

Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 58 • JULY 2013

vbFRONT.com



The Buzz
on
Festivals

Diane Akers,
The Blacksburg Partnership

Banking services and products that rival the biggest.
Personal customer care that surpasses all.

Valley Bank ▲
Are You With Valley Yet?

Three Free Checking Accounts
NO MONTHLY FEES, NO MINIMUM BALANCE.

MyLifeStyle
MyTunes Checking▲ **MyBasic**
checking▲ checking▲

Come by any Valley Bank office or visit MyValleyBank.com. Let us help you choose the one that best fits your needs and customize it to fit your style. Member FDIC
Normal account opening policies and procedures apply.

WELCOME to the FRONT

A festivity for the best of us. This pretty little region of ours is really perking up the attention of people who like to party. There's a festival—or two—or three—or more—every weekend, especially during the spring, summer and fall. It's the rare exception if you can't find a major festival in either your county or the adjacent one; and it's simply impossible not to find some organized celebratory activity on any given weekend. So there. You have no reason not to have a good time. The fact is, there are people who are busy as bees making sure their locality or organization is ready to serve up a good time and a perfect reason to participate. We have so many positive attributes in Virginia's Blue Ridge, that it's almost a sin to have the additional distinction of being the perfect place to party. Almost.

Let's party.



Tom Field

“”
The festival is a beer
lover's paradise

— Page 9

“”
Our two locations look more like
a boutique than a doctor's office

— Page 35

HOME EQUITY
RATES AS LOW AS



REVEAL THEM AT
MemberOneFCU.com



540.982.8811 800.666.8811



Federally insured by the NCUA.

Make a lasting impression
by showing you made an
effort to create something
meaningful.

text
logos
photos
artwork
and more
printed on unique gifts
and apparel.

business card on a t-shirt



silver & red
glitterflake
rhinestones
& fashion film



photo on a t-shirt



apparel created using photo printing
heat applied vinyls
rhinestones & glitterflake
rhinestone car decals available

Life'sPrintSHOP
make it personal.

call or email us about the many products
available for personalization
no minimums required



photo of the Roanoke Star
applied to a crystal necklace



wedding photo on slate



childhood photo on a
rustic wood wine box

540.375.3756

Salem, VA

www.lifesprintshop.com

contactus@lifesprintshop.com

DEPARTMENTS

8 THE BUZZ

on Festivals



TRENDS

- business dress 22
- etiquette & protocol 23
- small business 24

FINANCIAL FRONT 26

LEGAL FRONT 28

WELLNESS FRONT 32

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT 35

DEVELOPMENT FRONT 38

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT 40

SENIOR FRONT 44

EDUCATION FRONT 46

CULTURE FRONT 48

REVIEWS & OPINIONS

- tom field 50
- guest interview 51
- letters 53
- book reviews 54

FRONT'N ABOUT 56

ECONOMIC INDICATORS 59

EXECUTIVE PROFILE 60

FRONTLINES

- career front 62
- front notes 66

vbFRONT.com
morefront.blogspot.com



A Cloud of Dust

Page 32



Dive In

Page 38



True Colors

Page 40

Art direction and cover photography
of Diane Akers by Tom Field.

Valley Business FRONT

P.O. Box 1041
Salem, VA 24153
(540) 389-9945
www.vbFRONT.com

Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

Departmental Contacts

Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com
Subscriptions	info@vbFRONT.com
News / Releases	news@vbFRONT.com
Admin / Ops	info@vbFRONT.com

(540) 389-9945
vbFRONT.com
morefront.blogspot.com

© Copyright 2013; Valley Business FRONT, LLC. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of this publication in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Information within Valley Business FRONT is obtained from sources considered reliable, but cannot be guaranteed. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the ownership. Valley Business FRONT is primarily distributed to subscribers by mail and select locations throughout the Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, and western Virginia.

JULY



Michael Abraham



Tom Field



Granger MacFarlane



Michael Miller



Angie Tabor



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 58.

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



Wayne Firebaugh



Rachael Garrity



Kathleen Harshberger



Liv Kiser



Anne Piedmont



Whitney Puckett



Samantha Steidle



Kathy Surace



Randolph Walker

“ “ “
We are probably the largest
manufacturer in the
country doing this

— Page 46

2013 Members

Nancy Agee Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford Claire V (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Woods Rogers (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Seniors)
John Garland Spectrum (Development)
James Glass JG Co. (Development)
Nancy Gray Hollins University (Education)
Ellis Gutshall Valley Bank (Finance)
Nanci Hardwick Aeroprobe (Tech/Industry)
George Kegley Retired (Seniors)
John D. Long Salem Museum (Culture)
Nancy May LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)
Stuart Mease Virginia Tech (Education)
Mary Miller IDD (Tech/Industry)
Ed Walker Regeneration Partners (Development)

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.

“ “ “
I build memories
for people

— Page 13

twitter
facebook

Website: www.vbfront.com
Facebook: [vb front](https://www.facebook.com/vbfront)
Twitter: [@vbfront](https://twitter.com/vbfront)
Blog: morefront.blogspot.com
Editor's blog: editrdan.blogspot.com

THE BUZZ



on Festivals

The buzz on our area is the increasing number of festivals. Wine, beer, carnival rides, crafts or monster trucks...there's something for everyone. Southwestern Virginia event planners buzz from one detail to the next to make sure that festival goers have a honey of a good time!

The arrival of warm weather heralds the beginning of the outdoor festival season. The Roanoke Valley and surrounding areas have seen increases in both the number and size of large scale events. If it's swarming samplers at a wine festival, cheering fans at a sports event, or crowds of cotton candy eating fair goers, one thing seems certain; the people love nearly any excuse to celebrate. While summer teems with events, nowadays, festivals can be found locally all year around.

While many of us know what it's like to enjoy one of the many anticipated festivities, what we may not realize is the complicated organizing and meticulous planning that is involved in bringing all the fun to the area. Behind the scenes festival organizers work diligently to ensure that not only does everyone have a wonderful time but also that events run safely and smoothly.

Some of the Roanoke Valley's prominent festival and event organizers share the headaches and the highlights of a job that brings joy to so many.

Diane Akers, President of The Blacksburg Partnership, a non-profit independent economic development organization, knows the fine art of weaving a festival together. She's been with Blacksburg Partnership since its early days a little more than a decade ago when she helped start the business. "For more than 14 years, I worked in all aspects of local government including finance, economic development and city management,"

Festival Busyness >

Executive Summary:

It takes more than a great idea to create a great event....a whole lot more!

By Angie Tabor



Tom Field

Diane Akers, The Blacksburg Partnership

she said. "I've also been a local government consultant." Her extensive career background is credited in making her an expert in the field of planning.

Akers is proud to be a part of The Blacksburg Partnership and loves her career. She works together with the Town of Blacksburg, community businesses and Virginia Tech. "The purpose of the organization is to bolster the vitality of Blacksburg through projects that attract visitors and retail prospects," Akers states, "Partnership projects include the development of property, revitalization of retail districts, arts and culture initiatives, special events and the creation of marketing programs."

The Blacksburg Partnership generates two signature events in The New River Valley: Blacksburg Fork and Cork, which occurs at the end of April and brings a variety of local wineries, artists and good food together; (This year guests were entertained by Food Network celebrity Chef Rahm Fama in the Chef Showcase cooking





demonstration) and the 5th annual Blacksburg Brew Do, to be held on Sept. 14. The festival is a beer lover's paradise showcasing local, Mid-Atlantic and national craft- and micro-breweries, according to The Blacksburg Partnership website. Both events draw anywhere from 4,500 to 5,000 locals with the number of attendees growing each year.

Akers is busy organizing two major festivals with a staff of two and as many as five interns.

Does Akers think that Southwest Virginia is becoming a popular party area?

"I think Southwestern Virginia is well known for its festivities," she explains. "There are so many beautiful areas to host events and the surrounding area is a natural draw for visitors."

For diehard celebrators who love days of music, camping, kayaking and hiking, FloydFest may be the answer. The four day event this year will be held from July 25 – 28. FloydFest has been referred to by many as the annual Woodstock of Southwestern Virginia. However, one thing FloydFest advertises and ensures is that it's a family friendly event for all ages. So, you won't see Jefferson Airplane take the stage or a free-spirited nudist dancing in mud, but what you will see is an array of colorful locals who celebrate together their love of music, crafts, outdoor activities and their strong regional pride.

Promoted by everything from bumper stickers to word of mouth FloydFest's popularity continues to flourish. FloydFest cofounder, director and producer, Kris Hodges of Across The Way Productions, admits his love of music and fun is responsible for FloydFest's evolution from a dream to a major event.

The festival had its genesis in the fall of 2001 when he worked with Erika Johnson to stage the first festival held in September, 2002. The first year 2,600 guests celebrated the arrival of FloydFest, which has now grown into a 15,000 a day head count.

"We've seen a steady 20-40% annual increase in attendance and sales since the first event," Hodges said.

A loyal supporter of local community, as are most festival organizers, Hodges noted that FloydFest has been an economic growth engine in the area with a "local impact" of as much \$2 million. But it's not just all about numbers and revenue for Hodges. "FloydFest is more than a music and arts festival," he said, "It's a philosophy of living in balance with the world around us. Respect for nature, music, art and community."



Tom Field

Kris Hodges, FloydFest

In 1974, Wendi Schultz, tourism and events coordinator for Roanoke County Special Events, came to Virginia from New York and has called Roanoke home ever since. Her road to festival organizing began when she moved into an Old Southwest neighborhood and helped organize her first community event, the Highland Fling. She served for 5 years as district director of the Muscular Dystrophy Association and then executive director of Roanoke's Festival in the Park for 20 years. She also earned certification as a festival expert through the International Festival Events Association and Perdue University.

Currently Schultz organizes festivals for Roanoke County, such as Touch-a-Truck which will be held July 27 in Green Hill Park. Advertised as wings, wheels and water, Touch-a-Truck allows children and adults to climb aboard everything from



Tom Field

Wendi Schultz, Roanoke County

boats to helicopters to fire trucks. Touch-a-Truck has been known to attract as many as 8,000 to 10,000 festival-goers and this year she doesn't expect numbers to decline.

For motorized transport lovers of all ages, rev up your engines as this year she proudly announces that there will be over 200 vehicles on display, including a Monster Truck.

"This will be the largest Touch-a-Truck festival in the United States," she said.

Schultz agrees that while large festivals have an economic impact on the community, she works smaller events to ensure a quality of life. Among one of her favorite things to do is organize events that are new and different to the area.

Schultz enjoys attending the festivals she brings to life. Her many ongoing projects include the 11th annual Green Hill Medieval and Highland Games featuring a sprawling green and knights shooting flaming arrows, which will be held Sept 28 – 29. There was also the AmRhein's Wine and Cellar Outdoor Shakespearean Dinner Theater at the winery on Bent Mountain on June 30. Currently in the works is organizing a Zombie Run to be held Oct. 5,

C O V E R S T O R Y



which will be a 5k or 10k race in which the runners will have to dodge approximately 300 zombies along their path.

"Some events take years in planning," Schultz said, "namely, big events if you want them to be successful." There are a lot of the stressors for festival organizers that come from juggling so many different elements. In order to plan an event one has to implement the plan and work through things, such as dealing with the financial aspects, accommodating special needs, contracts, marketing, risk management and legal aspects.

"The challenge is juggling all these pieces and putting them in one cohesive group, so that it appears seamless," Schultz said.

But for Schultz it's all worth it once she gets into the crowd and sees everyone having a good time.

"I build memories for people," she says, "Those memories are cherished. There's an importance to bringing community together in celebration. There's nothing better than that."

Not all festival organizers wanted to be one from the start.



Barney Horrell, Olde Salem Days

Sometimes the responsibility of the job just comes with the territory. Barney Horrell, is a civil engineer with Brushy Mountain Engineering, PLLC. He is also a Rotary Club of Salem member and current chair of Olde Salem Days. Horrell has enjoyed working with his fellow Rotary Club members over the years. You don't hear him complaining about tedious details and deadlines. For him helping to organize Olde Salem Days has been a wonderful way to get to know locals in the community, and help others, all while orchestrating a fun event.

"The Rotary Club of Salem is a very active club with over 140 members. Almost all of our members are involved in Olde Salem Days in some capacity." He said.

Festivals have a way of helping a community locally and internationally. The Rotary Club of Salem took over responsibility of Olde Salem Days in 2009 from the Salem Jaycees. They cohost the festival with The City of Salem and this year it will be held Sept. 14. The festival, which



Tom Field

originated as Craft Day in 1982, has morphed into one of Salem's most anticipated attractions. Olde Salem Days has remained true to its arts and craft theme. Applicants are prescreened to make sure that they fall into the "crafters" guidelines, which are hand-made or hand-altered items.

Because Olde Salem Days is an open street event, numbers are not exactly known as to how many attend annually, it is likely in the tens of thousands. However, Virginia Tech games and weather conditions have been known to cause smaller crowds some years, according to Horrell.

The Rotary Club of Salem takes the profits that it makes from the festival, Horrell estimates at least \$15,000 - \$20,000 annually, and uses it towards communities. The funds from the festival are distributed to various charity groups and organizations. Locally, money has been used to help establish community improvements like the Salem Rotary Dog Park. Money has also been used internationally, such as the support of the Rotary Club of Salem's Haiti Water Project.



Tom Field

Jill Sluss, EventZone

But there are other aspects of Olde Salem Days which help the local economy in much the same way as any other festival. Crafters come to Salem to participate in the festival from as far away as New York and Florida, though most are from the Mid-Atlantic region. These vendors, guests and festival participants eat, shop and stay in local hotels during their visit.

One thing that stands out for Horrell is how crowded Olde Salem Days is and yet in all the years he's been involved with helping out he has never seen any kind of scuffle among patrons. With such a large group of volunteers and thorough planning the event runs smoothly and everyone has a pleasant time.

"Old Salem Days is an enormous undertaking. If it is hosted correctly most of the effort is invisible." He said.

Jill Sluss, executive director of EventZone, a 501C-3 non-profit organization, is not the kind of person who can just sit at a desk all day. As a teenager she had an informational interview with a public relations executive at a local bank. From then on she was sure she wanted to be in public relations and communications. Strategically, she took every opportunity she could to get where she is today. She sought "real world experience" while in college and completed internships at WDBJ-7, WSLA, WBRA, Leisure Publishing, and K92. She went on to be employed

C O V E R S T O R Y

by FOX 21/27 TV, a foreign language publishing company, and WSLO-Q99FM, but for the last two years she's enjoyed her current career as a festival organizer.

Sluss organizes events like Party in the Park, held every Thursday night from May to Sept. 12, which can bring in between 1,000 to 1,500 patrons. EventZone, once exclusive to Roanoke City, now expands their festival work to other localities. This year, Party in the Park has been moved from its usual spot in Elmwood Park to Daleville Town Center. Sluss enjoys seeing a mix of regular and new guests having a wonderful time together. Guest are known to travel from as far as Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland and South Carolina to mingle with locals while enjoying good music and a social atmosphere.

"In addition to our faithful patrons, who are in their 50s to 70s, we are seeing younger patrons who bring the entire family out which often includes two to three children." She said.

While Party in the Park is a great warm weather activity for families, EventZone also organizes Kroger Cabin Fever Series at the Roanoke Civic Center during the freezing season of January to March, the Shamrock Hill Run for Roanoke Catholic Schools in March and the Appalachian Power Festival Run held in May.

One thing Sluss is proud of is that many of the events she is associated with have a charitable alliance. Uncork the Cure Wine Festival that she organized this past May gave 25% of the admission proceeds to the Virginia Blue Ridge Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

"For me it is personally gratifying to know that I am doing something to help others." she said, "In my opinion, that is the greatest satisfaction that an event planner can receive."

While in high school Tina Workman worked at Explore Park on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Immersed in living history she got to see reenactments and event planning unfold. Now, 13 years later she is president of events and operations at Downtown Roanoke Inc. Those early days of being exposed to event planning helped her develop a love of the career she has today.

"It was a lot of fun, and allowed me the opportunity to learn from the bottom up on event planning." She said.

Workman organizes BB&T's Party in Elmwood Park from May to Sept. An average of 10,000 people attend the festival over the span it is held, according to Workman.

She is definitely not green about festival organizing and she carries some luck. Two of her bigger festivals are McDonald's St. Patrick's Day Parade along with the





Tina Workman, Downtown Roanoke Inc.

Shamrock Festival which draws approximately 24,000 folks into the downtown on a Saturday in March. It can be tricky to pull off a parade followed by music venues for a single day to attract diverse age groups, but Workman pulls it off every year.

The favorite events Workman organizes may also be the Roanoke Valley's biggest outdoor wintertime festival: SunTrust's Dickens of a Christmas. According to Workman, it draws approximately 40,000 festival goers to the downtown area over the course of three Friday nights in December. For her there is nothing like bringing the Yuletide to the area. Among her responsibilities are horse drawn carriages, making sure chestnuts are roasted, coordinating street actors dressed in character, Santa's workshop and community performances. For the last two years she has even managed to bring snow by snowing out streets so kids and adults can sleigh ride. And let's not fail to mention the annual lighting of the Christmas tree and Christmas parade.



Tom Field

"The basic challenges with organizing an event is securing sponsorships and keeping your event fresh." She said.

Sometimes the fun of festival organizing can turn into the funny. Waynette Anderson, owner and president of Sponsor Hounds has seen so many funny things happen since she established her company in November, 2006 that she swears that she and Elliot Broyles, Sponsor Hound vice-president, are going to write a book. And who's to say she never will? She is someone who can, after all, get things done. Sponsor Hounds has organized festivals from Roanoke to New Orleans.

"We are often hired as event consultants for other organizations or to manage part of or all of their entire events," she said.

Sponsor Hounds has organized small events like conferences and much larger and more upscale endeavors. Some of their past and present events include the Blue



Tom Field


Waynette Anderson, Sponsor Hounds

Ridge Bike Fest, Woofstock Dog Festival in June, Roanoke Ghost Tours, Cinco de Mayo Festival and Downtown Roanoke Trick-or-Treat among many.

"Most of our events are large-scale events. The largest turnout that we've had thus far has been 12,000 people," she said.

Festival organizers are friendly and love people. After all, they are the ones who continuously bring good times to the rest of us. They are the masters of ceremony who make sure the party stays on track and no one's glass is half empty. Anderson has no regrets about her chosen career. The perks for her are seeing smiles on guests' faces or she receives a "job well done" from a vendor. Currently, she is working on organizing the Roanoke Wing Fest to be held August 24 at Elmwood Park downtown.

"I feel that everything in my life thus far has led me to this point," she said. "It is the direction I was meant to go in. I love events, I love producing events and I love creating great things for our community to participate in."

So, the next time you have a great time at one of the many festivals, celebrations or big events in the area, you can tip your hat to the hard-working men and women who made it all possible. 

COVER STORY



Diane Akers
stepintoblacksburg.org



Kris Hodges
atwproductions.com



Barney Horrell
oldesalemdays.org



Jill Sluss
eventzone.org



Wendi Schultz
roanokecountyva.gov



Tina Workman
downtownroanoke.org



Waynette Anderson
sponsorhounds.com



Do I Really Need to Dress Up? >

A recurring question I get when attending “special” events is, “Am I underdressed?” or “Should I have dressed up more for this event?”

Here is my common-sense guide to dressing for “special” events.

- Is it a once-in-a-lifetime event – wedding, baptism, graduation, retirement dinner, first time you meet the girlfriend’s parents, new job interview, etc?
- Is it a special day to the guest of honor?
- Do you hope to get some recognition or are you competing for a new position?
- Do you want to look good in photographs taken on someone’s special day?

If you answer “Yes” to any of these criteria, then, certainly, you would be right to dress in dressier clothing than your everyday apparel. Your outfit should show respect for the guest of honor and the special day they are celebrating, or, if it’s a job interview, respect for the interviewer and the company they represent. Anything less is insulting, frankly. People overlook it all the time, but, believe me, they notice.

After all, we use the word “special” when describing these events. If it was just a typical day we wouldn’t refer to it as special.

Clueless as to what is appropriate special event attire?

For men, the drill is easy. All men look great in gray dress pants or neutral khakis, a white, collared shirt, dress shoes or loafers, and a navy blazer. Simple and classic. A tie is optional. Always bring a blazer along to a special event in case everyone else is wearing a suit. The blazer dresses you up just enough.

For women, a simple knee-length sheath dress in a basic color, and low heeled dressy shoes or sandals in a metallic finish always looks dressy without being excessive. Or, try a dressy pair of pants with a special top, metallic low-heeled shoes and a little jewelry.

Some people don’t like to dress up – ever. However, my philosophy is this: Life is what you make it. If every day is the same with no highs to celebrate and no lows to be somber and respectful of, where is the magic, the pomp and circumstance, the razzmatazz? We create the magical moments in life with mood music, special foods, lighting effects, and special attire. Take advantage of every opportunity life gives you to create magic with your appearance. 📷

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
What you wear says a lot. Are you sending the right message?

The Best Dinner Guest >

You're an up and coming professional and you've been invited to your boss's home for dinner. Here's your chance to shine, yet many young (and not so young!) people dread that invitation. Most accomplished hosts know that to make a party successful, they will invite at least one tried and true guest who doesn't go expecting to be entertained. They bring their best self, and plan to have a good time.

In Victorian and Edwardian days, dinner parties were elaborate affairs. If you saw the film *Titanic*, you might remember Leonardo DeCaprio's character, as he stared in panic at the myriad of glasses and silverware. "Nothing indicates a well-bred man more than a proper mode of eating. A man may pass muster by dressing well, and may sustain himself tolerably in conversation; but if he be not perfectly at ease with a knife and fork, dinner will betray him." *Hints on etiquette 1836*.

Though, to some, these rules seem a bit archaic, most 19th century manners are still the norm today. A person's breeding, then and now, is on display at the dinner table. People still don't like it when you slurp your soup, or spray food when you talk. Assuming you have mastered proper dining etiquette, what are some of the niceties that makes one a popular and sought after guest?

At a dinner party the host has many duties. So has the guest!

- RSVP promptly. Remember RSVP means respond whether or not you are coming.
- Explain dietary restrictions when you RSVP. It is rude to announce a seafood allergy as the bisque is being served.
- Never ask, "Who else is coming?"
- Arrive on time - not too late and not too early.
- Bring a hostess gift. Wine is nice but rather boring. Why not chocolates, or flowers that are already arranged?
- Never change the place cards on a table! Very bad form.
- Do not criticize anything – the food, the wine, definitely not your host's children!
- Hold up your end of a conversation, but don't dominate it.
- Have a little tool box of conversational topics to pull out when conversation lags.
- Help smooth awkward moments, especially those associated with politics or religion.
- Thank the hosts and (this will get you kudos from your boss's wife!), send a thank you note.

Master the above, and you will always be on the "A" list of popular and sought after guests. 🍷



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
How to make it onto the "A List". It's easier than you think.



Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

Executive Summary:
A detailed business plan is not always an absolute "must have".

What is "Lean Start-Up" Anyway? >

When you think of launching a business, what comes to mind?

Besides the thrill of a new opportunity and delighting customers, did you think about creating a business plan? That's the document that serves as a roadmap for your company during the first few years.

The thought of creating a business plan has long filled many entrepreneurs with anxiety. Well, I have good news. The business plan is no longer the only route to entrepreneurship. A new methodology, the "lean startup," does away with business plans. In their place is a fluid and fast-paced business model that can take a company from inception to profitability within a few weeks.

Who couldn't use that in today's economy?

It's important to note that the traditional business plan isn't going away. It retains an important role at established companies that know their market well. That's a position lean startups would like to be in one day.

The basics of lean startup

Essentially, the lean startup approach is a way of reducing risk in entrepreneurship, says Derick Maggard, executive director of the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council.

In the May 2013 issue of the Harvard Business Review, Steve Blank, one of the pioneers of the lean startup movement, describes how it works. Entrepreneurs start with "hypotheses," which is what they think is true about the market they wish to serve. Then they test the hypotheses, asking for feedback from hundreds of potential customers and business partners.

What they learn as a result of listening to all that feedback informs what they do next. Their goal is to discover a "minimum viable product," which is the most basic value proposition they can offer to achieve success.

If feedback tells the entrepreneurs to modify their product, they will put it through a new "iteration" to make it better. If feedback tells them something isn't working, they must rethink what they're offering. This is called a "pivot."

Using a practice known as "agile development," lean startup entrepreneurs are able to respond quickly to meet needs in the marketplace. A key to making it work is being willing to let go of losing ideas, no matter how good they look on paper. Entrepreneurs must be willing to change their business models to meet here-and-now customer needs.

Sometimes those needs are unexpected. Blank tells the story of a lean startup that wanted to sell robotic lawn mowers to golf courses. They discovered through research that golf courses didn't want this product, but farmers did, especially if the mower could kill weeds without chemicals.

The firm got \$3 million in venture capital in its first nine months. That's the value of the lean startup methodology. It can work for you too.


Teaching lean startup

"Startups are a temporary organization designed to search for a scalable and repeatable business model," says Blank. "Few courses teach entrepreneurs the skills to optimize this search."

Thankfully, that situation is changing. Classes and programs teaching lean startup methods are beginning to proliferate. Maggard notes that the National Science Foundation has incorporated these methods into its Innovation Corps program. Our region has received \$3.75 million to teach that curriculum. Virginia Tech's VT Startup class is in its pilot phase.

Virginia Western Community College is rolling out a new entrepreneurship course this fall based on lean startup. *I am developing and will be teaching that course, and I hope you will enroll if you have an interest in starting a business of your own. (Hint: It will be your homework to do so.)*

Virginia is a high-ranking state for new businesses. The lean startup methods we're teaching locally, combined with our outstanding talent pool in Roanoke and the New River Valley, will strengthen what I like to call our entrepreneurial "ecosystem." It's the quickest way to stimulate the economy and get people working in careers they love.

Best of all? It's fun and low risk, with a high chance of success if one carefully listens to feedback and is willing to adjust business models on the fly. That's lean startup. Anyone can do it, and Southwest Virginia is ready for it. 

Samantha Steidle is a consultant building entrepreneurial ecosystems and coworking spaces. Visit BusinessLoungeDevelopment.com to learn more about promoting entrepreneurship in your area.



Using a practice known as "agile development," lean startup entrepreneurs are able to respond quickly to meet needs in the marketplace. A key to making it work is being willing to let go of losing ideas, no matter how good they look on paper.

Subscribe to the FRONT now only **\$19.99**

Go to vbFRONT.com or call 540-389-9945



Wayne Firebaugh

Financial Matters

Planning for the unplanned >

Executive Summary:

"Stop, drop and roll" can also be the solution to financial emergencies.

By Wayne Firebaugh

Stop, drop and roll! As kids we learn the proper response to our clothes catching fire. However, the possibility of your clothes actually catching

fire seems pretty remote. FEMA reports that 2,500 people die and another 12,600 suffer injuries from house fires each year. In a country of 314 million people, you have to like your odds of avoiding death or injury by fire. Despite the tiny odds, we all know how to respond to a clothing fire.

If we can plan our response to a remote risk, why don't we contemplate our response to almost certain calamities? In a recent survey, Ameriprise Financial discovered almost every American experiences at least one retirement "derailer" with a combined average cost of \$117,000. Ameriprise calls these events "derailers" but I call them unplanned transitions. Life is full of such transitions, both planned and unplanned. Planned transitions include retirement, purchasing a home, and marriage (because shotgun weddings are illegal). Unplanned transitions include disability, job loss, and sudden death.


There are two ways to address your life's unplanned transitions – prior contingency planning and post event triage. Prior contingency planning really only includes two things, insurance and cash reserves. Although our mortgage lender makes us buy fire insurance, we intuitively understand that a house fire, even though improbable, would devastate our family's finances. We should be similarly diligent seeking insurance for other risks that are similarly debilitating but more probable. Examples include disability of a primary wage earner, death, and nursing home confinement (no, I don't sell insurance).

After you've used insurance to transfer risks you cannot afford to bear, build your cash reserve. Your place in life will usually dictate a reserve equaling three to twelve months' living expenses. For example, if you're a single parent, your reserve should tilt higher than three months. Accumulating that reserve should usually take precedence over other savings goals including retirement and college.

Appropriate insurance and cash reserves will make you better able to weather unplanned transitions. However, the uncertainty caused by most unplanned transitions brings crisis that will still require post event triage. So, you should stop, drop, and roll (but not because you're on fire).

- Stop! Don't panic. You usually have options and resources you haven't considered. Unfortunately, you're often too emotionally connected to see all of your choices. So, don't be reluctant to seek help from someone you trust to give you the frank, unvarnished truth.
- Drop your current assumptions about what you have, what you must spend, and what your options are. Take an inventory of your assets and liabilities. Don't neglect anything, even assets you've earmarked for some particular purpose. Prioritize your cash expenditures according to the requirements for sustaining life. Groceries come before your credit card and credit rating. Your mortgage is more important than your smartphone (gasp, I know).
- Roll with a new plan. During an

unplanned transition, cash is king. You may find yourself temporarily relying on your kid's 529 college savings plan for groceries or the house payment. It's not a great choice, but it's a lot better than the alternatives – hunger and foreclosure. Even so, don't act precipitously. Fully understand the tax, investment, and long-term opportunity costs of each alternative. Ask lots of questions of any advisor who proposes a solution that includes the purchase of a financial product.

Face it. You're life is likely to be filled with unplanned transitions. The Ameriprise survey suggested the average American will face four derailers. If stop, drop, and roll is good enough for the remote possibility your clothes will catch fire, it's good enough for life's probable unplanned transitions. 

So much more.

vbFRONT.com

- > [Virginia Tech President Steger Resigns](#)
- > [Lorton Retires from Carilion; Halliwill New CFO](#)
- > [Dual Winners in VTK Tech Transfer Challenge](#)
- > [Advance Auto Shuffles, Eliminates Executive Chairs](#)
- > [Interactive Achievement Gets Cash Infusion](#)
- > [Ground Broken for West End Center Project](#)
- > [Startup Business Workshop in Roanoke March 29](#)
- > [Red Sun Farms Bringing Jobs to Pulaski](#)
- > [Locking Down the Cell in Roanoke](#)
- > [Virginia Tech Climbing the Rankings Ladder](#)

morefront.blogspot.com

So many FRONT readers just can't get enough in our monthly magazine. "Give us more!" they say. Well, we say, "OK." Read more stories and latebreaking updates on our moreFRONT blog.

- > [Life-Guard 12 To Get New Home in Lexington](#)
 - > [Alleghany Gets 55 New Manufacturing Jobs](#)
 - > [Richfield Cuts a Ribbon on Rehab Center](#)
 - > [Roanoke's Luna Sells Secure Computing Group](#)
 - > [Norfolk Southern Cuts 140 Roanoke Jobs](#)
 - > [South Peak Plans New Hilton Garden Inn](#)
 - > [A Broadband Step Forward for Roanoke Valley](#)
 - > [Carilion Rolls Out \(Stair\) Wellness Campaign](#)
 - > [New Dentists Office Features Green Technology](#)
 - > [Girl Scouts Head New CEO of RVSPCA](#)
 - > [David Bandy New President at Spectrum](#)
- and much more (of course; hence, the name)**



Liv Kiser

Monica Monday: Gentry Locke closed 53 cases for Blue Ridge clients in 2012.

"Most lawyers think it's important to provide legal services to those who can't afford it," says Monica Monday, managing partner of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore. Pro bono work for deserving clients is encouraged by the Access to Legal Services Committee of the Virginia State Bar (www.vsb.org).

Most pro bono work falls into two categories: work for the indigent and services for charitable organizations.

In the Roanoke Valley, Blue Ridge Legal Services is the gateway for indigent clients seeking legal help. "We are a federally funded legal aid organization," says Susan Proctor, managing attorney. "You have to apply for our service. We are a poverty agency, so [income] has to be 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines."

For The Public Good >

Executive Summary:

There are services and attorneys willing to help indigent clients and charitable organizations at no charge.

By Randy Walker

Getting billable hours is, of course, necessary to keep law firms going. But many firms take cases that don't generate bills. For several reasons, firms are willing to work *pro bono publico* (Latin: for the public good, usually shortened to pro bono).

Blue Ridge assists clients with civil matters such as family disputes, debt, bankruptcy, housing disputes, and eligibility for certain government benefits. It does not handle criminal matters, traffic violations, personal injuries or malpractice cases.

Proctor is the only staff attorney at Blue Ridge's Roanoke office. Qualifying applicants are usually referred to the Legal Aid Society of Roanoke Valley, or to private attorneys willing to take pro bono clients.

Legal Aid (lasrv.org) shares the same building—132 W. Campbell—as Blue Ridge Legal Services. "We used to be one [combined] office until the late 1990s," says David Beidler, general counsel of

Legal Aid. "That changed when Congress imposed restrictions on the kind of work we could do if we were receiving federal funds." As a privately funded non-profit, Legal Aid is able to take cases involving non-citizens and can also handle class action lawsuits.

Cases handled by Legal Aid include family law, custody, domestic violence, representing tenants in landlord-tenant disputes, and public benefits such as food stamps and Medicaid, says Beidler. Legal Aid only has four attorneys, however, so Blue Ridge refers many qualified applicants to private firms.

"In 2012 we closed 53 cases for Blue Ridge," says Monday. "That was over 300 hours of attorney time. They are largely domestic cases. Occasionally you'll have some custody matters, but mostly divorce. We also help Blue Ridge with power of attorney, advanced medical directives and where they need someone



Randolph Walker

Susan Proctor of Blue Ridge Legal Services: The door to 132 W. Campbell is the portal to pro bono services for many indigent clients in the Roanoke Valley.

Energy efficiency with a healthy serving of style.

Cave Spring Middle School Cafeteria



SPECTRUM DESIGN
architects | engineers

Roanoke 540.342.6001 | spectrumpc.com



Randolph Walker

Al Knighton of Woods Rogers: "We have an obligation to return something to the community."

to serve in a guardianship proceeding."


Woods Rogers does "quite a bit" for Blue Ridge, says Al Knighton, a principal at WR. "I do, for example, wills and powers of attorney for indigents. It comes in to individual lawyers. It's generally those who have indicated they're willing to do work of a specific type."

For obvious reasons, firms have to set limits on pro bono work. "You never compromise the quality of your work," says James Creekmore, owner of the Creekmore Law Firm, PC in Blacksburg. "You just try to be efficient and work with the clients as best you can, and balance it out with time

devoted to billable work."

Indigents aren't the only beneficiaries of pro bono services. "A lot of attorneys provide free legal services to non-profit organizations either because they sit on the board, or matters may arise for that organization where they need special expertise," says Monday.

Knighton puts pro bono work in the context of the legal profession's relationship to society.

"My view has always been that the community has given us a comfortable living and we have an obligation to return something to the community. And this is one way of doing it." 



GOODWILL® Presents the Fashion Event of the Season!

4th Annual
SECOND RUNWAY

Thursday, August 8th Jefferson Center, Roanoke
5pm - 9pm, show begins at 7pm

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!
\$35 per ticket, \$40 per ticket at the door

Enjoy an evening of drinks, hors d'oeuvres, live music, shopping with Goodwill, a silent auction, and a high energy, runway fashion show.

To purchase tickets and for more information:
www.goodwillvalleys.com • (540) 581.0620 ext. 174

 **SECOND RUNWAY**
It's Gonna Be a Goodwill Night

When does health care reform become effective?

The health care reform bill was signed into law in March 2010. The changes made go into effect over a period of years. Some of the law's changes are already in effect, such as the prohibition on pre-existing condition exclusions for individuals under age 19. Other key changes go into effect in 2014, such as the requirement for individuals to buy health coverage or pay a penalty.

Are individuals required to have health coverage?

Starting in 2014, most individuals will be required to obtain acceptable health insurance coverage for themselves and their family members or pay a penalty. This provision of the health care reform law is often called the "individual mandate" because it has the effect of requiring individuals to have health coverage. If you are covered under a health plan offered by your employer, or if you are currently covered by a government program such as Medicare, you can continue to be covered under those programs.

Certain individuals are exempt from the individual mandate. For example, you may be exempt from the penalty for not maintaining acceptable health coverage if you:

- Cannot afford coverage (that is, the required contribution for coverage would cost more than 8 percent of your household income)
- Have income below the federal income tax filing threshold
- Are not a citizen, national or lawfully present in the U.S.

What are the penalties for individuals who don't have health insurance coverage?

The penalty for not obtaining acceptable health coverage will be phased in over a three-year period. The amount of the penalty is the greater of two amounts—the "flat dollar amount" and "percentage of income amount."

2014: The penalty will start at \$95 per person or up to 1 percent of income.

2015: The penalty increases to \$325 per person or up to 2 percent of income.

2016 and after: The penalty increases to \$695 per person or up to 2.5 percent of income.

The penalty for a child is half of that for an adult. The penalty is calculated on a monthly basis, and will be assessed for each month in which an individual goes without coverage. There is no penalty for a single lapse in coverage lasting less than three months in a year.

Is my plan required to provide free preventive care?

All non-grandfathered group health plans and plans in the individual market must provide coverage for recommended preventive health services. If your plan is subject to this requirement, you should not have to pay a copayment, co-insurance or deductible to receive recommended preventive health services such as screenings and vaccinations.

For example, depending on your age, you may access (at no cost) preventive services such as:

- Blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol tests

- Many cancer screenings, including mammograms and colonoscopies
- Regular well-baby and well-child visits, from birth to age 21
- Routine vaccinations against diseases such as measles, polio or meningitis

If your plan is grandfathered, these benefits may not be available to you. Also, if your health plan uses a network of providers, these benefits may only be available through a network provider. Your plan may allow you to receive these services from an out-of-network provider, but may charge you a fee.

In addition, effective for plan years beginning on or after Aug. 1, 2012, non-grandfathered health plans must provide additional preventive services for women without cost sharing, such as coverage for well woman visits, breastfeeding support and contraception. Exceptions to the contraceptive coverage requirement apply to religious employers.

What is the new health insurance exchange, or Marketplace, and when will it be available?

The health insurance exchange is an online marketplace that is designed to help make buying health coverage easier and more affordable. Effective for 2014, the Marketplace will allow individuals and small businesses to compare health plans, get answers to questions and find out if they are eligible for tax credits for private insurance or health programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and enroll in a health plan that meets their needs.



Yes. We're this serious.

Cut through the confusion. Save \$.

We saved an 18 employee group **\$18,000** a year.

A company of 43, nearly **\$60,000** a year.

A small 7 person firm, **\$24,000** a year.

New Health Insurance Companies • New Benefit Designs
Extraordinary Service

BusinessSolutions

It's not business, it's personal



Randy Walker

Deborah Young-Corbett

Injury Prevention >

Executive Summary:

Building safety into products and processes is becoming a design essential.

By Randy Walker

Business owners: Are you planning to build or expand? Need a new piece of equipment? Ask your contractor or engineer if he's heard of Prevention through Design (PtD).

Historically, engineering students have learned how to achieve specified tolerances and performance criteria, without necessarily accounting for the environment and human safety. Now there's a movement in engineering to formalize the study of preventing illnesses and injury. It's called Prevention through Design, and Deborah Young-Corbett at Virginia Tech is in the forefront of it.

Young-Corbett is an assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering and a member of the university's Myers-Lawson School of Construction.

The optimal method of preventing occupational illnesses, injuries, and fatalities is to "design out" the hazards

and risks, eliminating the need to control them during work operations, according to the PtD philosophy. This approach involves the design of tools, equipment, systems, work processes, and facilities in order to reduce or eliminate occupational hazards and environmental risks.

For example, Young-Corbett and colleagues designed and built a sander with a built-in vacuum that can eliminate 99 percent of dust (see photos). They also built a hard hat with a built-in carbon monoxide (CO) tester that works through the skin, alerting management if blood CO exceeds a safe level.

You can't buy the sander or CO hat at Lowe's yet, although "we're working on getting patents," she says.

Young-Corbett gives other examples. Vibration from hand tools can be reduced. A lockout system built into a machine will prevent operation if the machine has been tampered with. If a roof can be constructed on the ground, and a crane can lift and place it, the risk of falls can be greatly reduced.

"Construction engineers would not have thought to do this if they did not have this Prevention through Design incentive," she says.

The field was launched in 2007 by the National Institute for Occupational Safety



Left: Worker sanding a wall. Note the dust in the air. Right: Worker using a sander designed by Young-Corbett and her team. The tool's built-in vacuum removes 99 percent of the dust.

and Health (NIOSH). Part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NIOSH is the federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury and illness.


"I'm trying to teach the engineering students at Virginia Tech how to think like this," says Young-Corbett, who teaches civil and industrial engineering students, as well as building construction students. "Historically the engineering curriculum has not taught how to go about doing that. It's just now getting incorporated in engineering curricula throughout the country. There may be a half dozen schools that are teaching it. It's still pretty new."

Young-Corbett came to her interest in the field through work in occupational and environmental compliance. "It's very difficult to get workers to comply with rules especially when you're asking them to wear respirators and hearing protection. If we

can design out these hazards, then we aren't going to burden workers with wearing protective equipment, and that would make everyone's life a lot easier."

Her resume lists certifications in environmental, health and safety compliance. While trying to keep people safe in her professional life, she paradoxically does dangerous things on her personal time, like diving with sharks, climbing rocks, crawling through caves, and jumping from airplanes. "Go figure," she writes on her website (www.mlsoc.vt.edu/users/dyoung).

She's always had lots of energy. "Just the way I was born," she says. "It drove my parents crazy when I was young, but I put it to good use."

From New Jersey, she came to Blacksburg to get her bachelor's, and went on to get one of her two master's degrees and her doctorate from Tech. "It's hard to be more Hokie than I am," she says. 



SOLUTIONS START **HERE.**

Breaking News...

Your long-term **Canon** provider for the last 31 years has just added a new product line.



TECHNOLOGY GIANT

SAMSUNG

Chooses Blue Ridge Copier to introduce their latest line of Digital Multi-Function Equipment Solutions.



Blue Ridge Copier

909 Iowa St., Salem, VA 24153
(540) 389-4400
(800) 552-6907 Toll Free
www.blueridgecopier.com

Tech Scoop

You say potato >

Executive Summary:

Biotechnology may be leading us to another crop famine.

By Michael Miller

I used to love Red Delicious apples, but not anymore.

Well, I would still like them if I could actually find any. Back in the day, they would show up on the grocery shelves in the fall, as big as your fist and crisp to the bite, dripping with that familiar rich winery flavor. But they would only last a few weeks on the shelves. The things they sell today have been modified to have longer shelf life and no flavor. Yuck.

A more important problem, however, is that we are rapidly losing the original gene pools for many of our important food plants because of this sort of artificial manipulation. Maybe you don't care that the tomatoes don't have a lot of flavor as long as you can buy them all year round, but what if we lost the ability to grow corn or wheat?

That's precisely what happened to the potato crop in the mid-19th century, with global consequences.

When the British conquered Ireland, they pretty much converted all the decent land to pasture so they could provide adequate beef supply for the homeland. The already poor Irish peasants were forced onto small plots of bad land, barely able to feed their families. The British had introduced the potato as a garden crop of the gentry, but by the early 1800s it had become the staple of the poor.

The potato crop was decreasingly biodiverse, and after repeated crop failures, one strain of blight essentially wiped out the crop beginning




Michael Miller

in the 1840s. The effect on the poor was devastating. Between 1845 and 1852 the total population of the country dropped by as much as 25% due to starvation. Even today the population of Ireland has not recovered to pre-famine levels.

The culprit for the blight, technically, was a particular strain that is now believed to have originated in Mexico and then transmitted to Europe from the US. The result was a diaspora of Irish peasants to other parts of the realm and elsewhere, including quite a number to the eastern US, where their culture and gene pool enrich our lives even today.

Modern biotechnology has managed to manipulate the genetic makeup of many important plants like corn and wheat to stay one step ahead of natural threats. But at some point we have to wonder if nature itself might have the best answer by just preserving the naturally-diverse gene pools which provide built-in defenses.

Sure, this attitude might mean that we could not have everything we like whenever we want it. But one of the reasons I liked those old Red Delicious apples was that I could only have them for a few weeks in October every year. And that was not a bad thing. 



L-R: Photographers Bill Poff and Yusef Messallam with Invision optometrists Scott Mann and Jon Gudeman.

A face on the internet >

Executive Summary:

The virtual tour concept is being adopted by businesses other than real estate.

By Randy Walker

Users of Google Street View can take a virtual walk down almost any street using Google's panoramic photo interface. By clicking on directional icons, users can look up, down, left, and right, and "walk" forward or back.

What if users could take a look inside your business? Would they be intrigued enough to visit?

Scott Mann thinks so. Mann and his business partner, Jon Gudeman, are optometrists who own Invision, an upscale eye care center with locations in Salem and Christiansburg. Mann and Gudeman signed up with Business Photos, a new Google service (launched 2012) that effectively functions as an extension of Street View.

There is no charge for a basic Google business listing. If the business participates in Business Photos, a "see inside" link will show up next to the business listing. Users can navigate through panoramas offering



Randolph Walker


a high-resolution virtual tour of the store. Specialty items can be highlighted with additional feature photos.

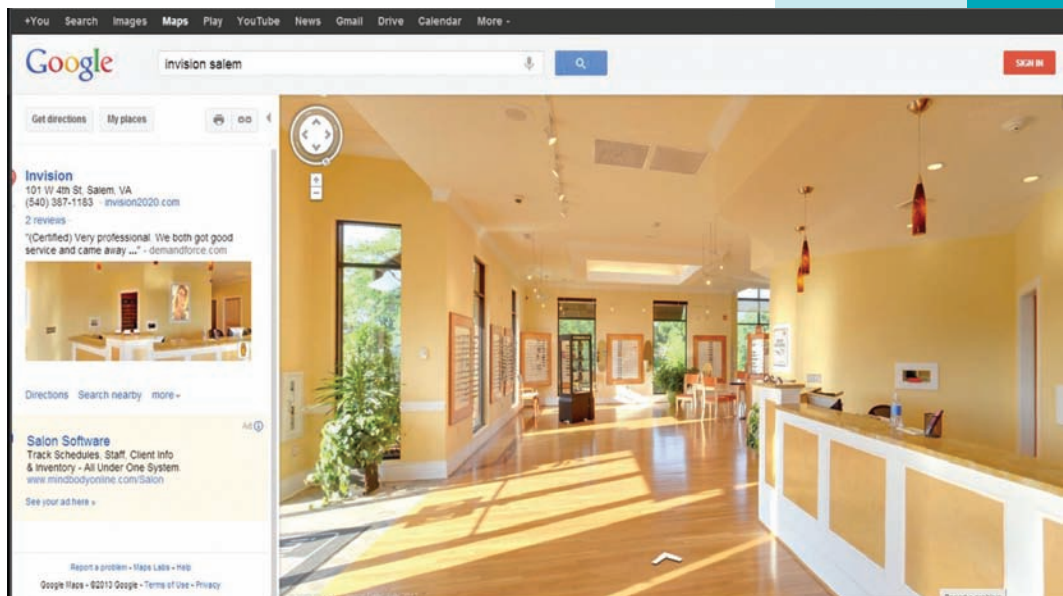
"We feel like our two locations, which look more like a boutique than a doctor's office, would connect with the demographics of our target market if they could only see it," says Mann.

Mann's contact with Google is Bill Poff, a commercial photographer based in Salem. Poff and fellow photographer Yusef Messallam, partnering as Trusted 360 Tours (trusted360tours.com), are two of the four Google-approved photographers in Southwest Virginia.

"You have to go through a training process and you have to buy several thousand dollars' worth of equipment," says Poff. "They specify what type of camera, what lenses you can use."

Cost to the business is typically \$350 to \$750, a one-time charge with no annual fees required, Messallam says.

Businesses can embed the Google tour on their website for no additional charge. Says Messallam: "The idea is to give businesses a face on the internet." 



A screen capture of Invision's Salem boutique as seen through Google Business Photos.



WV Film Office

The grand hotel at Sweet Springs will need more than a coat of paint.

Sweet Springs needs you >

Executive Summary:

A historic West Virginia property offers big challenges and quite possibly, big rewards.

By Michael Abraham

Amidst an area with phenomenal resorts, Sweet Springs commands a number of superlatives: incredible history, stunning views, unique heritage, and world-class water. Sadly, what it doesn't have is an operator or occupants, and it is rapidly deteriorating.

Sweet Springs is a mere 45 miles north of Salem, 3 miles past the West Virginia line in Monroe County. The first settler to the valley was in 1764. By 1792, a small hotel

Henrico County Schools award MB Contractors with \$32M project!



Expected expansion and reconstruction for Henrico High School

Largest
Single
Contract in
101 Years



ROANOKE | RICHMOND
www.mbcontractors.com
540-342-6758



WV Film Office

The historic bath house is in ruins but the percolating spring water remains.


was built, making it one of the earliest of the Appalachian spas.

In 1839, a startlingly grand hotel was built, three floors tall and 800 feet long, with four separate porticos, said to have been designed by Thomas Jefferson. This building still stands and is an astonishing sight to travelers driving by.

Across a circular arrangement of buildings, all built with bricks fired on-site, is the original bath-house, situated above springs of naturally carbonic (fixed air) water, bubbling up and maintaining a constant 72F. Sadly, the bath house is in ruins, with one wall completely collapsed and the others not far behind. The hotel is marginally better, but needs considerable work.

But oh, what water! Not only has the water at various times been credited for a long list of cures, but has been compared favorably to the finest spring waters in the world. The taste is naturally smoothed by the limestone origin of Peters Mountain from where it emanates.

Steve Weir is Executive Director of the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation, tasked with the significant challenge of bringing new life to the facility. He said, "The prior owner, Warren Smith, opened a bottling plant which sold the water commercially. When Smith died a few years ago, the bottling plant ceased operation and the renovation program stopped. The bottling plant was a successful venture that has now become dormant.

"Considering the historical and economic significance of this property, any effort we can muster is reasonable, despite its current condition. We're looking for a unique owner who can develop a sustainable, eco-friendly facility, perhaps a private/public effort to develop an agri-tourism/educational facility, tied to the adjacent large state-owned agricultural farmland. We can train young farmers and eco-economists how to manage the 'twenty-second century farms' we envision." 



WV Film Office

With its four porticos, the grand hotel is impressive indeed.



Duane and Cathy Mills, owners of Valley Paint

Valley paint and decorating >

Executive Summary:
Creativity and customer service are a winning combination for this couple.

By Rachael Garrity

McDonalds' founder Ray Kroc defined the two most important requirements for major success as: (1) Being in the right place at the right time; and (2) doing something about it.

Duane and Cathy Mills, owners of Valley Paint and Decorating in Blacksburg might want to update that formula just a bit by changing the first requirement from being to choosing the right place and time and people. The story of their business success provides ample testimony of just why theirs is a sound argument.

RETAIL / SERVICE FRONT

For beginners, it takes no small amount of courage to sell a house, buy a house, move, have a new baby and open a business all within three weeks' time. That's precisely what the Mills couple did when they moved from Raleigh, NC, to Blacksburg, in part because Duane's father was ill and they wanted to be nearby to help.

"I've spent all but eight years of my life in Blacksburg," Duane points out, "and the decision to come home was an easy one. My dad, who was in the architecture business, realized there was no retail outlet for Benjamin Moore paint in the area, and that prompted our original decision. We opened the store on April 15, 1996, which was a Saturday. At the close of business we had not had one customer. And yes, we did have a what-have-we-done moment."

Still, it was not long before the couple

learned that the three-legged-stool they stood on for business growth – customer service, product knowledge and quality products – was indeed a winning combination. The business grew steadily. Chris Croy, a friend Duane had met in the first grade, joined the staff, and the enterprise attracted a customer base broken down into roughly 70 percent building/decorating tradespersons and 30 percent retail.

Then, beginning in 2006 the economy headed sharply down, and by 2008 Duane had decided he needed another kind of business to provide additional income necessary for them to ride the tide until the situation righted itself. He bought two 7-11 franchise stores in Blacksburg, and found himself in a position quite different from what he had experienced as a business owner. "I don't really think that one kind of business requires a different skill set from

GOOD FOR BUSINESS... & PLEASURE



Set your business apart with an event at Hunting Hills Country Club. Our professional staff takes the time and worry out of event planning and delivers on your vision. Whether you are a member or non-member, we can assist you with all your corporate & private banquet and event needs including golf outings, receptions, meetings and social functions. Let us plan your next event, call 774-4435.

Hunting Hills
COUNTRY CLUB



HUNTINGHILLSCC.com



Coming Up...

August 2013 Agritourism

It's not a new industry, but it's way bigger than it used to be. Agritourism is popping up everywhere. Farmers and property owners are supplementing their conventional businesses (selling crops, livestock, etc. to suppliers and retailers) with activities for visitors, tourists, and locals who enjoy a distinctive environment for entertainment, shopping, recreation, or discovery with a taste of culture and the outdoors. In some cases, agritourism has all but replaced the old family farming business model. Perfect for day trips, stop-by cruises, special events, or just a nice outing — the new emphasis on agritourism makes a delightful read for our August FRONT.

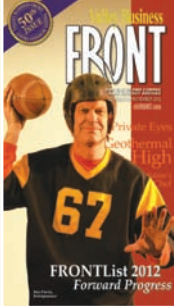
FRONTguide

The FRONTguide is now available at vbFRONT.com. Not just a book-of-lists or directory. In classic and progressive FRONTstyle, we're presenting the businesses, products and services you need most at your fingertips. Compact and easy to use. It's like having your own little black book! An evergreen 24/7/365 online directory, we continue to build lists and add sponsors. To be a part, contact FRONTadvertising today!

Call or email us for more information...

ads@vbFRONT.com

540-389-9945
vbFRONT.com






the other," he explains, "but there is most definitely a difference in philosophy that takes some getting used to. As a franchise operator, I buy the products and put them on the shelves per strict instructions from the company. There is no room for creative thinking. On the other hand, when there are economic trends that eat so much into the bottom line, it's nice to have an arrangement in which the only real cost I am responsible for is personnel."

Cathy, meanwhile, has found the flexibility provided by being in an ownership position a real boon when it comes to achieving a balance between work and home responsibilities. "When I was employed by Kaiser Permanente, I understandably had to work specific hours. With the two of us totally involved in our business, and the amazing help of a great set of employees, I am happy to report that at least one of us has been available for all the various

activities the children (of which there are now three) have chosen to participate in."

Despite what Duane describes as a much slower economic recovery than he (like many other American business owners) had hoped for, annual sales for the paint store had climbed to \$700,000 by 2007. "Frankly, most of that is from word-of-mouth," he insists. "We really DO believe in customer service."

Behind him Chris Croy carries a box of paint, rollers and brushes out for a customer, who is clearly not a professional painter. Seeing the roller pad she has chosen, he quietly exchanges it for another – more expensive – one. "That one has its place," he explains, "but believe me you'll be a lot happier with this one." The difference in price is less than \$2. The bill is not revised. And the customer smiles and replies, "I'll be back. Somehow, you save me every time." 



Whitney Puckett

Mrs. Genevieve White, of Salem

Welcome to Walmart! >

Executive Summary:
Retire? "No thanks," says one octogenarian.

By Whitney Puckett

Born in 1927, Mrs. Genevieve White, of Salem, officially retired when she turned 60, but to her, that didn't mean she had to quit working.

"It's just not for me," she says, "I've just always worked."

A child of the Great Depression, Mrs. White is the oldest of eleven siblings, ten of which are still living. "We're all in pretty good shape," she chuckles. And at 86 years of age, Mrs. White is still going strong, working four six-hour shifts a week as a Greeter at a local Walmart.

In the early 1930's, Mrs. White attended primary school for a few years until she began her first real job, working at the local general store. In 1944 at the age of 17, she got a job at the Valleydale plant in Salem where she met her husband, Jasper.

Over the years, Mrs. White became a mother to three girls and one boy. During that time, she also held a job at the Salem Doughnut Shop before she and Jasper opened their restaurant, a small barbecue diner in Salem. After that, she was employed as a cafeteria worker for several years before she officially retired and began working for Walmart.


For six years, Mrs. White worked at the store's snack bar before leaving to help care for several family members. In 1998, she returned to Walmart for good.

"I'm just a people person," she says, "I just like meeting people and talking." And that, she says, is her favorite part of the job.

When she's not greeting and directing customers, Mrs. White spends time with her family. She also loves to watch sports (although she timidly admits to being a fan of the Dallas Cowboys and Atlanta Braves). And, of course, she loves to crochet.

So, when will Mrs. Genevieve White slow down? It doesn't appear to be any time soon.

"When I can't get one foot in front of the other and through the door, that's when I'll retire," she declares.

Until then, you will continue to find Mrs. White perched on her stool, smiling warmly, and welcoming you to Walmart. 

"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.

Rife + Wood ARCHITECTS
Roanoke, Virginia 540.344.6015





Rachael Garrity

Deputy Crystal Lloyd

School resource officers >

Executive Summary:
Building trust is the first and most important step.

By Rachael Garrity

Maintaining the safety and security of this nation's school children has probably never been a higher priority than it is today, in the wake of the killings at Sandy Hook School in Connecticut, and yet even among parents, the role of the school resource officer (SRO) is often poorly understood. Two SROs working in schools sited side-by-side in Montgomery County describe a job that reaches well beyond safety to broad community service.

Deputy Jason West sits in his office at Auburn High School, leans forward and with no small amount of intensity explains that he sees his

primary job as making sure the students roaming the halls just beyond his door see him as a source of help when they need it. "I grew up right here," he says. "In fact, I was once a student here. It's a community I love, and it's important to me that I get beyond any of the suspicion students might have."

Meanwhile, roughly the length of half a football field away, at Auburn Middle School, Deputy Crystal Lloyd, who grew up in Blacksburg, admits that "some of these students come from homes where the attitude is that anyone in uniform is trash. It's our job to get beyond that."

And precisely how do the two, who share prior experience working in jails, weave that goal into days filled with traffic control, lockdown drills, and working with teachers and administrators on discipline issues?

For beginners, they agree solidly that there is a defined line between discipline and law enforcement, and that their role is to support teachers and principals, not to issue citations that will drive students precipitously into the criminal justice system for minor offenses.



Deputy Jason West


"For example, lots of these students are hunters," West points out, "and they sometimes come to school with knives in their pockets. Obviously, the first thing I do if I find out about a knife is inform an administrator and thereby make sure appropriate measures are followed. The point is, often it's a matter of the student's having forgotten, not that there is any intentional threat. More than once, I've had a young man come up to me, hold out a knife, and say, 'Deputy West, can you take care of this?' That's where the trust issue is so important."

And what about bullying? West points to a short list of steps posted on the wall behind his desk for bullying intervention. Lloyd describes an access system through which students can report bullying anonymously, with not only a school counselor, but a mental health professional working fulltime in the school and a set of agreed-upon safety procedures for students who have exhibited problematic behavior on multiple occasions. "Sometimes, in fact," she explains, "I actually get calls from parents asking me how they should deal with problems at home, as they try to understand

what's going on with their children."

Both deputies have completed comprehensive training programs on how the law works with juveniles, including a review of case law, and a focus on how to work within schools systems effectively. They are actively involved in YOVASO (Youth of Virginia Speak Out), a statewide program started in Roanoke in 2001 to address what was then an escalating number of teen fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. Safe driving clubs and summer retreats have created a peer-to-peer program that has seen a steady decline in teen fatalities from 133 in 2007 to 83 in 2012.

Both also have two sons, and are keenly aware of their roles as mentors within the wider community, not only during the school day. Obviously, safety is a first priority in what they do, but neither would be comfortable – or truthful—saying that's all they do.

"This is a job that takes a good deal of dedication," West admits, and then adds with a broad smile, "but it's a very rewarding career." 



Michael Abraham

Mountain Car Company locomotives are astonishingly realistic.

Mountain Car Company keeps model railroading alive >

Executive Summary:

It's not too late to become a railroad tycoon. A local company can make it happen.

By Michael Abraham

There's *A Little Engine Company That Could*, long hidden in a nondescript industrial building in Salem, which for nearly 30 years has been building railroad dreams.

Jim Humphrey owns Mountain Car Company, manufacturer of 1/8 scale railroad locomotives and cars. They're too big for the basement but big enough to ride around the yard, if you have a large yard... and lots of disposable cash.

"We design, manufacture, and sell throughout America and the world to hobbyists and light commercial customers. A standard railroad

has a track width of 4' 8-1/2". Our trains run on tracks that are 7-1/2" in width.

"We build replicas of diesel locomotives and the rolling stock. We are probably the largest manufacturer in the country doing this."

Humphrey was a hobbyist from his childhood years. Long ago when the Virginia Transportation Museum was at Wasena Park in Roanoke, there was a 1/8 scale layout. Humphrey became involved in the new Blue Ridge Live Steamer Club, which ran locomotives that literally burned coal and made steam to power them. He graduated from Virginia Tech in Business Management and started the company soon thereafter. "At the time I saw the stuff that was on the market and I thought I could make it better and cheaper. And I've been banging my head against the wall ever since!

"We have nine employees. We do a variety of parts, kits, and assembled cars and locomotives. Our product designs are standardized to as great an extent as possible. Our train car designs are very similar to each other. The parts are duplicated and the processes are similar. Even though the locomotives may look different on the outside, the chassis,

engines, and other parts are similar underneath.”

Mountain Car Company has a complete metal manufacturing plant, with CNC machining, welding, painting, and assembly. His people are often skilled at several aspects, most learning on the job. Most have been with the company for many years, one as many as 17 years. They work four 10-hour days. Most of their sales are direct to the customer, advertising through the Internet. In years past, Jim attended many train meets, but he can be equally effective now without all the travel.

“Cost for our train cars averages around \$1500. Cost for our locomotives is around \$15,000. It is an expensive hobby, but many people have expensive hobbies. A small track might be a 300-foot loop. A customer in Oregon has 200 acres and 35 miles of track. An average layout might be 3500-feet of track on five acres. An entry level set-up with locomotive, a few cars, and 1000 feet of track may cost around \$30,000.”

The trains are exquisite and look surprisingly realistic. They are powered by a two-cylinder gasoline engine that powers a hydraulic pump and chain drive to all the locomotive's



Jim Humphrey loves all things railroad.

Michael Abraham

wheels. The locomotive may be equipped with lights, a horn, and even speakers that emit locomotive sounds. They resemble modern diesel locomotives rather than steam locomotives. While some hobbyists use steam, they found the same issues as the railroad companies, that they are temperamental, inefficient, and require extensive maintenance.

“Business is growing. We had a tough time like everybody else in 2008 and 2009. But things are turning around. For me, the pleasure in this business is designing and manufacturing something that works well and looks good, and will stay that way for many, many years. Even if I live to be old and am long gone, this equipment will still exist. This stuff will be around virtually forever.”

**better than
when I
began**

It's a fun and unique learning environment. One that helps you discover your strengths and weaknesses and come out better than when you began. A great atmosphere that fosters growth and teamwork.

– Kate Steinbacher

The Coaches Console

LIKE us on Facebook to keep up with what's happening on the mountain... and who's going there



540-588-1611
mountainshepherd.com



On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:

When it comes to marketing, research and development could be overrated

Emphasizing R&D >

Rightly or wrongly there's a popular sentiment that in the U.S. we have too many lawyers. Everyone's suing everyone else over the drop of a hat. A similar perspective permeates city utility departments. Twelve guys in orange vests standing around a pothole wondering who might grab the shovel next.

We can't have lawyers and municipal workers getting all the bad jokes. I feel compelled to throw another group in the mix. After recently watching a presentation on an insurance company's \$642 million ad budget, it struck me how much of the process was tied to research and development. Before the actual marketing takes place, millions of dollars and thousands of man hours have been expended. This is not to say the R&D effort wasn't brilliant. It's really quite impressive. But I had to ask myself; I wonder... could—or would—the brilliant and creative and yes, strategic marketing happen had none of that R&D ever taken place?

With my apologies to the tacticians, I have to say, yes.

The agencies and their clients say no. They say market intelligence is the top priority; and on that point, I agree. Then, they say they somehow suddenly discovered all those years they had been marketing for people to respond to "x" when really they respond to "y." R&D pointed us in the right direction now, they say. They also show how R&D is needed to select the right message, choose the right media distribution, and improve the chances of capturing more market share.

I say R&D is often a perfect little scapegoat. It serves to prove you're smart. When things work, R&D verifies your competency. And when things don't pan out so well, at least you went with the research, so you can hardly be blamed. I believe company owners and stakeholders only need one premise when it comes to marketing, regardless if it's a Fortune 500 corporation or a mom-and-pop.

The only justification you need is performance.

Therefore, I propose a new definition using the same acronym. R&D: Run and Do.

Gut instinct can trump all the R&D in the world. The truth is, there are too many scaredy cats to try it. Yes, I used the sophisticated term there. R&D would have insisted on a much cooler word, like pusillanimous.

Run & Do.

If you put all or most of your marketing into actual execution, the R&D will naturally evolve out of that. If you market to "x" instead of "y", the results from your active engagement will far outweigh whatever shortcoming you experienced from lack of research and development.

Run to the producers. Do the marketing.

Give your orange vests to your competitors. 

In Search of John Henry >

"All the pieces are in place. We just need someone with some economic muscle."

So says J. Granger Macfarlane, former state senator of Virginia. He's talking about the railroad's proposed intermodal site in the Elliston area, Montgomery County, right at the bordering edge of western Roanoke County / Glenvar. The project was all the rage in the headlines for a stretch, stirring up both proponents and opponents. Reports were presented, lawsuits filed, municipal and private party positions were published. Politicians, industrialists, land use planners and engineers, environmentalists, citizens, NIMBYs (not-in-my-back-yarders), and stakeholders of all types spoke from their soapboxes. Occasionally.

And then, suddenly, as if someone hit the track switcher, everything went quiet.

If anyone paid attention, there was a recent blip about securing the latest property rights and land acquisition. But the promise of a hustling, bustling enterprise that constitutes an active and thriving inland port? No one seems to know (or care) where the development stands.

Granger Macfarlane's ready to deliver a swift kick to the caboose.

Even though we're having a quiet, civil little lunch at the club, you can sense his agitation underneath the surface. Granger clutches a paper with stats and illustrations of other intermodal sites as if it was a secret treasure map. Quite simply, he thinks we're missing out on something really big. The intermodal site isn't just a nifty little project; he calls it "the second most important economic development initiative in the two valleys." The two valleys are Roanoke and New River; and the second place designator refers to the promises from the Carilion-Virginia Tech medical R&D initiative.

He wants our region to get in on the action. And he wants it sooner, not later.

"This [intermodal site] offers more opportunity for jobs and investments than anything I know," says Granger Macfarlane. "There is far more front end income producing revenue of all kinds from this than anything else on the table."

Granger cites examples from Front Royal, VA to existing and brand new stations in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Ohio, where jobs were produced and dozens of new businesses sprang up immediately around the new intermodal sites. He also chugs along smoothly between beneficiaries of the development other than the railroad and the distributors.

For education and workforce development, Granger envisions



Tom Field
Granger Macfarlane

Guest Interview

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Granger Macfarlane wants to make a priority out of the "stalled" Norfolk Southern Elliston/Ironto Intermodal Transfer Terminal

an educational satellite program for schools like Virginia Western and New River Community Colleges (which would also assist as a pipeline feeder for direct training-to-job programming). Environmentalists should be on board too, he says, due to the reduction of truck traffic for transporting goods. And he'd even like to latch on to the advantages of establishing a tax free zone for international commerce (like the port at New River Valley Airport).

Let's say you think the former senator's ideas about the intermodal site are more wishful thinking than practical, he's got a specific call to action. Several actually. He brings up the notion of finding someone with economic clout over and over, and he's not afraid to drop names in the pursuit.

"We've got to get business leaders to meet with Wick [Moorman, chairman and CEO of Norfolk Southern] to show support and find out what we can do to facilitate the general assembly and accelerate this to a line item on the transportation budget."

Granger wants leverage from people like Thelma Drake of Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation and NS government relations lobbyist Bruce Wingo to push on the region's behalf. Additionally from the government's side of the equation, Granger sees a whole roundhouse of options to re-energize the development.

"If Bob Goodlatte [Congressman, 6th

District] would agree to put \$20 million to Boehner [Speaker of the US House of Representatives] and Cantor [House Majority Leader] that would put the fat in the fire. He [Goodlatte] could make the deal subject to support by Montgomery County and the adjacent localities of Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and Salem on a pro rata share basis, for example; and then have the fed kick in with matched funding."

Granger says the program could be administered by an authority or a commission, much like a utility or the airport or similar to the way the Spring Hollow reservoir was managed between municipalities during the drought.

But it's that person with formidable "economic muscle" that Granger wants most. He laments the absence of a facilitator like Lacey Putney [Virginia House of Delegates 19th District] who he claims "is a driver who does more with one hand than anyone else with two."

Granger Macfarlane sees the busy Norfolk Southern Elliston/Ironto Intermodal Transfer Terminal right there in his mind like a kid on Christmas Eve, expecting his shiny new train set running around the Christmas tree the next morning.

"The stars are in alignment [for all of this to happen]," Granger states. He picks up his paper and walks away from the table.

"You sure couldn't tell it, though." 

Subscribe to the FRONT

now only \$19.99

Save **44% off**
cover price!
Give a gift subscription!
Credit cards accepted.

Go to vbFRONT.com or call **540-389-9945**

Letters

Weddings

We were delighted to see the cover story on the business of weddings [FRONT / June 2013 edition] and the spotlight it put on our organization, New River Valley Bridals & Events. As a networking group completely devoted to the celebration of weddings and the professionals who provide those services throughout our region of Virginia, we appreciate how the FRONT managed to show what our vocations and passions are all about! The members of NRV Bridals & Events love what we do, but through all the happiness and enjoyment it is still very much a business and our livelihood, so it's nice to see the attention to that side of the story.

Marivic Gallimore
President & Founder
NRVBridalsAndEvents.org

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

““”

I would still like them if I could actually find any

— Page 33

““”

This will be the largest Touch a Truck festival in the United States

— Page 12

Reach Out!

There's no better audience than readers of the **FRONT**. Reach the region's most-engaged, progressive, informed buyers right here—each and every month and online 24/7.

Call or email us for more information.

ads@vbFRONT.com

540-389-9945
vbFRONT.com



Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our contributors 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 news@vbFRONT.com

Memoir of the book

Karen Swallow Prior's *Booked: Literature in the Soul of Me* (T.S. Poetry Press) is a perfect delight for those of you who love books, even considering them a spiritual place. Her tour through some of the great literature of the ages is engaging and worthy of the English professor that she is.

Karen teaches at Liberty University in Lynchburg, not a place one would expect to be a bastion of outstanding literary scholarship, but she's impressive, especially with *Booked*, which brings her faith to the fore in this bookish memoir, but doesn't bang you over the head with it. I would have been much happier if the type had been a good bit larger, but if that's the only negative in a book, then you have a success and Karen's is all of that.

She will teach a class on memoir at the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference at Hollins University January 24-25.

—Dan Smith

Summer action

The warm, sunny weather that comes each year awakens flowers, trees, birds and my interest in beach reads. Winter is perfect for dark, brooding, thought-provoking fiction, but summer? It's meant for books that won't make you scowl at the hunk who launched the volleyball that just landed in your lap, interrupting the drama that had you so enthralled. So, I found Randy Wayne White's most recent, *Night Moves* (Putnam, 2013). I mean, really, a guy named Randy Wayne probably isn't going to mess with my social

consciousness, so I felt sure this was a two beer, sunny day kind of read. I was right.

White's protagonist, Doc Ford, his unlikely buddy, Tomlinson, and sea plane pilot, Dan have embarked on the improbable mission to find five WWII Navy planes that disappeared while on a training mission in 1945. The blurb had me at "buried secrets", but White stirs the pot and adds an oddball drug dealer, an international assassin, a cheating wife, a lost dog and other various and sundry colorful characters.

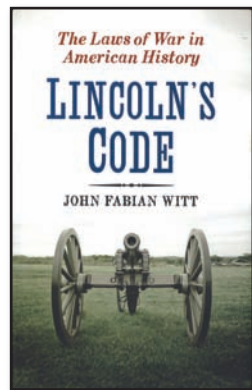
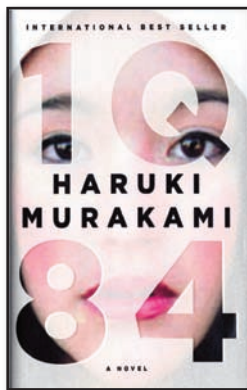
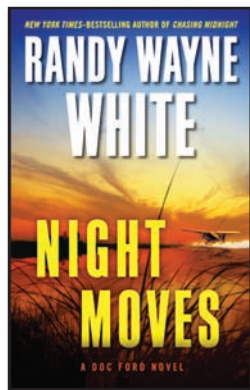
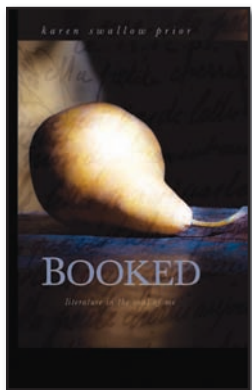
If all that doesn't scream "beach read", consider that these characters and their mysterious agendas and goings on live in one of my personal favorite domestic locales... Sanibel Island, Florida. I could literally envision the views White describes. He lives in the area and does a wonderful job of promoting Florida tourism, something he may live to regret.

White's most recent reminded me a bit of Carl Hiaasen's books, except most of White's characters have more education... and teeth. As with any good beach read, fun, mayhem, mystery and revelations of a funny or sad but not too life changing variety keep the reader turning the pages. My only issue with this book was that White either assumed I had read the previous nineteen(!) Doc Ford books as some history was only vaguely described, or he assumed I would want to read the previous Doc Ford books to find out how Doc and Tomlinson ever got to this point... this guy's a beach-readable genius!

—Cathy Cooper

Alter Egofantastical

Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* (Vintage International; 2013) is a long read. I wasn't sure the tome would pass the airport screening, and it ruined my track record of finishing a book specifically selected for my trip's duration (a four day conference in this case, with not enough breaks, apparently). True, the characters navigate two worlds, but there are only three principle subjects, and the plotlines are simultaneous. Never being one of those contemporary critics who insist today's reader needs shorter content, I have to say some discretion in editing would have been a good idea in



this case. Part of the repetitiveness could be attributed to the Japanese/English translation, but I kept unearthing examples where our author seemed to be on a mission to prove he was accurate and consistent. That, he was. But I really don't need a continuous description of how ugly Ushikawa is with every passage in every part of the book every single time. *1Q84* is full of that.

Despite the structural overkill, *1Q84* is still a captivating story. In fact, Murakami spins such good scenes and mood that I would have been quite satisfied if he left the fantasy elements out altogether. The symbolism would have been all the more powerful had *1Q84* remained embedded in reality, or perhaps a tad of fantasy, but not overtly supernatural.

The title plays off Orwell's *1984*, and the story is true to form to that era, even though the literary and philosophical underpinnings are more Freudian than Orwellian. A little romance, a little action, and a lot of internal characterization deliver a highly descriptive narrative you really do want to finish. Throw in some socio-religious competing forces, numerous western artistic references in an eastern setting, on top of confusing twin alter egos (who aren't as different from their counterparts as you might think) and you have a colorful novel going in a direction of which you're just never quite sure.

—Tom Field

How To War

Would Abraham Lincoln condone water-boarding? Would he approve of drone air strikes? Before we chatise such hypothetical

speculation, saying it's hardly fair, since one of our greatest, most-cherished presidents doesn't live in our day and time, we can't deny two credentials. First, Lincoln presided over the deadliest war in U.S. history (more than 650,000 deaths; and some historians claim as many as 850,000 — in any case, more Americans died in the Civil War than all other U.S. wars combined). Second, Lincoln commissioned a distinctly American perspective on the "laws" of war; dealing with the very same issues we face today, though the techniques of warfare are different.

John Fabian Witt's *Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History* (Free Press; 2012), is a fascinating account of how a nation deals with the conduct of war, even within our own borders. Whether Witt waves the red, white, and blue when he says, "No nation in the history of the world has made the law governing the conduct of armies in war more central to its founding self-image than the United States," will be a determination you'll have to make for yourself. But little doubt remains after reading *Code* that we have a nation here that at least perfers to present a little honor as we slaughter others or have our own slaughtered by others.

War is hell. Writing rules to make it less hellish is admirable, albeit sickening at the same time. Nevertheless, there's no better time to read about this than during the age of terror.

—Tom Field

(The reviewers: Dan Smith, former editor of FRONT is working on his novel. Cathy Cooper is an executive assistant and project manager for Berryfield. Tom Field is FRONT publisher and creative director.)



Green Addition >

Private elementary **Community School** in the Hollins area of Roanoke County held its groundbreaking on June 10 in celebration of construction of a campus addition employing green technology. General contractor S.C. Rossi & Co is slated to complete the \$275,000 project by the 2013-14 school year.



Hurdle Hopping >

Held at the Salem Civic Center each year, **The Roanoke Valley Horse Show** has been estimated to contribute \$13 million in economic impact to the Valley. Above, a jumper competes in the 2013 event, which has been billed as "the longest running professional sporting event in the Roanoke Valley and one of the top horse shows in the nation."



Dan Smith

Welcoming Bridges >

A groundbreaking ceremony was held for **The Bridges** on May 24 for the new 22-acre adaptive reuse and multi-use development project along Riverside in extended downtown Roanoke. Among the stakeholders present were (left to Right) **Curtis Mills** (Carilion); **Bern Ewert** and **Bill Rakes** (Roanoke River Associates); **Burrell Saunders** (Lyll Design Architects); Mayor **David Bowers** (Roanoke); and contractor **Jason Vickers-Smith** (WVS).



Sandy Murray

Big Day >

City of Roanoke and Greene Memorial United Methodist Church teamed to bring **One Big Day of Serving** to Roanoke for the first time in May. Over one hundred and fifty youths, from all over Virginia, came to work for a day in Roanoke's West End neighborhood. Projects included painting houses, clearing debris and landscaping.

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Abraham

is the owner of The Threshold Center, a shell center in Christiansburg and co-owner (with wife Jane) of publisher Pocahontas Press. He has written several books featuring southwestern Virginia and West Virginia.

[bikemike@nrvnwired.net]

Tom Field

is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and 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]

Wayne Firebaugh

is a fee-only Registered Investment Advisor who provides financial advice and investment management to individuals, corporate retirement plans, and institutions. His office is in downtown Roanoke.

[wayne@waynefirebaugh.com]

Rachael Garrity is the owner of Penworthy LLC, a New River Valley-based publications services and consulting firm.

[penworthyllc.gmail.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]

Liv Kiser is a senior at Cave Spring High School, who will attend Emory & Henry College in the fall to major in mass media. She is serving as a photographic intern for FRONT. Liv has her own photo business, Photography by Liv (www.livtophoto.com).

[livtophoto@gmail.com]

Granger MacFarlane

is president of Eastern Motor Inns and served as Virginia senator from 1984 to 1991. He has been active with numerous boards and commissions in transportation, commerce and public service.

[jgmac@emotorinns.com]

Michael Miller has worked with intellectual properties and technology innovation. 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]

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]

Whitney Puckett

is a high school English teacher with Roanoke County Schools. A mother to two of the funniest, sweetest children that ever lived and color guard for her school's marching band, she also enjoys cooking, blogging, and blogging about cooking.

[whitnempuckett@gmail.com]

Samantha Steidle

is owner of the Business Lounge in Roanoke. She has an MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and has worked in TV advertising, marketing, education and small business counseling.

[samanthasteidle@gmail.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]

Angie Tabor is a graduate of Hollins University. She is a former staff writer for the Salem Times-Register and has won two awards from the Virginia Press Association.

[atabor@hollins.edu]

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 Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets.

[nvaassen@berryfield.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]

Subscribe to the FRONT now only **\$19.99**
Go to **vbFRONT.com** or call **540-389-9945**

Unemployment is down in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. Employment is up. Home sales are up and the average home price is holding steady. It certainly looks like the recovery is taking root in the region.

the Blacksburg MSA dropped by a slightly stronger 67.2 percent.

Unemployment/Employment

Unemployment rates in the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas have dropped below six percent. The rate for the combined region is down almost nine percent from April 2012 - close to the pace at which Virginia's rate has dropped (5.5 percent to 5.0 percent).



	Apr. 2012	Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013
Blacksburg	5.8%	5.6%	5.2%
Roanoke	5.8%	5.4%	5.3%
Combined	5.8%	5.4%	5.3%

Fewer people unemployed means more people **employed** in the region in April than in the previous month and the same month a year ago.

Apr. 2012	Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013
226,625	228,440	229,260

Initial unemployment claims for the region fell by 65.6 percent during Week 19 of 2013 (May 3-May 9) from the same week last year, a slightly sharper drop than Virginia's 63.0 percent drop. The Roanoke MSA's initial claims fell by 64.8 percent, while

INITIAL UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Week 19 2012	Week 19 2013
346	119

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Real Estate

Home prices in the region were up in April from March, but down 3.1 percent from a year ago. But more interesting is the rise in **home sales** locally. From April to April, the number of residential units sold rose from 290 to 375 – a jump of 29.3 percent – the most sold since August 2012. (Nationally, home sales rose 9.7 percent over the year.) The local average home price is 27.9 percent lower than the national average price of \$242,600.



Apr. 2012	Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013
\$180,457	\$169,155	\$174,902

Apr. 2012	Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013
290	301	375

Sources: Roanoke Valley Association of REALTORS & National Association of REALTORS

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

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



Angie Tabor

Marlow Ferguson takes a break on the Star City Playhouse stage that he is currently reconstructing for a new show.

Star City Playhouse shines again >

Executive Summary:

Teaching the art of theatre to aspiring actors and crew members is only part of the mission.

By Angie Tabor

Marlow Ferguson and Karon Sue Semones Ferguson know a thing or two about theater... and a little bit more. For 24 years, since they married, they've been a partnership invested in theatrical arts. In 1994, they started their first theater, in an 1851 renovated church in Elizabeth, NJ, 11 miles outside Manhattan. The theater ran successfully for 10 years. But after Sept. 11, 2001 and being so close to the World Trade Center collapse the Ferguson's caught homesickness and moved back to Roanoke.

They may have left the theater in New Jersey but theater never left them. What did the couple do once they returned to Roanoke? Open a community theater, of course.

Karon Sue, Star City Playhouse writer-in-residence and set/costume designer, earned two B.A. degrees: theater with a concentration in playwriting/dramatic writing; and English with a concentration in creative writing from Hollins University. She then went on to earn a M.F.A in playwriting at Columbia University and finished her credits at Brooklyn College in 1995. Marlow, Star City Playhouse director, attended Penn State, traveled the country as an Equity actor for 35 years, directed theater, wrote for the BBC and has worked with many well-known people.

The couple renovated a warehouse on Williamson Road that seated 72 people. They brought with them props and other items from the Today Show studio, The Muppet Show set and other production sets.


In 2004, the curtain went up and the Star City Playhouse was official. After several years, the theater

temporarily shut down but reopened at The Metropolitan Community Church of the Blue Ridge on the corner of Jamison and 8th Street. The Ferguson's are satisfied with their move.

Karon Sue took the move as a good omen since their beloved Elizabeth City theater was in church. Now the church social hall, which can seat about 72 people, contains a stage, lots of props and a dedicated resident company of talented actors.

The Star City Playhouse sells their adult tickets for \$12 a person. Students and senior citizens discount is \$8. Marlow and Karon give 30% of their ticket sales to the church. The rest of the earnings get invested back into the Star City Playhouse. Actors and other play production crew are not paid but get plenty of theater training and the Ferguson's love to see new actors audition.

The last show of the current season will end at the end of June. Then the theater won't open again until the fall season. For Marlow and Karon closing down for the summer is bitter sweet. While they love to immerse themselves in the arts, the temporary break is appreciated.

"We created this theater as a labor of love to pass on what we've learned with those who may not have time or effort to go to New York and study," she said, "We help the actors to develop a varied resume' and to develop craft while sharing stories with the community." 



Marlow Ferguson and Karon Sue Semones Ferguson stand before many of their talented actors who have and continue to perform at Star City Theater.

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Schang

Jennifer Schang has been promoted to vice president of Dominion Risk Advisors.

Linda Long Barnett has been promoted to assistant vice president by BB&T Scott & Stringfellow.



Harris



Bradley



Jenkins

Brad Harris has joined Valley Bank as senior vice president. **Jerry Bradley** has been promoted to senior vice president of finance.



Kalafut



Williams



Williams



McGhee

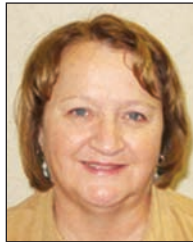
Brent Jenkins has been promoted to assistant vice president and downtown branch manager. **Desiree Kalafut** has joined the bank as assistant branch manager, Salem Branch. Also: **Allan Miller** has joined the bank as senior vice president and business banking officer; **Mary Williams** has joined as assistant vice president, mortgage office manager and closing coordinator; **Martin B. Williams**, assistant vice



Smith



Saunders



Ferguson



Crosswhite

president/commercial credit underwriter; and **Ashley E. McGhee** as assistant vice president/controller. Recently promoted to Bank Officer are: **Connie Smith**, Retail Administration Specialist; **Linda Saunders**, Small Business Banking Assistant and **Bonnie Ferguson**, Real Estate Finance Assistant. Promoted to Branch Manager at the Salem Branch is **Shannan Crosswhite**.

Sonya Cox (Brookside branch), **Chad King** (Salem branch) and **Jennifer White** (accounting department) have been announced as vice presidents by Member One Federal Credit Union.

Shenandoah Life announced the promotion of **Andrew Viperman** to vice president and controller. The firm also promoted five executives to the position of second vice president. They are: **Bill Board**, information systems and services; **David Killian**, corporate actuary; **Marci Chrisley**, tax and treasury services; **Pam Ferguson**, legal services; and **Steve Hilbish**, investments.



Glass



Stinnett

SunTrust Bank has named **Dexter C. Glass, Jr.**, as a Business Banking Relationship Manager in the Commercial Division and **John Stinnett** also as a Business Banking Relationship Manager in the Commercial Division

**LEGAL
FRONT**

G. Michael Pace, Jr., former Managing Partner of the Virginia law firm of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore, LLP, will become General Counsel with Roanoke College on July 1. Pace will continue to practice law at Gentry Locke as Of Counsel to the firm, concentrating on commercial real estate matters. In addition to serving as General Counsel to Roanoke College, he will continue as an Adjunct Professor at the college, and as President and CEO of The Center for Teaching the Rule of Law, which has offices on the college's Salem, Va. campus.

Woods Rogers PLC has announced the addition of **Nathan Evans** to its Charlottesville office, bringing significant intellectual property (IP) experience to the firm.

Michael P. Drzal, a

shareholder based in the national law firm LeClair Ryan's Blacksburg and Roanoke offices, has been named a recipient of the 2013 Ruby Award presented by the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC). The award was presented at the Council's annual TechNite Awards Banquet on Thursday, May 16 at the Hotel Roanoke.

**WELLNESS
FRONT**

Dr. Anne C. Hutchins has been promoted to chief of staff at the Salem VA Medical Center. She was interim chief of staff.

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.

**TECH/INDSTRY
FRONT****Rigby**

Ellie Rigby has been hired as Project Manager at Building Specialists general contractors of Roanoke.

**DEVELOPMENT
FRONT**

Ann Blair Miller, director of project management for the Roanoke Regional Partnership has been

elected 2013 president of the Virginia Economic Developers Association.

**RETAIL/SERVICE
FRONT****Hanighen**

George Sherman has joined Advance Auto Parts as president. **John Hanighen** has been appointed vice president of commercial marketing at Advance Auto Parts. **Charles Tyson**, previously a senior

Subscribe to the FRONT

now only \$19.99

Save **44% off**
cover price!
Give a gift subscription!
Credit cards accepted.

Go to vbFRONT.com or call **540-389-9945**

Career FRONT

vice president has been promoted to executive vice president, merchandising, marketing and supply chain. **Jim Durkin** has assumed the new role of senior vice president, commercial and **Tammy Finley** has been promoted to senior vice president, human resources. The company also announced the promotion of **Jon Dehne** to Senior Vice President, Market Availability, Inventory Management and Merchandise Operations. Advance Auto Parts, Inc. is a leading retailer of automotive aftermarket parts, accessories, batteries and maintenance items.

R. Frank Fox, Jr. has joined Nancy's Candy Co. as plant manager of its headquarters facility in Meadows of Dan, VA.

SENIOR FRONT

Richfield Retirement Community has

announced three new positions to lead its state-of-the-art Wellness Center. **Rob Goralewicz Ph.D.**, a personal trainer and adjunct professor of psychology, was named program manager for the Wellness Center. Joining him are physical therapist **Jon Royall Ph.D.**, senior director of rehab & wellness services, and **Pat Martin**, a 10-year Richfield employee who is taking on a new role as wellness & transition coordinator.



Wilkins

Janice Wilkins, RN, has been named director of nursing at Richfield Retirement Community. Wilkins will oversee nursing care at Richfield Recovery & Care Center and the award-winning Rehab Center.

EDUCATION FRONT

Dr. Michael Erskine has been named interim director of Virginia Tech's Marion DuPont Scott Equine Medical Center.

Jake Schrum has been named president of Emory & Henry College, effective August 1.

X.J. Meng has been named a University Distinguished Professor by the board of visitors of the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech. Meng is a professor of molecular virology at the school.

William W. Walton has been named the director of business operations and fiscal affairs for the Graduate School at Virginia Tech. **Sanjay Raman**, professor of electrical and computer engineering in the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech, has been named university's associate

vice president for the National Capital Region. **Luke F. Lester** named head of Bradley Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Virginia Tech



Miller

Mary Miller, founder and president of Interactive Design and Development, of Blacksburg, Va., is the Virginia Tech College of Engineering Distinguished Alumna for 2013.

OTHER FRONTS

C. Denise Hayes has been appointed CEO of the Roanoke Valley Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. **Mary Bivens** has been appointed to the board of directors

Bank brilliantly.

StellarOne

BANK

www.StellarOne.com | 888.785.5271

MEMBER FDIC



Bivens

of the organization.

Holly Peters has joined the staff of Children's Trust of the Roanoke Valley as a supervisor for the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program. **Nancy Fralin** joined the organization as coordinator. **Nancy Creedon** has been named Special Events

Coordinator. Promoted to director are:

Christina Rouse, Children's Advocacy Center; **Judi Jacobsen**, CASA; **Erica East**, prevention programs.

WSLS-10 announced today that **John Carlin** will be returning as a lead news anchor for the station. He will join Karen McNew on the anchor desk for the 5, 5:30 & 6 p.m. newscasts weekdays. He will co-anchor the 11 p.m. newscast with Lindsay Ward during certain months of the year. Carlin will officially re-join the station

on Monday, July 8.

Robert Smythers has been named president of Partnership for Philanthropic Planning of the Blue Ridge.

Neathawk Dubuque & Packett (ND&P) announced an expansion with nine new associates, including two in Roanoke: **Tom Smigielski**, Account Supervisor and **Caitlin Mitchell**, Creative Coordinator.

Compiled by Tom Field and Cathy Cooper



Smigielski



Mitchell

So much more.

vbFRONT.com

- > Virginia Tech President Steger Resigns
- > Lorton Retires from Carilion; Halliwill New CFO
- > Dual Winners in VTK Tech Transfer Challenge
- > Advance Auto Shuffles, Eliminates Executive Chairs
- > Interactive Achievement Gets Cash Infusion
- > Ground Broken for West End Center Project
- > Startup Business Workshop in Roanoke March 29
- > Red Sun Farms Bringing Jobs to Pulaski
- > Locking Down the Cell in Roanoke
- > Virginia Tech Climbing the Rankings Ladder

morefront.blogspot.com

So many FRONTreaders just can't get enough in our monthly magazine. "Give us more!" they say. Well, we say, "OK." Read more stories and latebreaking updates on our moreFRONT blog.

- > Life-Guard 12 To Get New Home in Lexington
 - > Alleghany Gets 55 New Manufacturing Jobs
 - > Richfield Cuts a Ribbon on Rehab Center
 - > Roanoke's Luna Sells Secure Computing Group
 - > Norfolk Southern Cuts 140 Roanoke Jobs
 - > South Peak Plans New Hilton Garden Inn
 - > A Broadband Step Forward for Roanoke Valley
 - > Carilion Rolls Out (Stair) Wellness Campaign
 - > New Dentists Office Features Green Technology
 - > Girl Scouts Head New CEO of RVSPCA
- and much more (of course; hence, the name)**



South Peak development ramps up

Peak at South Peak

South Peak, a 62-acre Roanoke County development at U.S. 220 and Virginia 419 has completed its first condo building and is preparing the site for a Hilton Garden Inn, a five-story building with 117 rooms, indoor pool, restaurant and lounge. Plans also include the construction of a second condo building (of five), the first spec house for The Estate (23 single family homes), and eventual restaurant/retail merchants.

Blacksburg wants 1 gig

TechPad, the business incubator in Blacksburg, has launched a project

to establish a 1-gigabit connection to the internet. That bandwidth is typically available only in major cities and about 3 percent of the U.S. population. Funding for the project includes support from companies such as Modea, pledges from Montgomery County Economic Development, and a crowdfunding campaign solicited from the public. Free Wi-Fi in downtown Blacksburg is also part of the plan.

Alexander's Table Manners

Alexander's restaurant in downtown Roanoke has been named to OpenTable Diners' Choice 2013 list of "Top 100

Restaurants for Service in the United States." The award is based on reviews submitted by customers dining at more than 15,000 restaurants.

Stroll and Shoot

Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission has launched the first annual Roanoke Valley Greenways Photo Contest. The Commission is looking for images captured along the greenway corridors and trails comprising the Roanoke Valley Greenway system within the cities of Roanoke and Salem, Roanoke County, and the Town of Vinton. Images may include greenways users and activities,

wildlife, plant life, natural landscapes, cultural landscapes, weather, architecture/structures, etc. The Photo Contest period runs through September 15, 2013. Prizes range from credit recognition to \$200. Details and instructions are available at www.greenways.org.

High Five for ND&P

Advertising and public relations firm Neathawk Dubuque & Packet won five awards (two Capital and three Commonwealth designations for outstanding communications) at the Virginia Public Relations Awards, a competition sponsored by the Public Relations Society of

America.

Hip-Snip Grant

Mountain View Humane has received a \$2,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the New River. The funding for the low cost clinic will be used to help subsidize the cost of spaying and neutering the animals of seniors living on a fixed income, animals owned by low income families, and free-roaming cats in Pulaski County.

First in 15

First Bank & Trust Company was ranked in the top 15th percentile of community banks in 2012 by risk management firm Seifried & Brew. The recognition is based on a composite ranking of exemplary performance in balancing risk and reward.

Anstey Hodge at the Park

Roanoke ad agency Anstey Hodge was selected by the City of Roanoke to produce creative materials for Parks & Arts, a series of performing and visual arts events, held at seven Roanoke-area parks from June through September.

Marathon Money

The Roanoke Regional Partnership and Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission reported \$476,370 in economic impact from the 2013 Blue Ridge Marathon in April. The post-race survey determined the race

created \$295,678 in direct new sales activity, plus an additional \$180,691 in indirect spending, for a 26.3 percent increase over the 2012 results.

Affordable House

Christiansburg's Community Housing Partners (CHP) ranked in the nation's top 50 affordable housing owners by Affordable Housing Finance magazine.

Bridge for Sale?

Rep. Bob Goodlatte has requested and the National Park Service has agreed to conduct a review to determine if Natural Bridge should be considered for inclusion in the National Park system. Park Service spokesman Mike Litterst did not say when the review would begin or how long the process would take. Roanoke-based Woltz & Associates has been retained to market and sell Virginia's historic landmark Natural Bridge, including the 215-foot high bridge, the 150-room hotel, the Caverns, and 1,600 acres. The popular public travel and tourism destination is privately owned.

Bridge the Gap

More than \$14 million in federal funding will be awarded to regional greenway projects, principally to finish a 21-mile stretch of the Roanoke River Greenway that will connect Green Hill Park in western Roanoke County to the

Have an announcement about your business?

Send announcements to **news@vbFRONT.com**
A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

Blue Ridge Parkway. The funding should expedite the project, with a projected completion in 2020; and is part of a six-year \$28 million allocation announced in February to the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Member One on Telly

Member One Federal Credit Union's marketing department won two bronze Telly Awards for commercials it developed on its Loan Solution for Life campaign. Production services were provided by B2C Enterprises, Abandon Films and Motion Adrenaline Studios.

RC Poll Up

The most recent poll by Roanoke College's Institute for Policy and Opinion Research (measuring consumer confidence) reported some rising optimism regarding personal finance and business conditions. More than 37 percent of those surveyed believe their finances will improve over the year, and more than 41 percent expect improving business conditions. The Virginia Index of Consumer

Expectations (VAICE), increased 15 percent since the first quarter to 78.9. The Virginia Index of Current Conditions (VAICC) rose 11 percent to 84.0. The Roanoke College Poll interviewed 603 Virginians about their financial situation, general business conditions now and in the future, their inclination for purchasing durable goods, and their thoughts on prices in the near-term.

Salem Jersey

Jersey Lily's restaurant is opening at Ridgewood Farms on Electric Road in Salem across from Lewis Gale Hospital. The new location will be a second; the first is on Orange Avenue, east Roanoke.

Gift Transported

Advance Auto Parts' Advance Cares Foundation has awarded the Virginia Museum of Transportation a \$100,000 gift to strengthen and expand its education program for students and visitors.

Bridges

As reported by FRONT [in April, May, and in "Fixing Up Riverside"



The Roanoke Times gets new owner

June story], ground has been broken on the multi-year, mixed-use development that includes new apartments, restaurants, offices and retail space on the site of a former mill and scrap yard – the largest development of its kind in Roanoke. The 22-acre project, named The Bridges, will expand downtown Roanoke along South Jefferson Street, complementing the Virginia Tech-Carilion Research Institute and Riverside office complex

and adjacent site under the Walnut Street bridge. The Bridges is planned to grow to 1 million square feet of residential, retail and office space that will connect downtown with the Roanoke River to create a destination that will include a public river walk, kayak launch and riverfront dining. Managed by WVS Companies, the project received \$10 million in financing from the City of Roanoke for public infrastructure improvement and continues the adaptive

reuse movement that is gaining momentum in the extended downtown area. Mill Mountain Park, River's Edge Sports Complex and the expanding greenway system are all within immediate proximity.

Times Achanging

Warren Buffet's BH Media Group (a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway) has acquired the Roanoke Times from Landmark Media Enterprises in

Norfolk for an undisclosed amount. BH Media has named Terry Jamerson (former publisher of Lynchburg's News & Advance) as the new publisher of Roanoke Times.

Perry's Production

Digital film producer David Perry has formed Dave Perry Cinematographer, LLC. The company will produce commercial and corporate video, independent film and web projects.

Blue Eagle Credit Union Soars Into the Community

The Blue Eagle Credit Union name and logo are new, but the \$115 million credit union isn't a new player in the local financial community. Blue Eagle Credit Union was formed in 1948 when a group of United States Postal Service (USPS) employees pooled their money to create Roanoke Postal Employees' Federal Credit Union. The recent downsizing of local USPS facilities and employee base prompted the credit union to expand its field of membership. Membership in the credit union is now open to residents of the greater Roanoke and Lynchburg areas, including Botetourt and Craig counties and Salem.

Lumos signs Ethernet network deal with HCA Virginia

Waynesboro-based Lumos Networks Corp. has signed a multi-year

Ethernet network contract with HCA Virginia in Richmond. The network will connect 10 HCA Virginia facilities, satellite offices and critical-care locations to its Richmond Data Center. Lumos Networks is a fiber-based service provider in the mid-Atlantic offering data, voice and IP services. Lumos serves Virginia, West Virginia and portions of Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, and Maryland over a 5,800 route-mile fiber network.

StellarOne to be Acquired by Union First Market

Richmond-based Union First Market Bankshares plans to acquire Charlottesville-based StellarOne in a \$445.1 million stock deal, the companies announced recently. Based on financials reported on March 31, 2013, the combined companies would have total assets of \$7.1 billion, deposits of \$5.8 billion and loans of \$5.2 billion. The

companies expect to close the deal on or around Jan. 1, subject to normal closing conditions, including regulatory and shareholder approvals.

Radio Handoff

Longtime WRIS AM 1410 Christian radio station owner Lloyd Gochenour has sold the station to employee / manager Russ Brown for a reported \$30,000. WRIS went on the air in February 1953 and is one of Roanoke's oldest stations.

Omni Hotels & Resorts to Buy The Homestead

Omni Hotels & Resorts announced recently that it has reached a definitive agreement to purchase and operate five resort properties, including The Homestead, from entities affiliated with KSL Capital Partners LLC, The Homestead's current owner. According to a company press release, the properties will be

reflagged under the Omni brand on July 1. The 250 year old Virginia resort, which is wrapping up a \$26 million renovation including a miniature golf course and a new Canyon Ranch Spa Club, will retain its storied name.

The Homestead had previously reported that it intended to hire as many as 100 new positions as a result of the renovation.

Grand Home Furnishings Acquisition

Grand Home Furnishings plans to acquire four John Eye/Big Sandy Furniture stores in West Virginia. Grand will acquire John Eye/Big Sandy stores in Beckley and Lewisburg, where Grand already has stores, and in Princeton and Summersville. Grand's Beckley store will move into the John Eye/Big Sandy Beckley location. The Lewisburg John Eye/Big Sandy store will close. Grand hopes to hire current John Eye/Big Sandy employees, adding

65 to 70 workers to Grand's payroll.

Place Your Bids

Ken Farmer Auctions and Appraisals is relocating its Radford business to Salem, effective September 1. A frequent appraiser on PBS's "Antiques Roadshow", Ken Farmer operated the Radford location for 30 years and continues to manage the firm's Charlottesville location. His son, Will Farmer, a Roanoke College graduate, will run the Salem location and anticipates holding up to three auctions per month. He also plans to hold a nationally advertised catalogue auction every 30 to 60 days. The business will be located in leased property on Midland Road near the intersection of Apperson Dr. and Rt. 419. The firm also has a location in Falls Church, VA.

Compiled by Tom Field and Cathy Cooper

Additional FRONT Notes posted online at moreFRONT.blogspot.com.

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

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

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

ADVERTISER INDEX

AAF / Roanoke	71	Hunting Hills Country Club	41
Ameriprise Financial	71	Life's Print Shop	4
Berryfield	71	MB Contractors	38
Biscuits & Bubbles	71	Member One	
Blue Ridge Copier	34	Federal Credit Union	3
Business Solutions	31	Mountain Shepherd	
Carilion	BC	Wilderness Survival School	49
Controllers, Etc.	71	Rife + Wood Architects	45
Duncan Audi	70	Roanoke Business Lounge	71
DWS Publicity	71	Spectrum	29
Davis H. Elliot Company	71	StellarOne	64
Goodwill Industries		Valley Bank	2
of the Valleys	30	Woods Rogers	33

The yellow light was invented in 1920.
Almost one hundred years later, 85% of drivers
have no idea what to do when they see one.

The highly intelligent Audi A6 is here.
Built to outsmart the road, including the 38 million drivers who couldn't pass the driver's exam today. And although the A6 can't remove the driving-challenged from the road, it can help you avoid them with features like Audi pre-sense plus.* This system helps prevent collisions and will take measures to protect you if a collision is unavoidable. And that's just a few of the 2,000 decisions the Audi A6 makes a second. We're on a mission to smarten up the roads, and engineering the Audi A6 is only our first step. Learn more at audiusa.com/A6.

The road is now an intelligent place.

Audi
Truth in Engineering 






Duncan Audi 2032 Peters Creek Rd, Roanoke, VA 540.562.0099
duncanaudi.com

*Audi pre-sense plus is an available driver aid on the A6 3.0T Premium Plus and Prestige models. "Audi," "A6," "Truth in Engineering," the Audi Singleframe grille design, and the four rings and Audi emblems are registered trademarks of AUDI AG. ©2012 Audi of America, Inc.

FRONT NETWORK



AMERICAN ADVERTISING FEDERATION
ROANOKE
2013-14 Membership Kickoff
Celebrating 55 Years of Service!
July 17 • 5:30pm • Penny Deux
(at The Patrick Henry, downtown Roanoke)
AAFRANOKE.ORG



Take charge of your financial future.
Our Advisors. Your Dreams. **MORE WITHIN REACH®**
Call me today at (540) 443.9143



Christine Smith
Financial Advisor

1901 S Main St Ste 4d
Blacksburg, VA 24060

540-443-9143

christine.a.smith@ampf.com

Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. Member FINRA



BERRYFIELD
marketing that moves

Tom Field President
Tel: 540.389.9945
Fax: 540.389.6366
Email: TField@BerryField.com

www.BerryField.com P.O. Box 1041; Salem, VA 24153



Biscuits & Bubbles
Grooming & Self Service Dogwash

Doggie Day Care
Retail Shop for Dog & Cat Supplies
109 West Main Street • Salem

biscuitsandbubbles.com
tjohnson3901@comcast.net **540-378-5200**

Increase Your Productivity
Reduce Your Stress
540-344-4538
susan@controllersetc.com
www.controllersetc.com



Controllers, Etc.
Susan M. Culbertson, CPA



DWS 
publicity

DWSPublicity
www.dwspublicity.com
donna@dwspublicity.com

DONNA WALLACE-SHELL
OWNER
P.O. Box 8084
ROANOKE VA 24014
(540) 330-3763



ELLIOT

Electrical Excellence
~ Since 1946 ~
www.davishelliot.com
(800) 755-6702

Davis H. Elliot Company, Inc.
Full Service Electrical Contractor



ROANOKE BUSINESS LOUNGE CO-WORKING Community

Entrepreneurial Work Space
Memberships start at \$200/month

Roanoke, Virginia 24011 • (540) 397-4377
www.RoanokeBusinessLounge.com

**Put your Business Card in
the FRONT for only \$144.90**

Email ads@vbFRONT.com or call 540-389-9945

P.O. Box 1041
Salem, VA 24153

We partner closely with patients to keep them healthy and out of the hospital. But when surgery becomes necessary, you can trust the region's most experienced orthopaedics team. Our highly trained surgeons, many specializing in the hand and upper extremities, are pioneering the latest techniques and technologies to help rebuild lives. Just ask Barbara Michael, who after having surgery to repair her thumb joint can now get back to her to-do list. Let us help you rebuild from an unexpected injury or ongoing health condition. **It's what we do every day.**

Barbara Michael
Moneta, Va.

Grip weakened by arthritis.

REBUILT BY CARILION.

Carilion Clinic Orthopaedics was named to *Becker's Hospital Review's* **Top 101** listing of "Outstanding Orthopaedic Programs" in the country.



CARILION CLINIC