhaps a central Virginia office

In Brief

Name: Stuart R. Lynde
Age: 46
Company: Environmental Services & Consulting (<http://es-and-c.com>)
Type of business: Consulting and laboratory services
Location: Blacksburg
Position: Principal scientist

Background: Stuart is a Lynchburg native who graduated from Lynchburg College in 1991 with a degree in biology. He followed that with a master's in aquatic ecotoxicology from Virginia Tech in 1994. Stymied in his pursuit of a Ph.D., Stuart started working out of his house to make ends meet and support a new family. Today, the father of three and grandfather of one stays busy in the community with several non-profits, and also tags along with his son on Boy Scout outings.

in Charlottesville and one in Richmond for the eastern part of the state—but those plans are temporarily on hold.

Says Stuart, "Right now as we look at the current economy, I think all of those plans have been pushed down the road." 

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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Curro



Jones

Banks

Terri Curro has been named senior VP and director of human resources and training and **Bill Jones** has been named senior VP and lending compliance officer for HomeTown Bank in Roanoke.

Carolyn Kiser has joined HomeTown Bank as VP and marketing director.

WELLNESS FRONT



Strickland

Hospitals

Carilion Clinic has named **Katherine F. (Kay) Strickland** to serve as chief development officer.



Johnson

She is the former executive director of the Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation and External Relations and was instrumental in establishing the Community College Access Program (CCAP) providing free tuition for high school graduates to attend Virginia Western.

Carl H. Johnson, director of revenue cycle management at Carilion Clinic, has been appointed president of the Virginia-Washington D.C. chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA).

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Wilson

Manufacturing

High-tech engineering firm Aeroprobe Corp in Blacksburg (formerly Schultz-Creehan Holdings) has named **Stacey Wilson** controller.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Harper



Noll



Mauceri



West

Architects/Engineers

Spectrum Design has named **Nathan Harper** an associate following his passing the Architect Registration Examination (ARE). Spectrum Design has added three other professionals: **Kelly K. Noll**, LEED AP as an interior designer; **Michael C. Mauceri** as an architectural intern; **Matthew G. West** as a mechanical engineer.



Cohen

Construction

Adam Cohen, co-founder of Structures Design Build in Roanoke, has been named vice chairman of the technical committee of Passive House Institute US.



Milton

Logistics

Dublin, Va.-based Allegheny Logistics Group of Dublin has named **Lee Milton** director of business development for its three subsidiaries: Allegheny Brokerage, Allegheny Logistics Services and Allegheny Ocean Transport.

RETAIL FRONT

Automotive

Advance Auto Parts in Roanoke has named **Donna Broome** senior VP for team member excellence.

SENIOR FRONT



Oliver

Facilities

Warm Hearth Village in Blacksburg has promoted three employees within the marketing and development department. **Ellen Rorrer** is the marketing consultant

for independent living, specializing in town homes and apartments.

Katie Browne and **Rorrer** are new marketing consultants for WoodsEdge. **Shannon Hammons** is the new associate director of development for the Warm Hearth Foundation. **Sharon Oliver** recently joined Warm Hearth Village as the new salon operator at Showalter Center.

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.

EDUCATION FRONT



Bishop

Colleges

Jefferson College of Health Sciences in

Roanoke has inaugurated **Nathaniel L. Bishop** as its president.

OTHER FRONTS

Advertising/PR

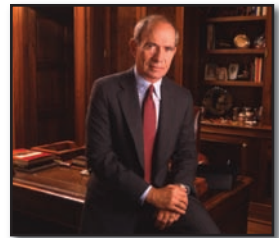
Chris Turnbull has joined the becher agency (tba) as public relations account executive and principal



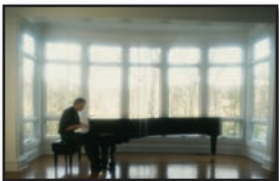
ADVANCE AUTO



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BERTRAM FIRESTONE



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ROWE

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Career FRONT



Fritz

of the firm. Turnbull was with the World Bank in D.C., where he served as an advisor to leaders in response to international crises. He has worked in hot spots around the globe to develop, implement and improve crisis communications, organizational development and business continuity efforts for the world's preeminent multilateral development bank. **Monica Fritz** has joined tba as graphic designer. She is a former contributing writer for FRONT.

Funeral Service

Oakey's Funeral Service & Crematory in Roanoke has named **LaDona Sizemore Stossel** as manager of its North Chapel.



Smith

Media

FRONT Editor **Dan Smith** was recognized with an Award of Merit in the "Profiles" section of the International

Regional Magazine Association awards ceremony in Reno, Nev., recently for his Blue Ridge Country magazine portrait titled "The Ballad of Miss Kay." It was the story of the legendary Kay Wilkins, the square dance coach at Smith's high school in Cranberry, N.C. Leisure Publishing Editor in Chief **Kurt Rheinheimer** also won a COM for his portrait of Ty Cobb's mother.



Lewis

Organizations

Architect **Gregg Lewis**, executive director of Community Housing Partners' newly formed community alliance for energy efficiency, has been named to the Cool Cities Coalition board of directors.

Downtown Roanoke, Inc. has elected **H. Victor Gilchrist** of Bank of America Merrill Lynch, **Gabe Niccum** of Thalhimer, **Melissa Palmer** of chocolatepaper, **Tony Pearman** of Access Advertising & PR, **Bethany Sherman** of Cox Communications, and **Mike Sutton** of Blue Eagle Enterprises to its board of directors. DRI has named **Tracie Hughes** market manager, and **Matthew Klepeisz**

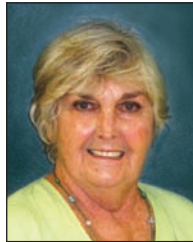
communications and program manager.



Rosen



Kemp



Goehring

YMCA of Roanoke Valley has elected the following to its board: **Brooke C. Rosen** of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore; **Vivian G. Morse**, community

volunteer; **Mike Kemp** of Morgan Stanley, Smith Barney; and **Nancy Goehring**, community volunteer.

The Literacy Volunteers of Roanoke Valley has named the following to its Board of Directors for 2011-2012: president **Molly Bell**, Roanoke Times; vice-president **Tommy Bell**, retired; secretary **Jean Holzinger**, Hollins University; treasurer **Connie Vaughn**, CPA/Business Consultant; and board members **Ruth Terry Dickerson**, Cole & Associates CPAs; **Gina French**, Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business; **Michael Hertz**, Woods Rogers; **George Kegley**, retired journalist; **Debbie Melnik**, community volunteer; **Steve Murray**, New York Life; **Pam Reilly**, retired; **Sally Rugaber**, community volunteer; **Lucas Snipes**, Carrington Place; **Steve Turner**, Valley Bank; **Sheila Umberger**, Roanoke Public Library.

“ I started handing out Cokes when I was six

— Page 41

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Abraham is owner and operator of The Threshold Center, a multi-tenant industrial shell facility in Christiansburg and co-owner with his wife Jane of Pocahontas Press, a regional publisher. He is also the author of three books about Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia. His articles and commentaries have appeared in Blue Ridge Country, The Roanoke Times, Greenbrier Quarterly and Backroads Motorcycle Touring Magazine. He lives in Blacksburg and his website is www.bikemike.name. [bikemike@nrvunwired.net]

Susan M. Ayers is a Roanoke-based freelance writer who has written articles on a wide array of topics that have been published in various media. As a former mortgage banking executive, she has experience in technical writing and business correspondence including white papers, management briefings, systematic analyses, awards programs, performance standards and responses to correspondence of a sensitive and confidential nature. [susanmayers@cox.net]

Anne Giles Clelland is the founder of business news site Handshake 2.0 (handshake20.com) and President and CEO of Handshake Media, Incorporated, makers of Handshake mobile applications. She is co-founder of She Chooses (shechooses.com), the social network for women. [anne@handshake2.0.com]

Tom Field is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT magazine. He has written and produced programs and materials for local and international organizations for more than 30 years. [tfield@berryfield.com]

Kathleen Harvey Harshberger is a graduate of Radford University and the Protocol School of Washington. She conducts seminars in business etiquette, international business protocol, and dining skills. She has an international clientele in business, government, and higher education. She is a certified Protocol Officer. [harshbergr@aol.com]

Gene Marrano, a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, is one of the most prolific journalists in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Roanoke This Week with Gene Marrano" on Fox Radio 910). [gmarrano@cox.net]

Michael Miller is senior licensing manager for Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties in Blacksburg. His consulting company is Kire Technology. With more than 25 years as an inventor and technology consultant, working with Fortune 500 companies and startups, he screens businesses for the World's Best Technology Showcase and mentors tech startups through Development Capital Networks and the National Science Foundation. [mbmiller2@gmail.com]

David Perry, who works for the Western Virginia Land Trust, is an accomplished freelance writer. He is a native of Blacksburg and a James Madison University Graduate. His writing has appeared in Blue Ridge Country and the Roanoker, among other publications. [[dave@davidperryonline.com](mailto:dave@ davidperryonline.com)]

Anne Piedmont is the president of Piedmont Research Associates, a marketing communications firm she has started after working for the Roanoke Regional Partnership as director of research for more than 18 years. She's also worked in public relations and journalism. She loves numbers and wants them to make sense for you. [annepied@yahoo.com]

Dan Smith is editor and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT. A native of Asheville, N.C., he has been a journalist for more than four decades and has won many journalism awards (writing, photography and design). He is a member of the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame and was a 2009 recipient of the Perry F. Kendig Literary Award. He was Virginia's Business Journalist of the year in 2005. He is the founder of the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference. [dsmith@vbFRONT.com]

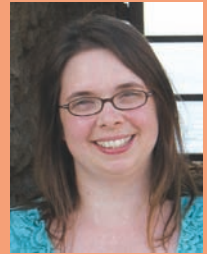
Kathy Surace is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years. [kssurace@aol.com]

Kili Teh is a copywriter, graphic designer, freelance writer, and owner of Teh Communications in Salem. She is a graduate of Iowa State University. She was a reporter and has written online educational content for a multinational information technology corporation. She is an avid traveler. Her blog site is <http://tehcomm.blogspot.com>. [tehcom@live.com]

Nicholas Vaassen is a graphic designer with 12 years experience, specializing in publications. His design projects include FRONT, lifestyle, real estate, municipal, classified sales and cultural organization magazines in the Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets. [nvaassen@berryfield.com]

Greg Vaughn is an award-winning Roanoke area photographer for more than 30 years whose work has appeared in local and international publications. [greg@gregvaughnphotography.com]

Randolph Walker graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a journalism degree in 1983. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in Roanoke and an advertising copywriter for the Edmonds Packett Group. He is now a freelance writer as well as a performing musician and guitar teacher. [rwalker25@cox.net]



Laura Purcell

October 2011 > Contributor of the Month

As if new mother **Laura Purcell** didn't have enough on her plate, she didn't flinch when asked to research and write October's cover story on unions in the region. Laura has been a steady, dependable and solid contributor for FRONT for more than a year and she has become something of a go-to guy in a number of instances. She lives in the New River Valley and knows the people, the issues and institutions well and we are grateful to have her on our side. For her October contribution, Laura is the Contributor of the Month.

“
This technology is...
earthshaking

— Page 31

Interactive Achievement top business

The Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce and Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center have named **Interactive Achievement** the 2011 Small Business of the Year.

The company that creates and distributes educational software used for testing, reporting and analyzing students was recognized at the Chamber's 25th Annual Small Business Awards dinner October 6 at The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center.

Award winners by category are: Small Business Advocate: **Brian DuVall**, CEO, Duvall Media; Construction/Real Estate: **Spectrum Design** architectural/engineering design firm; Manufacturing: **Virginia Transformer Corporation** a processor of electric power transformers in North America; Micro-Business: **Nevaeh Salon Services**;

Technology: Interactive Achievement; Business-to-Business Services: **Virginia Business Systems** which provides technology and software to help businesses manage documents; Business-to-Consumer Services: **Varsity Landscaping & Grounds**; Wholesale/Retail: **East Coasters Bike Shop**; Legacy Award: **AmRhein's**, the Roanoke Valley's oldest jeweler (90 years) and now also a winery; Not-for-Profit Arts & Culture: The **Roanoke Regional Partnership**; Not-for-Profit Health & Human

Services: **Goodwill Industries of the Valleys.**

Backcountry.com locates

Backcountry.com, the largest online specialty retailer of premium outdoor gear, will invest more than \$20 million to establish a fulfillment center in Christiansburg. The Utah-based company's east-coast presence, which will be located in Falling Branch Corporate Park, will create more than 200 new jobs in Montgomery County.

Backcountry.com marks the third major business announcement in Montgomery County this year. Just last week, Federal-Mogal Corp. announced its plans to invest \$10 million and add 50 new employees to its existing facility in Blacksburg. In March, local startup Modea announced its plans to construct a new \$10 million corporate headquarters in downtown Blacksburg and hire 200 employees.

Federal Mogul to grow

Blacksburg's **Federal-Mogul Corporation** plant plans to hire 50 new workers as part of its \$10 million expansion. The company will add lines of manufacturing and new equipment at the plant where engine-bearing parts are made. The plant is in the Blacksburg Industrial Park and now employs 380 workers. The company is based in Michigan and had \$1.8 billion in sales last year.

New health insurer

Health insurance company **Optima Health** is moving into this region with a goal of absorbing about a quarter of the policies within five years. Optima is based in Norfolk and is a division of Sentara Healthcare. It has opened an office in Roanoke with two employees and reportedly plans to hire two more. Optima has a contract with HCA Virginia, a group that includes LewisGale Regional Health System with several hospitals in this area. It has been approved to provide Medicaid-managed care in this region.

Museum gets director

The **Science Museum of Western Virginia** has named Jim Rollings executive director. Rollings was most recently with Heifer Village in Arkansas. A Roanoke native, Rollings has experience in museum leadership, including positions with the Yorktown Victory Center, NASA Langley Visitor Center and the Virginia Living Museum in Newport News.

New Woods Rogers group

Woods Rogers PLC and **Gregory W. Feldmann** have announced the formation of Skyline Capital Strategies, LLC, a business advisory firm offering strategic guidance to financial institutions and middle-market companies. Skyline Capital Strategies

will be led by Feldmann, former president and CEO of StellarOne Bank. He has more than 30 years of experience in corporate finance, board and executive leadership positions.

Skyline will provide advisory services in such areas as corporate finance, business strategy and mergers and acquisitions to assist management teams, boards and business owners make strategic decisions about how to grow their companies and how to finance that growth. The new venture also will serve as an independent advisor on matters related to shareholder value management, ownership changes, reorganizations and re-capitalizations.

Tech grads' salaries fifth

Virginia Tech, with an average starting salary of \$51,600, ranks fifth in the nation, behind Stanford, Duke, Georgia Tech, and Notre Dame according to a new report from payscale.com. The Atlantic Coast Conference, of which Tech is a member, ranked first among all the top level of athletic conferences. The complete report is at <http://www.payscale.com/best-colleges/virginia-tech.asp>.

Of the 10 most popular jobs among Tech grads, four had to do with IT or computer programming. IT business analyst, civil engineer, database

administrator, electrical engineer and financial analyst and were the top four. The major that had the quickest payback for graduates—by far—was petroleum engineering.

Washington & Lee University in Lexington ranked fourth among Southern schools in salary potential with a mid-career median of \$98,000. William & Mary was 10th at \$96,500 and Duke was first at \$113,000.

WVCC names Access

Access Advertising & Public Relations in Roanoke has been named advertising and creative services agency for Roanoke's Virginia Western Community College.

Golf course ranked

The **Pete Dye River Course** of Virginia Tech, the home of the university's golf team, was ranked ninth in the 2011 Golfweek's Best Campus Courses list. The River Course

was the survey's fastest riser, moving up nine spots from 18th in the 2010 best campus course list.

Weight-loss clinic

The **Center for Medical Weight Loss**, founded in 2002 by Dr. Kenneth R. Luckay a former LewisGale Family Practice department chairman, has opened at 4515 Brambleton Ave. in Roanoke. It is a building formerly occupied by the Center for Rehabilitation and Development. The business is part of a national network of physicians trained in weight loss, according to a press release.

The practice has no hospital affiliation and will work with a nurse practitioner. Luckay has another office in Troutville.

VTC design wins awards

Roanoke's **AECOM**, designer for the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research

Have an announcement about your business?

Send announcements to **news@vbFRONT.com**
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Institute, has received two awards for facility design and construction excellence. The VTC School of Medicine and Research Institute received an Award of Merit from ENR Southeast's 2011 Best Projects Awards program. The medical school was one of three award winners in the education and research category.

For excellence in interior design, AECOM was awarded First Place in the 2011 Interior Design Excellence Awards program for the design of VTC. The IDEA's are awarded by the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Virginia Chapter and International Interior Design Association (IIDA) Virginia/West Virginia Chapter to recognize outstanding interior design projects.

found millions of dollars in savings and its new clinic model has kicked in successfully.

Kohl's opens

Wisconsin-based **Kohl's** has opened a store in Roanoke at Hunting Hills Plaza in southwest Roanoke. The retail chain has 130 employees. It is the 29th Kohl's in Virginia.

ND&P sweeps

In the "how many awards is too many awards?" category comes **Neathawk Dubuque Packett's** latest haul of 61 awards at the 17th Annual Communicator Awards. The pile includes 10 awards of excellence. ND&P has offices in Roanoke and Richmond.

Carilion upgraded

Carilion has been upgraded from AA-minus to A-plus by Standard & Poors, an event that was not unexpected. Carilion posted three years in the red recently, but it promised to turn that around and has. The organization, which hired financial consultants for advice,

GS Industries expands

GS Industries of Bassett, a leading provider of custom plastic injection molding, is expanding its business to produce parts for a manufacturer of infant and toddler toys and accessories. The company, occupying a 148,000-square-foot



VTC at night

FRONT Notes

building in Henry County, expects to add 35 new jobs to meet demand.

Of the 35 new positions to be created, 21 of will be machine operators with the rest in support roles and tooling maintenance.

Professors die

Hollins University film professor **Klaus Phillips** and Washington & Lee history professor **Pamela Hemenway Simpson** died within hours of each other Oct. 6. Phillips was 64 and Hemenway

was 65. Each played a key role at the two universities, Simpson helping lead W&L to co-education in the 1980s and Phillips founding Hollins' graduate program in screenwriting and film.

Neurotrek set to open

Neurotrek, using backing from a venture capital firm in Delaware, has scheduled an opening inside Carilion Clinic's Riverside 1 building in December as the first company to spin off from the Virginia Tech

Carilion Research Institute. The company researches the use of ultrasound in the treatment of neurological diseases and is headed by Jamie Tyler.

Advance layoffs

Advance Auto Parts, headquartered in Roanoke, is in the midst of what is expected to be an employment blip on its long-range screen, laying off several workers. The company is expected to hire 50 new people next year, an official says, but the layoffs are part of a

re-organization among support personnel. Those laid off are eligible for other jobs.

Shenandoah sale approved

The State Corporation has approved the sale of **Shenandoah Life Insurance**, based in Roanoke, to United Prosperity Life. Shenandoah has been in receivership for two years. Shenandoah will be converted from a mutual company to a wholly-owned subsidiary of its new owner. Prosperity,

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- > Carilion names Kay Strickland Development Director

and much more (of course; hence, the name)

which is based in Arizona, plans to invest \$60 million in Shenandoah.

ITT forms new company

ITT Corporation, a major Roanoke employer, has announced that its Defense and Information Solutions business will become an independent company on October 31. Soon-to-be ITT Exelis employs approximately 1,400 people in Roanoke and has been in the Roanoke Valley for 50 years.

"I am excited to announce that ITT Defense is becoming its own independent company," says Nick Bobay, ITT Corporation Vice President and General Manager of Night Vision and Imaging. "Though you will be seeing new signs outside our places of operation, we will be conducting business as usual with an even greater focus on meeting our customers' needs. We look forward to introducing our new brand and continuing our relationship

with the Roanoke community as ITT Exelis."

Vision Point new service

Vision Point Systems

of Blacksburg has introduced a new service called Voice Vision which assesses the performance and compliance of Interactive Voice Response (IVR), as well as contact centers and telephone systems in regulated environments.

VoiceVision is a standardized evaluation process that delivers an analysis of integrated IVR systems, contact center operations and voice/data networks performance quickly and inexpensively. VoiceVision identifies operational cost drivers, locates opportunities to leverage existing assets and find regulatory risk areas.

Compiled by Dan Smith

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 Read extended versions of items listed above, plus photos and many more current listings each day on the [moreFRONT blog](http://moreFRONT.com), also available by link at vbFRONT.com.



ROANOKE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

122ND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Thursday, December 1, 2011
6 - 9 PM

The Hotel Roanoke
& Conference Center

For more information or to register for the 122nd Annual Meeting of the Membership, call 540.983.0700 x221 or e-mail business@roanokechamber.org.



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