

Meet our  
**SUPEREXEC**

Valley Business

# FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING  
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • Vol II: ISSUE 2 • NOVEMBER 09

**THE ABC  
OF SCHOOL  
DESIGN**

*Tiptoeing through  
Carvin's Cove*

**GOODWILL**  
*Hunting*

**LARGE  
ANIMALS!**

**Dumpster  
Diving**  
at the **Y**

**MR. FERRIS:**  
*Always Startin'  
Somethin'*

**FRONTlist 2009**  
BEST OF BUSINESS!

Victor Iannello,  
Synchrony

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

As our process of evolution at Valley Business FRONT continues, we continue to look at ways to serve you and to solidify our market position at the same time. We are in the process of making our online presence stronger as a major step in that process.

Right now, we have our entire magazine (actually, every issue) posted at [vbfront.com](http://vbfront.com) and there are links to our two most prominent blogs—updated with considerable frequency, often several times a day—[morefront.blogspot.com](http://morefront.blogspot.com) and [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com](http://fromtheeditr.blogspot.com). These blogs are developing loyal followings and are giving readers a dose of daily breaking news (morefront) and the unflinching opinions of our editor (fromtheeditr). We often are first in the market with breaking news, and those subscribing to the blogs get a little notice every time something new is posted. In the past few months, for example, we have given you—first—stories on the auction of the Patrick Henry Hotel, live reports from Tech Expo, local movie and play reviews, local press news (which wasn't reported elsewhere), new directors at the Taubman and DRI, Regional Chamber award winners (with photos), Cobham Sensor's move to Blacksburg, cancellation of a major merger of country clubs in Roanoke, Goodwill Industries' continued growing impact, NanoSonic's move to Giles and on and on. Many stories that may get one or two paragraph treatment elsewhere, appear on our blogs in full length with photos. There's an index of stories at each blog and you can see for yourself what's there. It covers a lot of ground and is fresh when you get it.

But there's more coming in the very near future with the FRONT online. And early next year, we have a surprise coming that we're pretty excited about. Stay tuned and keep watching.

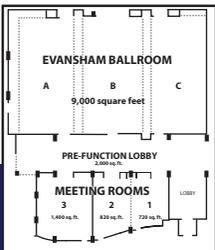
Tom Field

Dan Smith

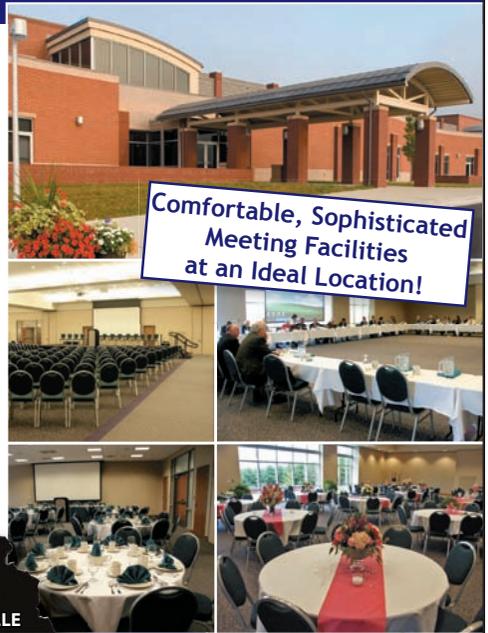
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} putting patients first.

## Valley Business FRONT

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# FRONTList 2009

BEST OF BUSINESS!

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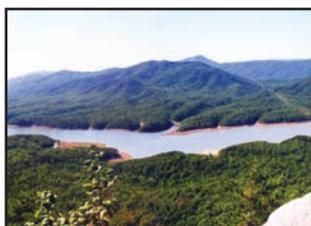
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## DESIGNING SCHOOLS

**vbFRONT.com**  
[morefront.blogspot.com](http://morefront.blogspot.com)

Cover photograph of Victor Iannello by  
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Jane Dalier



Gene Marrano



Linda Nardin



Wizzy Strom



Kathy Surace

## 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



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Rachael Garrity



Becky Hepler



Tim W. Jackson



Deborah Nason



Huong Nguyen



David Perry



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Patsy Stewart



Duffie Taylor



Nicholas Vaassen



Deborah Vaughan



Greg Vaughn



Alison Weaver

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 52.

## 2008 / 09 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion
- Laura Bradford** ClaireV
- Warner Dalhouse** retired banker, community activist
- Cory Donovan** NewVa Corridor Technology Council
- Nanci Hardwick** Schultz-Creehan
- Ed Hall** Hall Associates
- George Kegley** retired journalist, community activist
- Terri Jones** Access PR
- Cynthia Lawrence** Design Marketing
- Stuart Mease** Roanoke City
- Mary Miller** Interactive Design & Development
- Bill Rakes** Gentry, Locke, Rakes and Moore
- Court Rosen** Walnut Creek Development, Roanoke City Council
- Jay Turner** J.M. Turner Construction
- Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners
- John Williamson** RGC Resources



Joel S. Williams

“ I see things  
you won't see  
for 5, 10, 12  
years.

— Page 25

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.

# FRONTList 2009

## BEST OF BUSINESS!

Greg Vaughn Photography



**Victor Iannello** (FRONTcover model) may not be Clark Kent, but he took his own “S” company (Synchrony) to superhero status faster than a speeding bullet. That makes him our choice for FRONTList 2009 Executive of the Year.

## FrontLeaders >

### Executive Summary:

*A compilation of leading businesses and significant activities impacting our region.*

By Dan Smith  
and Tom Field

It's back. Our annual FRONTList / Best of Business. Loyal readers of the FRONT know we run FRONTLists in a variety of categories: restaurants, entrepreneurs, buildings, to name a few. But *this* list—at the end of the year—we like November even better than December—represents “the” list. It's our “best of” in all the areas that are most important to business. And it's the only list of its kind in our region. How did we come up with our FRONTLeaders? Well, it's not a readers' choice award system. (That's fine for some classifications—not this one. Seriously, which OB/GYN doctor would you say is the top? The one you *never* visited?) Our FRONTList / Best of Business was determined by listening. And observing. We talked to our editorial advisory board and other engaged business leaders. We watched the news happening around us—and reported on much of it. And then the Publisher and Editor met at a round table and discussed each category. Not a roundtable... a “round” table. We believe you will adamantly disagree with some, many, or all of our selections. But that's the point. You'll tell us where we could have done a better job. Until then, enjoy. Take it for what it's worth. We hope on the areas where you do agree—you'll find the FRONTList 2009 to be... super.

### Executive FRONTLeader

Synchrony CEO and founder **Victor Iannello's** biography is almost the classic in American entrepreneurship: he started his business in his basement in 1993, worked furiously for a decade and arrived with a new factory, backing from the big boys and a respect that is unquestioned in this region.

In a departure from our initial Executive FRONTLeader last year when we named a male (Ed Murphy of Carilion) and female (Marilyn Burrows of Cox) co-winners, we have settled on one top executive who will be selected annually

by FRONT editor and publisher working with our editorial board. We have set up criteria that do not discriminate by size or income and take into account leadership, community involvement, innovation, business stability and the kind of vision that makes a good executive a great executive.

Iannello was picked from a group of finalists that included (in order of finish):

- **Mary Miller** of IDD in Blacksburg, who was cited for her leadership in an industry that is at the cutting edge of communications technology, her status as one of the leading

mentors in the region and her attendance record shattering presidency of the NewVa Corridor Technology Council.

- **Pat Matthews**, president of Mailtrust/Rackspace Email & Apps, is also a Technology Council leader and it was his guidance that led Mailtrust to become part of Rackspace Hosting, making the company a public entity.

- **John Williamson** of RGC Resources (who is the FRONTLeader as Best Board Chairman) has almost unparalleled respect for his community involvement and his leadership of a stable utility.

- **Susan Still** of HomeTown Bank, though not as involved in the community as some of her FRONTList competitors, has become a respected leader in the banking community in a little over a year at the top of a bank that has grown significantly in a down economy. She is also a rarity in Virginia banking: a woman president.

lannello, who holds a PhD in nuclear engineering from MIT, saw Synchrony surge forward in 2009, hiring a veteran group of additional sales people, as the company's Fusion magnetic bearings was named one of the 100 most technologically significant products of the year. Synchrony develops and supplies magnetic bearings, high speed generators and motors, and power conversion systems for industrial, defense, and aerospace industries. It has raised \$15 million in private capital in recent years, funding considerable expansion. lannello is also chairman and

co-founder of Sunapsys Inc., a Vinton systems integration company that designs and supplies controls and information systems for automated manufacturers and municipal water systems.

His community service is impressive: boards of Carilion, Roanoke Business Council, NCTC, Roanoke Regional Economic Development Partnership, the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge, the Fifth Planning District Regional Alliance, the Greater Roanoke Foundation and the Business Leadership Fund.

## Company FRONTLeader

**Carilion Clinic**, a sometimes controversial innovator, is the FRONT's top business for 2009. It is a healthcare organization that operates eight not-for-profit hospitals in the region, has available 600 physicians in an integrated organization, 12,038 employees, and features an educational facility and clinical research. It is one of the truly significant economic engines of the region.

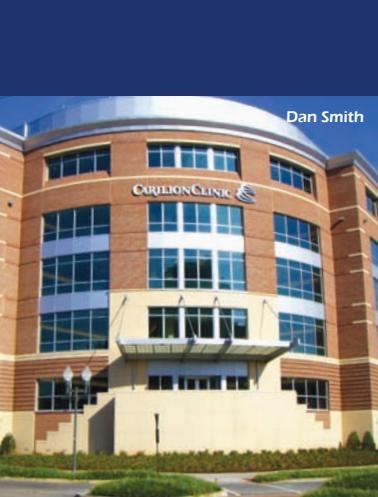
Carilion has been affiliated with the University of Virginia for 35 years, working with third year medical students and is developing a medical school with Virginia Tech, which will open in 2010. The Medical Education Department has 10 residency programs.

Carilion has been a lightning rod for criticism in recent years, mostly involving its new clinic model, which has seen it buying practices and employing physicians in recent

## Who Made The List >

*(FRONTLeaders only—read the story for the complete list)*

Blackberry  
 Better Business Bureau of Western Virginia's Torch Awards  
 Carilion Clinic  
 Central Virginia Community College  
 Creekmore Law Firm  
 Dabney Lancaster Community College  
 Downtown Roanoke Inc.  
 Fralin & Waldron  
 Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center  
 Hunting Hills Country Club  
 Victor Iannello  
 Inn at Virginia Tech  
 Jefferson Center  
 Performance Series  
 Legal Case of Peanut Corporation of America  
 Member One Federal Credit Union  
 New River Community College  
 North Cross School  
 Pulaski County  
 Pulaski County's nanotechnology park  
 Roanoke and New River Regional Partnerships  
 Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Small Business Awards  
 Salem Civic Center  
 Schultz-Creehan  
 Small Business Development Centers  
 Social Media Movement  
 Tech Board of Visitors  
 Via College of Osteopathic Medicine  
 Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties  
 Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business  
 Virginia Western Community College  
 John Williamson



Dan Smith

Carilion Clinic



Dan Smith

John Williamson



Dan Smith

Carilion building



Dan Smith

SBDC

years as it seeks to refine its services. Some accuse Carilion of trying to create a monopoly in the region, which its executives emphatically deny.

The organization was selected as this year's FRONTLeader because of its willingness to take risks, its strong leadership (CEO Ed Murphy was an Executive of the Year for FRONT last year), its participation in the whole community on a large scale and its ongoing leadership in medicine.

• Runners-up: in order, are **Rackspace/Mailtrust** in Blacksburg; **Advance Auto** in Roanoke; **ADMMicro** in Roanoke; and **Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties** in Blacksburg.

## Board FRONTLeader

**John Williamson** is at the center of the conversation in the region because of his involvement and leadership on nearly 30 important boards of directors, both corporate and non-profit.

Current chairmanships are: RGC Resources, Roanoke Gas Company, TAP (Total Action Against Poverty), Greater Roanoke Valley Economic Development Foundation. He formerly chaired Bluefield Gas Company, Diversified Energy Company, Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, Roanoke Valley Business Council, Virginia Western Community College Education Foundation, Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership, Arts Council of the Blue Ridge, The Business Leadership Fund, The Smaller

Member Council of the American Gas Association.

• Runners-up, in order, are **Warner Dalhouse**, a retired banker; **Nancy Agee**, Carilion chief operating officer; **Cynthia Lawrence**, president Design Marketing/Performance Link; and **Steve Musselwhite**, real estate developer and owner of Musselwhite Insurance in Vinton.

## Board of Directors FRONTLeader

The **Virginia Tech Board of Visitors** has navigated a minefield of bad national publicity (killings on campus), dramatic budget cuts by the General Assembly and mounting expenses by being resourceful, insightful and creative. Tech remains a highly-ranked national university that provides a next-generation workforce for a variety of industries, as well as being an engine for the region's economic machine.

• Runners-up: **Optical Cable**, Roanoke; **Valley Bank**, Roanoke; **Liberty University**, Lynchburg; **Center in the Square**, Roanoke.

## FRONTDeal of the Year

**Carilion Clinic's** acquisition of land around its medical school. The med school is expected to be quite a boost economically to the Roanoke Valley.

• Runners-up: **Rackspace/Mailtrust merger**, going public (which actually started more than a year ago, but these things take time); developer **Ed Walker's** newest downtown

development, the Cotton Mill; **F&W's** Daleville Town Center development.

## Business Assistance FRONTLeader

The region's **Small Business Development Centers** offer a breadth and depth of help to emerging and established small businesses whose value is almost impossible to estimate, except to say that is nearly priceless in some cases.

- Runner-up: **Service Corps of Retired Executives.**

## Business-Friendly FRONTLeader

**Pulaski County** is finding consistent success in re-defining itself as an economic entity and is using its head in that re-definition.

## Toughest Legal Case FRONTLeaders

Bankruptcy and criminal defense of Lynchburg-based **Peanut Corporation of America** (owned by Stewart Parnell) by Andrew Goldstein of Magee, Foster, Goldstein & Sayers in Roanoke is at the top of the list. Parnell's company is also under federal investigation and is being defended by Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore lawyers Bill Gust and David Paxton. This is a national case where the publicity has been all bad.

- Runners-up: Several other cases rank high: Magee, Foster, Goldstein & Sayers' Chip Magee's defense of **Luna Innovations** in a breach of contract lawsuit with

Hansen Medical, resulting in a \$36 million fine—since reconsidered at a much lower level—against Luna is prominent. **The Bank of Floyd's** defense against a whistleblower accusation (the first nationally under a new law) was successfully defended by Gentry Locke's Doug Densmore. Bill Poff, Tom Wynn and Josh Long of Woods Rogers worked an extremely complex and difficult case involving **Couvrette Building Systems** in Salem. In that one, Couvrette's intellectual property was stolen and misused by a former employee, causing extraordinary hardship for the company (including the layoff of 120 workers).

## FRONTLeading Economic Development Idea

The **Pulaski County's nanotechnology park** has enormous promise as this technology becomes increasingly important.

- Runner-up: **Salem's** emphasis on sports events as economic development and the stressing of outdoors activities available in the Roanoke and Franklin County areas by their economic development agencies.

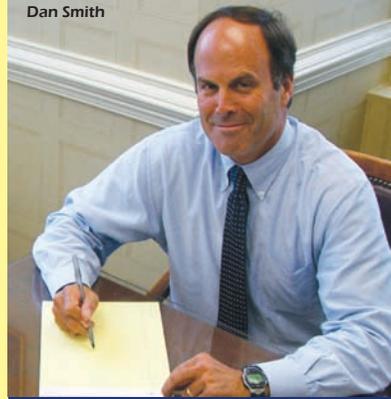
## FRONTLeading New Business Device

The **Blackberry** stands far ahead of the iPhone because you can consistently get a signal, even though the iPhone has some outstanding features. Without a connection, they're useless. iPhone, which relies on AT&T, is problematic even in the most heavily populated areas of the region.



Pulaski County courthouse

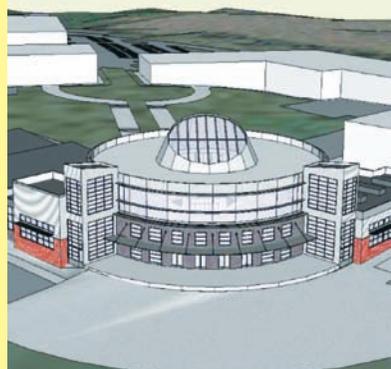
Dan Smith



Andrew Goldstein



Bill Gust and David Paxton



Pulaski's nano-tech park



Tom Field

North Cross School



Pamplin Professor Alan Abrahams in class

Wizzy Strom



Virginia Western Community College

Wizzy Strom



Hunting Hills Country Club

## FRONTLeading New Business Trend

We thought so much of the **social media movement** that our second cover story at FRONT was about anticipating social media and trying to explain it. It's here. It's everywhere, in fact, and we've just begun a monthly column about it. If you're not using it yet, you will be and you'd better hurry because your competitors are already there.

## Business-Friendly Education FRONTLeaders

**(Best Place To Educate Your Kids)**

**North Cross School**, even by the standards of elite private schools, is impressive. It educates its students, sends nearly all of them to college, where they graduate and many return home to help lead the community. Its success is simply astonishing.

- Runners-up: **Community High School** has a good record with its arts curriculum students; **Patrick Henry High** in Roanoke was recently named one of the best public schools in the nation (it was in the top three in Virginia).

**(Best College/University)**

**Pamplin College of Business** at Virginia Tech. Quite simply an outstanding college within a fine university. The executive MBA is respected and affordable.

- Runners-up: This region has a wealth of solid, accomplished liberal arts colleges and universities whose degrees

are immensely useful in a down economy (**Hollins University, Roanoke College, Sweet Briar, Washington & Lee** lead the way). **Liberty University** is moving up with several of its programs, especially law.

**(Best Place for Workforce Development)**

The region's four community colleges (**Dabney Lancaster, Central Virginia, Virginia Western** and **New River Community Colleges**) are at the center of a significant movement to educate a large group of our workforce in specific disciplines, some designed by the businesses who'll hire the graduates. An idea whose time is here to stay.

- Runner-up: The **Western Virginia Workforce Development Board** is doing notable work, referring, training and matching applicants to employers in the region.

## Business Entertainment FRONTLeaders

**(Best Place to Take a Client/Prospect)**

When **Hunting Hills Country Club** and **Roanoke Country Club** were considering merging, this was a no-brainer. It's a little more difficult now that the merger is off, but **Hunting Hills**, a business-oriented club, wins by a nose.

- Runner-up: **Blacksburg Country Club** is also a player, so to speak.

**(Best Arts Organization for Business to Support)**

The **Jefferson Center Performance Series** brings in top-notch, nationally-known

Dan Smith

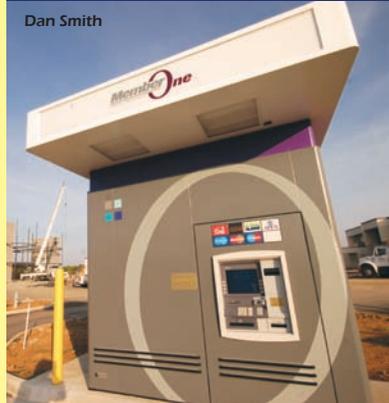


Hotel Roanoke &amp; Conference Center



Inn at Virginia Tech

Dan Smith



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talent to a sparkling venue and most often at prices families can afford.

## Non-Profit FRONTLeader

Roanoke and New River Regional Partnerships are at the center of the region's economic development efforts.

- Runners-up: The **Rescue Mission**, **TAP** and **Goodwill Industries** run like serious businesses and take care of some of the neediest of us. Many businesses could take lessons in how to operate from these sophisticated powerhouses.

## Best Meeting Facility FRONTLeaders

The **Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center** and the **Inn at Virginia Tech** have the same owners and you can tell it by the service and the success.

- Runner-up: The **Jefferson Center's Fitzpatrick Hall** stays booked for good reason.

## Business Event FRONTLeader

The **Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Small Business Awards** dinner is an all-star gala. Most chambers have awards dinners, but the big regional chamber is the star of this show.

- Runner-up: **NCTC's TechNite Awards** is always a good show and with Mary Miller as president, it set an attendance record this past year.

## Business Award FRONTLeader

The **Better Business Bureau of Western Virginia's Torch Awards** honor business ethics. Can't be much more relevant than that.

## Industry FRONTLeaders

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

## Financial FRONTLeader

**Member One Federal Credit Union** has been solidly profitable and stable in the middle of a banking crisis.

- Runners-up: The region's community banks have been especially dependable while all about them was failing. Notables include **ValleyBank** and **HomeTown Bank** in Roanoke as well as some of the banks surrounding the city (**NBB**, **Bank of Floyd**, **Bank of Botetourt**, **Bank of Fincastle**, etc.). The region has a history of good community banking and the populace has responded.

## Legal FRONTLeader

Blacksburg's **Creekmore Law Firm's** Small Business Plan is creative. Flat rate monthly legal help for entrepreneurs, start-ups, small enterprises.

## Wellness FRONTLeader

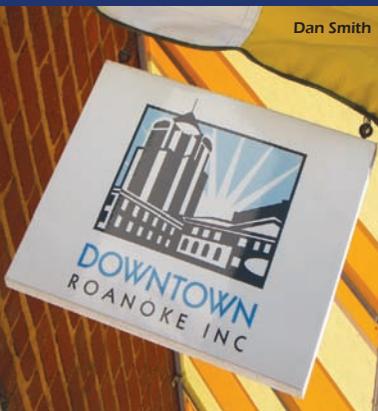
The **Via College of Osteopathic Medicine** in Blacksburg is educating a new breed of

Dan Smith



Daleville Town Center

Dan Smith



Downtown Roanoke Inc.

Wizzy Strom



Salem Civic Center

Wizzy Strom



Downtown Music Revival

healthcare worker, one who trusts the holistic approach.

### Tech / Industry FRONTLeader

Schultz-Creehan in Blacksburg is five-year-old product development company with expertise in materials science and industrial engineering, serving companies in aerospace defense, medical device and industrial disciplines.

- Runners-up: **Virginia Power Transformer**, Blacksburg; **Cardinal Glass**, Vinton; **Synchrony**, Roanoke; **Meridium**, Roanoke; **Handshake2.0**, Blacksburg; **Old Virginia Brick**, Salem; **Boxley Materials**, Roanoke, Lynchburg, NRV.

### Development FRONTLeader

Daleville Town Center by Fralin & Waldron is away from the trend of central development in the cities, but the way this one is put together has promise.

- Runners-up: **Ed Walker's** continued development in central Roanoke is notable, as is **John Garland's** (Spectrum Design) emphasis on rehabbing important buildings in Rocky Mount and Roanoke.

### Retail FRONTLeader

Downtown Roanoke Inc. continues to work at making the center of the city a viable, lively place and it is being successful.

### Recreation FRONTLeader

The Salem Civic Center and its director Carey Harveycutter set the standard, as they have for

years. Harveycutter's hustle and vision have created solid facilities that are used by the entire community.

### Education FRONTLeader

Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties was founded to protect all those patents issued to Tech professors. It is much more than that now and its success is as economic as it is educational.

### Culture FRONTLeader

The revived music scenes in Roanoke and Blacksburg, led by clubs like **Blue5 Blues Club**, the **Water Heater** and oddball little inventions like the **Kirk Ave. Music Hall** are dressing up downtown for play.

### Our Own Categories

#### Readers' Choice FRONTCover

"Headhunter" starring recruiter Alec Siegel / July 2009, got the most votes.

- Also strong was "**Builder**" John Garland / Sept. 2009, and "**Food Fight**" chef Mark Crim / Jan. 2009.

#### Readers' Choice FRONTCover Story

"Niche Itch" by Alison Weaver, Feb. 2009 (additional contributions from Doug Cumming and Keith Ferrell).

#### Reader's Choice FRONTContributor (freelance)

David Perry wins. Two FRONT co-owners also placed (inelligible) as well as Donna Dilley, etiquette. 

DEFINITELY

## Not in FRONT and Other Awards

### Worst for Business

The easy argument is that Roanoke City, which has the highest rate of poverty in the region and is the destination of many rural poor (because they are welcome), is the most difficult to govern. That is true. But the current city council is without solid leadership and its indecisiveness has become a real problem, exacerbating what is already a challenge.

### “Forget Bid-Rigging and Poll Stuffing, Let’s Get Those Scores UP” award

William Fleming principal Susan Willis and the SOL scandal.

### “Police Artistic Appreciation” award

Roanoke City Police officer Reinhold Lucas’ review of public art on the market.

### The Great Park That Wasn’t award

Developer (?) Larry Vander Maten’s unending promises about Explore Park.

### Retail Dud award

Ukrop’s.

### The Best Airport That Never Was award

Roanoke’s airport is good, but airline ticket rates are so high that people drive to Greensboro, Dulles, and Raleigh for fair fare. Especially harmful for business.

### The Disconnect award

Nice greenways, but all separated from each other by localities’ inability to coordinate and cooperate. (And what’s up with the Tinker Creek spur in Vinton?)

### The Still Smarting award

Slate Hill development. Still ugly after all these years. Plant some trees, dammit!

### The Kick in the Smiley Face award

Blacksburg’s Fist & Main said no to Wal-Mart. US-220 South / Clearbrook’s still kicking.

### Let’s Stick to Our Day Job award

Berglund’s William Farrell, as a TV spokesman. He’s a good dealership executive, but take some direction Wm. Tie your hands. Talk a little slower. Your look’s good and you have cred. Use it.

### Wish We Had That Here award

Passenger train service.

Representation in the General Assembly.

National-level performing acts.

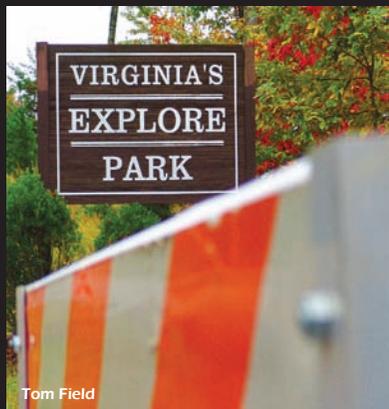
Professional theatre (we lost that one and hope to get it back soon).

Professional sports (other than baseball and roller derby).

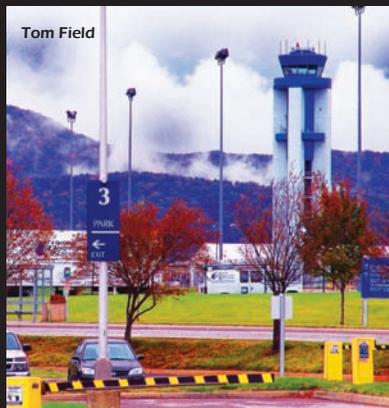
Manufacturing (more, much more). 



Dan Smith  
**Roanoke City Council: Huh?**



Tom Field  
**Explore Park: Can we come play?**



Tom Field  
**Roanoke Airport: Ticket\$\$\$\$**



**Berglund’s Farrell: chillax.**



## Dealing with bad behavior >

Joe Wilson, Serena Williams, Kanye West are public figures recently seen behaving badly. Everyday incidences of uncivil behavior seem more prevalent now than ever. While rudeness runs rampant, we need to act in a positive manner to confront uncivil encounters and situations that we may face.

Barbara Pachter, author of *The Power of Positive Confrontation*, suggests practicing the following six steps to keep behavior from spiraling out of control.

**Don't attack back:** Remember that someone else's bad behavior is no excuse for your own. Though it may feel good to say, "Well, what do you know, you idiot?" it's not going to build your credibility or accomplish anything.

**Disagree agreeably:** If you have difficulty with someone, talk to the person. You can evaluate an idea without attacking the person who is promoting it. Saying, "I disagree, and here's why."

**Use courteous language:** It's hard to be nasty to people who are nice to you. Keep "please," "thank you" and "excuse me" in your vocabulary. Do not ignore others; greet them when you see them. Help others when you can.

**Avoid inflammatory words:** Using harsh words like "stupid," "ignorant," "fool," only inflame a situation and will be less likely lead to a positive resolution. Cursing at people is just mean.

**Acknowledge your mistakes:** Saying to someone, "I apologize. You're right. I shouldn't have said that or done that," goes a long way in maintaining good relationships.

**Stop complaining:** If you don't like something, instead of complaining about it, do something. Get involved. Join organizations. Politely object.

If all else fails, you can simply walk away from the situation. 

## Business Etiquette

By Donna Dilley

### Executive Summary:

*Just because the person you're talking to is a jerk doesn't mean you need to be one, too.*

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## Party time: Yes or no? >

**Dear Getting a Grip:** Every year my company holds a holiday office party. Every year I debate whether to go. This year, you decide. Yes or no?

**Dear Holiday Spirit:** Facebook has nothing on the holiday office party for creating angst over the crossing of the line between personal and professional.

One way to decide is to perform a cost-benefit analysis, even in a spreadsheet if need be. Each option requires yes/no weighing.

First the costs: What are the personal costs of going? Perhaps time away from your family? What are the personal costs of not going? Will you miss social time spent with co-workers who are friends?

What are the professional costs of going? Might you tend to drink too much and say things that will plague you at work later? What are the professional costs of not going? Maybe resentment from the rah-rah supervisor who organized the event?

Now to the benefits. What are the personal benefits of going ...the personal benefits of not going?

**Getting a Grip:** What do you want to do? Given you have X-number of years on the planet, how do you want to spend the hours during which the office party is scheduled? If you want to go to the party, go. If you don't, don't. Sometimes deciding what to do can be that simple. 



## Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

**Executive Summary:**  
Need to start "Getting a Grip" on a personal problem at work?  
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# Business Dress

## 'Black tie is your friend ...' >

Where is the classic white dinner jacket lately? A friend recently asked if and when it is proper to wear the white dinner jacket, so I investigated.

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**  
*If you're confused about when to wear that tux or the dandy new white dinner jacket, here is the clue.*

According to Wayne Spencer at Amrhein's Brides and Formal, the white dinner jacket is less popular with men renting formalwear. "Today most men go with a classic one-button black tuxedo with a notched collar. It is worn with a black cummerbund and tie of the same fabric. The look is very put-together—not overdressed or underdressed. Very James Bond." His clients ask for a white dinner jacket only when indicated on the invitation.

Interestingly, Spencer noted that when men need a dressy suit but want to look casual, they choose a cream-colored khaki suit in a lightweight fabric, a microfiber shirt and a necktie. This ensemble conforms to the casual look of the last decade. At one time, it was appropriate to dress your best. Now it's



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important to look as if you aren't trying too hard! Bizarre.

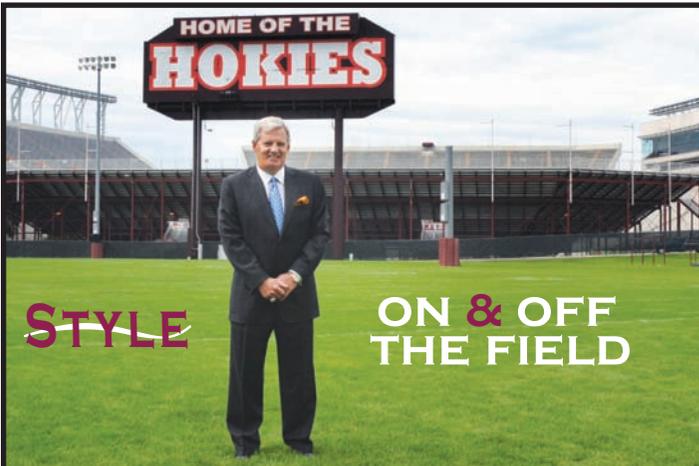
Whatever the trends, the white dinner jacket has an interesting history and purpose.

This iconic jacket was designed as a casual alternative to traditional black tie. It met the needs of wealthy vacationers on cruises and at country club dances in the summer. Light in weight and color, it was perfect for hot climates and seldom needed north of the Mason-Dixon. This elegant garment was the essence of "casual chic" and the authentic warm weather attire for black-tie events.

Many men dread special occasions because they don't know what to wear. A few pointers to remember:

- Wear black tie attire after six and to formal events. Americans break this rule often for afternoon weddings with evening receptions.
- White dinner jackets are worn in hot weather or tropical regions, and at festive and leisure events, such as on a cruise, to a dinner dance, summer wedding or awards banquet.
- Wear a dark business suit for invitations suggesting "business attire." If you lack black-tie attire, the dark suit can suffice for black tie preferred or black tie optional events.

Peter Marshall's wonderful Web site, [www.blacktieguide.com](http://www.blacktieguide.com), provides the history and reason for formal attire. Peter asserts, "Much of black tie's dress code is not about what you must wear but what you may wear. This choice is what lies behind black tie's genius. Although many men may not agree, as Men's Wardrobe so succinctly puts it: "Black tie is your friend, not your enemy." 



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## General Electric Company >

Compiled by Deborah Nason

### Overview:

General Electric Company (GE) is a diversified technology, media and financial services company. As of December 31, 2008, GE operated in five segments:

- Energy Infrastructure comprises energy, oil and gas, and water; headquarters are in Salem.
- GE Technology Infrastructure comprises health care, aviation, enterprise solutions and transportation.
- NBC Universal is a diversified media and entertainment company focused on the development, production and marketing of entertainment, news and information.
- Capital Finance offers a range of financial products and services worldwide and comprises commercial finance, GE Money, industry verticals and corporate treasury. Services include commercial loans, operating leases, fleet management, financial programs, home loans, credit cards, personal loans and other financial services. GE Capital has locations in Covington and Lynchburg.
- The Consumer and Industrial segment sells and services home appliances.

### Market Commentary

- General Electric topped the 2009 Forbes Global 2000, claiming the title of the world's largest company, based on its composite score for sales, profits, assets and market value. [ Source: Forbes.com ]
- General Electric Co. said [July 28] its GE Capital finance arm is on track to be profitable this year and won't need outside funding, but that its higher level of losses on loans gone bad will likely continue into 2010 ... GE Capital provides loans for everything from store brand credit cards to office buildings ... With unemployment rising, corporate profits falling, and markets like commercial real estate tumbling ... [t]he division, once GE's biggest profit driver, posted an 80 percent drop in profits in the second quarter [of 2009] alone. [ Source: abcnews.go.com ]
- GE Energy Infrastructure is a sprawling business involved in everything from renewable markets such as wind and solar power to next-generation electric grid equipment. [It] was the only GE operating unit to show an increase in revenue or earnings in the first six months of [2009], when operating profit rose 16 per cent... In a show of faith in GE's energy businesses, [CEO] Immelt in July 2008 made the division a stand-alone operating unit.... [ Source: ft.com ]

### Total Executive Compensation

Name	Title	Amount
Jeffrey R. Immelt	Chairman of the Board/CEO	\$14,096,603
Keith S. Sherin,	Vice Chairman/ CFO	\$13,982,589
Michael A. Neal	Vice Chairman	\$16,301,726
John G. Rice	Vice Chairman	\$18,811,815
Brackett B. Denniston	Senior Vice President,	\$12,257,605
David R. Nissen	Ex-Pres./CEO, GE Money	\$22,440,477
Robert C. Wright	Ex-Vice Chairman	\$17,136,124

### Board of Directors

Name	Primary Company	Age
Jeffrey Immelt	General Electric Co	53
Mike Neal	GE Capital	55
Stefano Bertamini	General Electric Co	44
Douglas Warner III	General Electric Co.	62
Ralph Larsen	Sustainable Perf. Group AG	70
Samuel Nunn	Internet Security Systems Inc.	70
Ann Fudge	WPP plc	58
Andrea Jung	Avon Products Inc.	50
Roger Penske	Penske Automotive Group	72
James Cash Jr.	General Catalyst Partners	61
Rochelle Lazarus	Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide	61
Alan Lafley	Gillette Co.	62
Robert Swieringa	S.C. Johnson School of Management	67
William Castell BA, FCA	Wellcome Trust	60
Robert Lane	John Deere Capital Corp.	59
Susan Hockfield	MIT	58
James Mulva	ConocoPhillips	62
W. Beattie	General Electric Co.	49

### Institutional Stock Ownership

There is significant interest in GE by institutional investors. The 51.05 percent of the shares outstanding that they control represents a greater percentage of ownership than at almost any other company in the Industrial Conglomerates industry.

[ Source: investing.businessweek.com ]

### Major Non-institutional Stockholders

Name	Shares held
Jeffrey R. Immelt	6,344,053
Michael A. Neal	3,738,734
David Nissen	1,908,129
John G. Rice	3,794,625
Keith S. Sherin	3,575,508
Robert C. Wright	4,638,408
Brackett B. Denniston	1,341,454

### Sources

[ finance.aol.com ] / [ GE.com ]  
 [ investing.businessweek.com ] / [ reuters.com ]  
 [ morningstar.com ] / [ finance.yahoo.com ]  
 [ GEPower.com ]

### Note

This article is meant for information purposes only and is not intended as an investment guide.

## Can you sustain another 50 percent drop? >

### Executive Summary:

*Suggestions for cautious optimism with preservation as a strategy.*

**By Joel S. Williams**

I find myself in an unusual position concerning the direction of the stock market. I am an eternal optimist when it comes to the long-term stock market. The reasons are simple: The stock market is not

a roulette game; it is a place where pieces of ownership in companies are traded. These companies make the goods and services we consume. The number of people in our domestic and global economies is growing daily. Thus there will be more consumption (demand) each future day, than in the past. As demand rises (shift in curve), prices rise. As prices rise, values of companies that produce the goods and services go up. End of story.

In my opinion, in the next 12 months the stock market could drop 50 percent. Of course thereafter, it will probably launch into its next long-term bull market. The tea leaves are not quite dry enough to forecast that far out. But, the question is not whether one is a long-term investor or not. The question is, can you emotionally



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and financially handle another 2008...even if it is only for 12 months? More discussion on the reasons for my opinion is needed, but basically the following issues concern me in order of priority:

- I believe jobs are not going to return to the US and global economies, as we know them. In my opinion, we will look back at the data and see that the number of full time jobs with benefits will be greatly reduced. Full time jobs will be replaced with outsourced services and part-time skilled, off-premise workers.
- As a result of benefits being reduced for average households, less discretionary income will be available for consumption, which represents 70 percent of our gross national product (GDP).
- The stock market will process this (drop) over the next 12 months then respond to a reorganization of the capital markets, lead by profitable companies that have re-conceptualized their business models. Consumer spending will likely not be 70 percent of GDP, going forward. Again, these are only my opinions.
- To support this thesis, study annual report cards on business schools; observe what happens to the dollar following classical bear rallies; and review stock market behavior when popularity of government program

changes is so negative, while a very polarized electorate exits at the same time.

The market over the past six months has exhibited a classic bear rally, in my opinion. The concern I have is that another drop could occur soon. Here are some suggestions for getting through the next 12 months:

- For any cash needed in the next 18 months, one should consider liquid investments such as money market or bank savings accounts. (Keep in mind this was written September 11, 2009.)
- Conservative Investors: One may want to consider very safe investments with an inflation protection such as TIPS (Treasury Inflation Protected Securities) for any public traded securities.
- Moderate Investors: One may want to consider moving a significant amount of publically traded securities into some index that would track the dollar.
- Aggressive Investors: One should consider moving publically traded assets to an inverse index of the market.

To be able to make these suggestions, compliance requires me to say that these are not recommendations and one should discuss these strategies with a qualified investment professional before implementing. 

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Christopher Rhodes: "I see things you won't see for 5, 10, 12 years."

Dan Smith

## The lawyer is a doctor (of chemistry) >

### Executive Summary:

*Christopher Rhodes has found a way to combine all that education—chemistry and law—into a practice that merges them.*

By Dan Smith

The elephant in just about every room Christopher Rhodes enters is that fat, happy

background, combining it with the law degree to put up a protective fence around inventors and innovators. He's part of the intellectual property practice, adding oomph with the clientele via his Dr. Rhodes designation, earned at the University of Virginia. The law degree is from Suffolk University in Boston, which specializes in people who want to add a law degree to an impressive resume and underway career.

John Hulak, CEO of Woods Rogers, says the firm has patent and intellectual property attorneys for both science and engineering



I saw my boss beating his head against the wall writing grants with less than a five percent chance of success. It didn't seem to me to be the path I wanted to take.

—Chris Rhodes

Ph.D. in front of his name. It's in chemistry. He's a lawyer.

(that done by Peter Rosden of the Charlottesville office).

The Roanoke native and Roanoke College chem graduate has just joined Woods Rogers, one of the largest law firms west of Richmond, in order to use that chemistry

Rhodes, who is 37, has most recently been with a Cambridge, Mass., intellectual property law firm and he has 10 years of

experience working with companies as varied as startups and multi-nationals.

Says Tom Bagby, Woods Rogers' president, "His background in science and technology is especially helpful in understanding the unique challenges of high-tech, entrepreneurial companies."

Rhodes' background includes patent prosecution and counseling in chemical, optical, physical, biochemical, pharmaceutical and biotechnical arenas. His interest is in a wide base of specialties: chemical and analytical instrumentation, magnetic resonance, mass spectrometry and therapeutics, clinical diagnostics, fuel cells, bio-separations, toxin detection, optical technologies, nanomaterials, medical devices, surgical techniques and solar cells.

All of this is his way of expanding his horizons. He had intended to go into

research, but "I saw my boss beating his head against the wall writing grants with less than a five percent chance of success. It didn't seem to me to be the path I wanted to take."

He's all over the place with the practice, advising, filing, protecting, litigating when necessary. The patent, he says, "is like the fence in your back yard: you want to cover as much of your ground as you can. We need to make the scope broad." He tends, he says, to work with corporations and some bio-tech startups at this stage, but just about anything scientific is game. He's even done some university work (MIT and Harvard, as examples).

As much as anything else, he says, the daily appeal is in seeing the future on an almost daily basis. "I see things you won't see for 5, 10, 12 years," he says, "and it's fascinating." 

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Dr. Terry Swecker (right) works with students on the farm.

## Large animal vets: Job security >

### Executive Summary:

*At Virginia Tech, they're turning out vets as fast as they can, but it's not fast enough to meet rising demand.*

### By Rachael Garrity

Job prospects may be bleak today, but there is at least one stark exception. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for large-animal veterinarians, sometimes referred to as food-animal veterinarians, is rising dramatically, as much as 35 percent from 2006 to 2016.

The 28 veterinary colleges in the U.S. graduate about 2,500 students each year, far short of the demand, in part because not enough of the graduates choose to work with large animals. In a resolution adopted early this year to direct the veterinary college at Virginia Tech to study the shortage, the Virginia legislature noted that since 1990, the number of large-animal vets in the U.S. has declined from 6,000 to fewer than 4,500, a situation it describes as a potential—and potent—threat to public health.

Talking with Dr. Terry Swecker, who was tapped to chair the committee doing the study, is more than a little like conversing with an American version of James Herriot, Britain's veterinarian-cum-author of *All Creatures Great and Small*. A professor of production management medicine and clinical nutrition, he was named last spring to the new position of associate head of the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences at the vet school, which is officially named The Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, and as such the only regional college of veterinary medicine in the country.

"As much as anything else, what we are dealing with is a lifestyle choice," Swecker insists. "It isn't salary." Indeed, a recent survey by the American Veterinary Medical Association, revealed that veterinary medical college graduates who deal with food animals exclusively have the highest average starting salaries.

"There are a number of social and economic factors at work," he explains. "First, it should come as no surprise that most of the students who choose to work with large animals have grown up in rural areas, while the majority of our student body comes from Northern Virginia—hardly a farming area. Add to that generational changes. Most of our students' parents had some family connection with a

farm, even if they didn't live on one. Not true today."

He also points to the similarities between the training of doctors to take care of animals and those treating humans. For some, specialization offers social and professional cachet. Vets dealing with food animals are generalists in the strongest sense of the word, depending on a daunting array of different skills. While they are highly valued by farmers and frequently form strong personal bonds with their clients, if social status is important, it's far more likely to come in clinics where the patients are named Fifi and Fearington.

Dr. Jennie Hodgson, Swecker's colleague at Virginia Tech, who is associate dean for professional programs, echoes these sentiments, adding that the increase in the number of women in vet schools is yet another factor, because fewer of the female students opt to work with large animals.

"There is the strong influence of lifestyle," she continues. "In metropolitan areas there are emergency clinics, which means those in group practices can limit their involvement

to office hours. They find that much more appealing."

Hodgson notes that the university is already addressing the problem, by not only increasing the class sizes within the next few years, but also including in the curriculum additional courses for students interested in both food animals and government/corporate work to assure that there will be enough talent to address potential health and safety problems through large enterprise, the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Like our counterparts who work in human medicine," Swecker concludes, "we want to spend our time keeping our patients healthy, instead of treating them when they're sick."

With mad cow disease a continuing concern, and swine flu causing cautionary behavior changes in schools and hospitals, it's clear that if Swecker, Hodgson and their compatriots succeed, they will also have a direct effect on the health of all of the small, medium and large animals who walk on two legs. 



Dr. Jennie Hodgson (left) works with students.



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Terry Kahn with one of her buddies.

David Perry

## A niche for alternative pain therapy >

### Executive Summary:

*Terry Kahn has found that this neuromuscular therapy works wonders for her patients and for her.*

### By David Perry

Life is short, Terry Kahn learned one day.

Terry is the owner of Roanoke Neuromuscular Therapy and a certified massage therapist. In 1991, she was working as a software developer in Washington, D.C., when her boss died suddenly at 41.

"I took the summer off to do all the things I'd never done because I always put work first," she says. "At the end of the summer I went

to massage school just because it felt like where I needed to be."

Terry did massage for two years in Virginia Beach before returning to the computer world and eventually ending up with Atlantic Mutual in Roanoke. ("I wanted a new start and Roanoke came to me in a dream one night," she says.)

But the "body work" bug never quite left her system, so she opened Quiet Touch on Brambleton Avenue in Roanoke County.

"About two years ago I realized my niche really was pain relief" via neuromuscular therapy. "It was a niche that no one else had claimed, so from a business point of view it made sense." She changed the company name to Roanoke Neuromuscular Therapy.

Across the industry, neuromuscular therapy is only beginning to appear on the radar screens of referring physicians, but it's



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growing. Typically, patients visit Terry complaining of neck, back, hip, or shoulder pain, or they may have other problems like fibromyalgia. The average patient is a middle-aged woman, although Terry says she has a good mix of both genders.

Neuromuscular therapy may not be well understood in the Roanoke Valley yet, but "When people hear there is an alternative pain therapy that might help them, they'll try anything," she says.

Terry first takes a history from the patient in order to form a theory of what's causing the pain. She then treats the problem area, first with general message, and then on to specific muscles. She sometimes uses just one finger to pinpoint the problem area.

"If the problem is a trigger point, that's the size of a grain of rice," she says.

Followup may include stretching, hot baths, and just paying attention to how one is using one's body: "Awareness is the first step so they can change what they're doing so they won't develop the problem again."

An hour-long session costs \$70, and usually between three and 10 weekly sessions are required. Still, she says "Eight or 10 sessions of this costs way less than six weeks of physical therapy or six months of chiropractic."

## In Brief

- Name:** Terry Kahn  
**Company:** Roanoke Neuromuscular Therapy  
**Location:** Roanoke County  
**Type of business:** Pain-eliminating massage therapy  
**History:** A native of Williamston, N.C. (along with Hall of Fame baseball pitcher Gaylord Perry), Terry earned a computer science and math degree from East Carolina University. But a life-changing event convinced her to get to work on her bucket list. Today, she and her husband live in southwest Roanoke County where she enjoys hiking, kayaking, the long-lost art of porch sitting, and singing in the choir at Greene Memorial United Methodist Church.

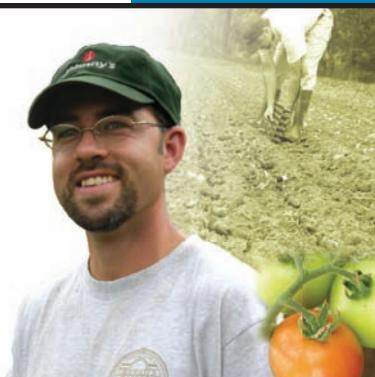
Terry has faith that neuromuscular therapy is on the cusp of expanding in the Roanoke Valley. In fact, she's offering classes locally so that other massage therapists can learn the craft as well.

"Once people realize what neuromuscular therapy can do for them, there is going to be so much demand, I won't be able to help everyone myself." 

# Growing since 1975



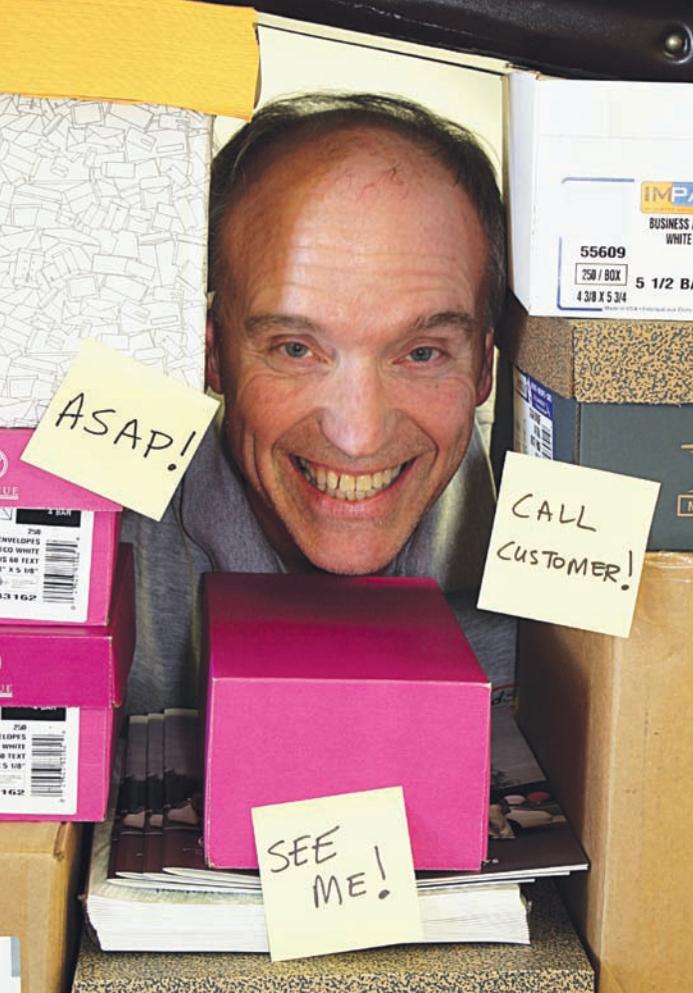
Brett Nichols, local organic farmer



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**Bill Gilmer:** “I thought I wanted to be the great American writer.”

David Perry

“ ”

I biked into town and refinished antiques to make enough money to pedal over to the grocery store and buy my big bag of rice that would last for a week.

—Bill Gilmer

of Fame Award, sponsored by the National Association for Printing Leadership (NAPL). He accepted it this past spring.

But the air that Bill now breathes wasn't always so rarified. In the mid-1980s, he was teaching English in Richmond and writing short stories on the side.

## Starving artist no more >

“I thought I wanted to be the great American writer,” he says. “I wanted to write full-time and not late at night when I should be grading papers.”

### Executive Summary:

*Mark Twain and Bill Gilmer have at least one thing in common, a love of printing. One of them was also a successful writer.*

Gilmer asked for a leave of absence and began looking for a place to hunker down and write. He found his retreat—an empty farmhouse in Wytheville that college friends Andy and Nan Kegley had bought and hoped to restore.

### By David Perry

For Bill Gilmer, Wordsprint is a journey that began in an abandoned farmhouse in Wytheville. It's brought him to the pinnacle of his profession, and it's not over yet.

It was perfect—no electricity, no running water, and no heat. Andy (son of legendary Roanoke business journalist George Kegley) had the power turned on and dug a well while Bill settled in with his space heater and an IBM Selectric typewriter.

Wordsprint, a New River Valley-based printer with offices in Christiansburg and Wytheville, is the only printer in Virginia to ever win the William K. Marrinan Management Plus Hall

“I proceeded to do just what I dreamed of, which was write all day,” Bill says. “I biked into town and refinished antiques to make enough money to pedal over to the grocery store and buy my big bag of rice that would last for a week.

"I did that for two years, at which point I realized that my desire to write greatly exceeded my skill level, and I was not good enough and certainly not lucky enough to get published."

Bill was stuck and needed a plan. He put his 110 words per minute typing speed, honed on the IBM, to good use doing typing jobs, but he realized he needed to take the next step. He hitchhiked to Connecticut and got his dad to co-sign a \$5,000 loan for a Macintosh computer and page layout software. He paid it off a year later. "I did it, but I had to live on rice," he jokes today.

He was in business, and the company was called Wordsmith. Bill was soon approached by a retired businessman who partnered with him to start a printing company in town. They changed the name to Wordsprint and bought their first offset press.

"At midnight that night I was up to my elbows in ink," says Bill. "I had to teach myself how to run an offset press."

A merger with the other printer in Wytheville soon followed, and in 2007, Wordsprint bought Christiansburg Printing from Michael Abraham.

Today, Wordsprint has 26 employees in two locations and specializes in "design, print and mail" marketing campaigns. Its clients include nonprofits, college admissions offices, realtors and banks, as well as some high profile clients like

## In Brief

**Name:** Bill Gilmer

**Age:** 54

**Company:** Wordsprint

**Location:** Christiansburg and Wytheville

**Type of business:** Printing

**History:** Born in Richmond, Gilmer earned a bachelor's degree in religion from Sewanee (Tennessee) and a master's in English from UVA. Married with two children (his first coming at age 45), he plays tennis in a men's league at Virginia Tech when he's not managing one of the region's most successful small printers.

Congressman Rick Boucher and Virginia Tech.

But Wordsprint started as a one-man shop and retains that emphasis on personal relationships today.

"If it's purely a matter of specs, it's going to be a price-driven," says Bill. "There are so many online sites that have the big 40-inch press and put your job and six others on the same sheet of paper.

"That's not our market. We'd rather be involved where our insights can be helpful." 

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The attorneys and staff of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore congratulate Mike Pace, our Managing Partner, for joining previous Gentry Locke recipients Monica Monday and Bill Rakes in being named “Leaders in the Law” by *Virginia Lawyers Weekly*.

Mike’s leadership was evidenced through several significant achievements over the past 12 months: serving as 2008 President of The Virginia Bar Association, developing and pioneering the third-year externship program with Washington and Lee’s School of Law, and forming and participating in the “VBA Rule of Law Project,” in which attorneys work with middle school students across Virginia to develop their appreciation for the foundation of American democracy.

Mike’s remarkable year certainly warrants such an award. But, more important to our Firm is the example Mike sets for us each and every day. Mike’s thoughtful and personal stewardship inspires Gentry Locke employees to maintain high ideals toward service to the community, diligence in the work we perform to benefit our clients, and makes everyone here feel appreciated.

We are pleased to see our friend and leader recognized. Mike is exceptional, in word and in deed.

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## Working social media into the plan >

### Executive Summary:

*Social media as part of your marketing can be smart, but it still requires a time commitment.*

### By Patsy Stewart

Social media, quite simply, is a means to generate conversations. In short: stop thinking "sales campaign" and start thinking "conversation." Use these conversations to generate relationships; the relationships will eventually lead to greater exposure, partnerships and sales.

Nielsen reports that Facebook is up to 250 million members, 50 million of whom joined in the past three months. There are more than 300,000 businesses on Facebook, one-third of them small businesses. Twitter has about 40 million users who spent nearly 300 million minutes on the site in April, 3,712 percent more than in April 2008. Twitter users spend 66 percent more dollars on the Internet than non-Twitter users, says market researcher ComScore.

If your company isn't using social media in your marketing strategy, start now. You can bet your competitors are learning quickly. A Social Media strategy that integrates it into your traditional marketing strategy has proved successful for our clients. Those clients develop or refine their brands and create a well thought strategy that reflects their goals.

The first—and most important—step is to evaluate social media expectations for your business. You can gain valuable exposure and increase your customers and clients. You can use social media to drive traffic to your Web site, build brand awareness and begin to establish yourself as a thought leader.

It's also a great way to educate your customers and clients about your products and services; receive feedback; evaluate responses and provide immediate service. Social media is a productive way to build your database of

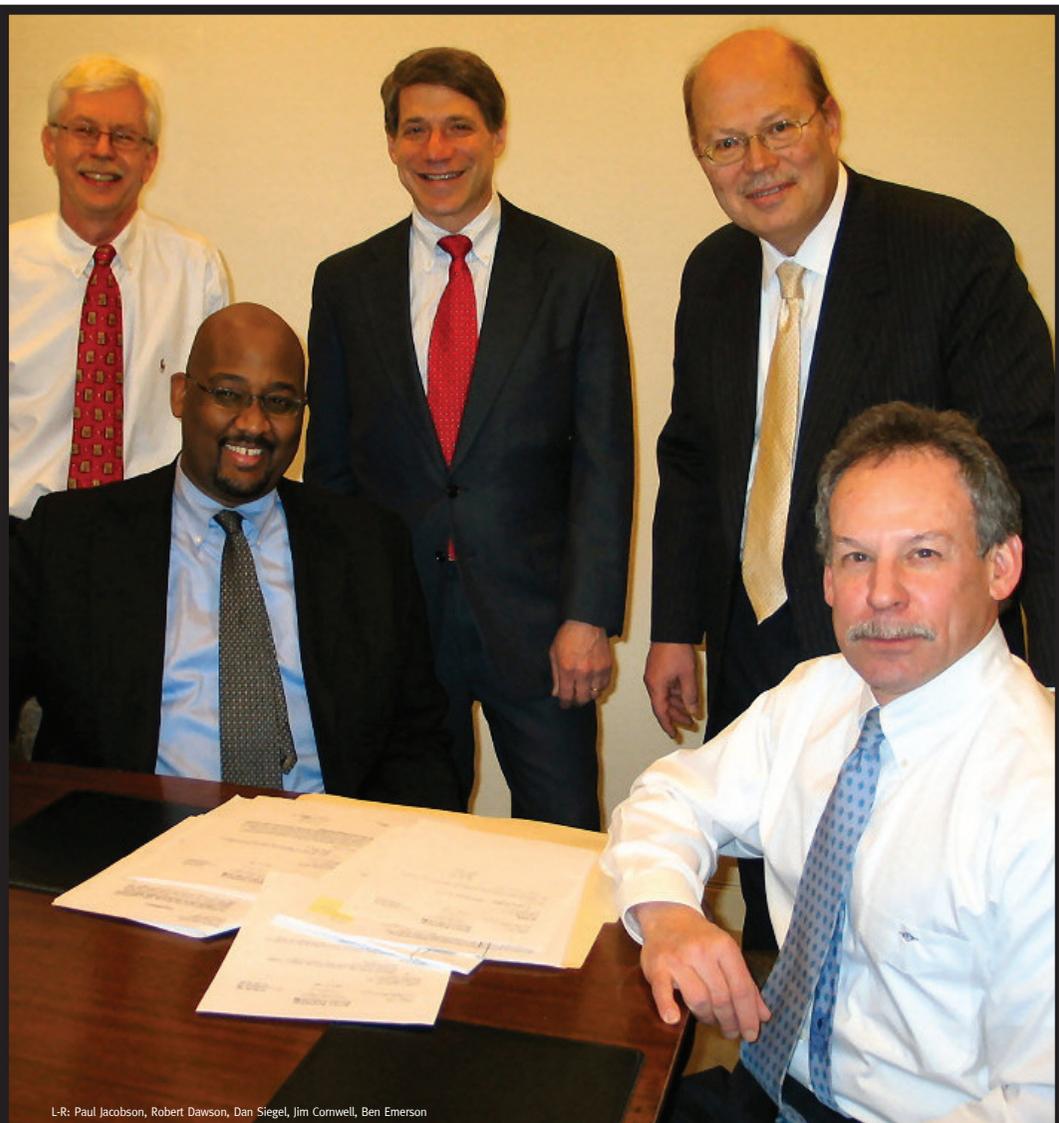
leads, a means to reach new channels of clients and gain valuable input for product development and market research. Now that you know what your expectations are, there are a few questions to evaluate if social media is a good fit for your business:

1. Who are your customers, are they online and do they engage in forums, blogs and social networking sites?
2. What kind of traffic does your Web Site get? Where does it come from?
3. Do your competitors use social media?
4. How will you integrate social media into your marketing efforts?
5. What resources are you willing to invest?
6. How will you incorporate social media training, interaction and tracking into your staff's daily jobs?
7. What is your willingness to experiment, take risks, and adjust your plans?
8. Are you ready to handle feedback?
9. How are you going to measure your results?
10. Are you willing to be transparent and give up complete control of your message?

Now you can create a powerful digital footprint. There are hundreds of applications, but it's impossible to use them all effectively.

For businesses, I recommend Blogging, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Youtube. Although social media is cost-effective it requires an investment of time. I suggest you allocate several hours a day to begin with. Determine which applications you will use for which activities.

A great exercise is to see your results is to Google your company name before you begin and print out and date the results. Repeat this exercise every two months and compare the results. 



L-R: Paul Jacobson, Robert Dawson, Dan Siegel, Jim Cornwell, Ben Emerson

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**Bill and Cathy Fandel:** “Right now, people just don’t want to spend money unless they absolutely have to.”

Dan Smith

## Hi-tech to low-tech at 55 >

### Executive Summary:

*Bill Fandel faced a dilemma that is becoming increasingly common: move or change jobs. He spun almost all the way around to become a carpenter.*

By Duffie Taylor

After putting in 33 years in the telecommunications industry, Ferrum resident Bill Fandel found himself out of a job. Like many others in his field, he fell victim to the dot-com implosion in 2002, when communications testing equipment manufacturer Acterna—his employer—filed for bankruptcy.

Having moved to the region several years prior, Fandel realized he would have to relocate if he wanted to remain within his profession.

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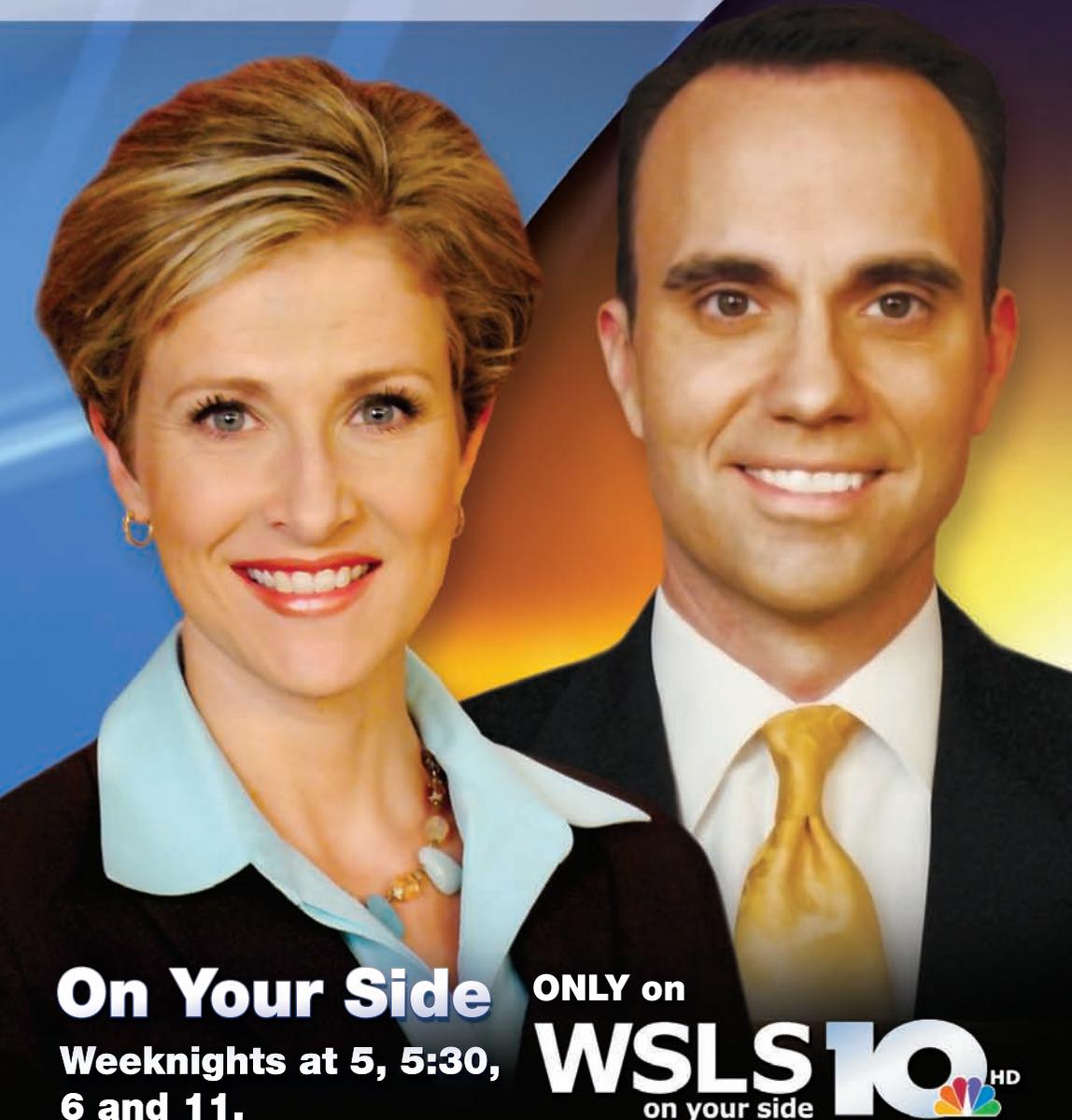
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But he decided he wasn't going anywhere. He and his wife, Cathy, had grown to love their home's sweeping landscape, temperate climate and mountainside view.

So despite the risks that come from starting over at 55, Fandel made a career change in 2005 when he and his wife started up a Kitchen Tune-Up franchise in the Roanoke area.

Always having had a knack for woodworking, Fandel says starting up a franchise with Kitchen Tune-Up, a South Dakota-based business seemed like the right business venture. It's specialty is kitchen cabinetry.

"I liked the philosophy of the company, that it could be family-run and have a good customer approach," he says.

After undergoing training at company's headquarters in South Dakota, he and his wife worked to get their local franchise off the ground, obtaining jobs through local Home Expos and print advertisements.

The franchise has not been without its struggles, especially in light of this year's recession.

As a two-person team, he and his wife have trouble getting the word out about their business, and the latest economic recession has put a damper on the home repair business.

As a result, Fandel says, he has gotten creative and even pitched Kitchen Tune-Up's services to local real-estate agents as a way to revitalize a home before a sale. Sometimes it's worked; sometimes it hasn't.

Fandel says Kitchen Tune-Up's approach is cost-effective: "Rather than completely replacing the cabinetry and doors—a process that usually takes three or four weeks—we recondition and revamp what you already have—a much cheaper and faster process. This is something most home repair retailers in the area don't offer."

Still, he says, "Right now, people just don't want to spend money unless they absolutely have to."

But there are advantages: "My former job I was traveling two to three weeks at a time—something I don't miss."

Fandel says he's his new career for the long haul (and at 55 that's relative), a commitment he insists is necessary if you're contemplating starting up your own business.

"Make sure you're ready to take the risk," he advises. "Make sure this is really what you want to do because there really isn't any going back."

As for moving, recession or no, he's not budging. 



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White-hot steel bar works through the process.

all photos: Huong Nguyen

## Work Spaces

It's hard, hot work >

### Executive Summary:

*At Steel Dynamics in Roanoke, difficult conditions are the order of the day. And so is safety.*

By Huong Nguyen

Behind a gated entrance on roughly 100 acres of land in the Norwich section of

Roanoke lie two long warehouse buildings with chimneys and smoke floating out of the top. Clusters of electric wires and ventilation tubes surround the production site while off to the side sits a long, narrow brick, two-floor office building. Workers wander through in hard hats and uniforms, which isn't an uncommon scene for a blue collar factory. But this isn't your average construction site or warehouse job. It's your state-of-the-art steel mill where the melting and reconstruction of metals occur.

Roanoke Electric Steel Corporation was founded in 1955 and has been operating under the banner of Steel Dynamics since April, 2006. As a huge recycler in the area, Steel Dynamics takes metal materials that would normally end up in landfills and melts them to make new steel products that are generally become construction-related commodities such as angles, flats, rounds, rebar and channels.



Workers maintain a machine.



The finished product is steel bars.



Workers finish one shift and get ready for another.



It looks almost foggy inside the plant.

The Melt Building, where the actual melting of the scrap occurs in the electric furnaces, creates a bath of new steel that is roughly 3,000 degrees. “We take that molten steel and re-form it through a casting process into squares of steel billets, which are essentially long bars six inches square and cut to length,” says Joe Crawford, vice president and GM of the facility.

As you walk past the stacks of the semi-finished products, you can feel the heat radiating off the billets without having to make direct contact. It’s toasty, and especially so in the summer when the mill is at its hottest. On those hot and humid days, the temperature in front of the furnace can get to 130-140 degrees and workers have to adjust to those conditions.

Says Crawford, “We put a lot of emphasis

on safety; it is the number one priority over earnings and production, which we preach to our employees constantly.” Taking breaks, working in shifts, drinking fluids are key factors, but personal protective equipment is mandatory. Hard hats, safety glasses, steel-toed boots with metatarsal guards, earplugs, and—depending on what area of the facility you’re working in—there are different types of uniforms that Steel Dynamics employees are required to wear, some quite heavy.

As brawny and butch as one may assume a steel mill worker may be, there is good humor and solid team morale on the floor. Working conditions challenging because of the nature of the business, but Crawford says, “I just can’t say enough good things about our employees.” All 440 of them. 



Steel bars out of the oven.



Workers often look like spacemen.



On the way to work.



all photos: Dan Smith

Dignitaries cut strung-together men's ties to open the Goodwill store in the east end of Roanoke.

## Goodwill gesture >

### Executive Summary:

*Goodwill hunting has become a trendy pastime. The stores constitute one of the largest and most popular retail chains in the region, but who would have ever guessed that from Goodwill Industries?*

**By Dan Smith**

When CEO Bruce Phipps held open the door for the first customer at the 29th Goodwill

Industries retail store in the Market Square East Shopping Center on U.S. 460 in Roanoke in late September, it was simply the fulfillment of another in a long string of ambitious goals that the economy has not thwarted.

Goodwill is one of the few retail businesses in this region—or perhaps any other region—that is thriving in this economy, perhaps even because of this economy. "Customers are being more frugal with this type of purchase so they have that money for other, more necessary purchases," he observes. A look around the six Goodwill stores in the Roanoke Valley (seven come spring with the addition of a store at Botetourt Commons in

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Daleville), though, tells yet another story. When school is not in session, many of the customers are young, school-age girls enthusiastically shopping with their mothers or in groups. That says "trendy" and in retail "trendy" is a magic word.

Phipps is not quite sure how to react to that observation. "Maybe," he says, "it is a reaction to all the press we've gotten." Maybe. But do 13-year-old girls pay attention to "press" or do they shop where their friends shop? Once upon a time, buying used clothing—even the upper end stuff sold by Goodwill in recent years—was *verboten* among the cool. It has become de *rigueur*.

The new stores are large, open, organized and clean. The service is often quite good and selection is at least as good as a store featuring new clothing, though, obviously the fashions are not straight from the designer to you.

In any case, the news is good for one of the region's largest and most successful retailers, one that recycles as much of the donated goods as it sells. Phipps stresses that only the best donated goods make the cut for re-sale. The rest goes to missions, foreign countries or—as a last resort—is cut into cleaning rags. "It's all used," he stresses. "Every bit of it. No waste."

Goodwill has become a regional powerhouse with its 29 stores in a region that goes from Charlottesville and Harrisonburg to the



Roanoke City Councilwoman Gwen Mason said she was "buying my campaign wardrobe" at the grand opening. She was running for the General Assembly.

Roanoke and New River Valleys, Greater Lynchburg and down to Martinsville. It recently spent \$7.7 million expanding and updating its corporate headquarters on Melrose Ave., where workers are trained. The company has 825 employees and the new store adds 20. There are 435 employees working solely in "donated goods," says Phipps.

Revenue last year for this division was \$24 million. The new store is 13,600 total square feet with 10,500 of that retail. The Daleville store, to be opened in Botetourt Commons by March or April, will be about the same size, says marketing manager Suni Heflin.

In addition to the stores, the training, the job counseling (18,000 people helped last year, with 565 getting jobs in competitive situations), Goodwill works at Forest Park Academy in Roanoke teaching kids how to use their money (who better?).



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## Holly Jolly Days at Tanglewood Mall

Does the thought of shopping this holiday season have you down? Cheer up! According to an Associated Press article (10/05/09), "there has *never* been a better time to be a consumer. *America is on Sale!*" This news comes just in time for the holiday season. Finding deals is the name of the game for many shoppers.

Tanglewood Mall is making shopping brighter this holiday season for customers by launching the Tanglewood *Holly Jolly Days* giveaway that will run Nov. 1 – Dec. 10. During these dates, when shoppers bring same-day receipts totaling \$25 or more to the customer service kiosk, they will be entered to win a mall gift certificate for the holidays. Each Friday in November and the first Friday in December, one lucky shopper will win \$250 in mall gift certificates. Then, on Dec. 11 a grand prize drawing for gift certificates totaling \$1,000 will be given away.

### *At Tanglewood Mall you'll find something for everyone on your list*

Conveniently located at the intersection of US 220 and Route 419 in Roanoke, Tanglewood offers shoppers a variety of retail, restaurant and entertainment options. Anchored by A.C. Moore, Belk, Barnes & Noble, JCPenney, Kroger, Staples, Stein Mart, and T.J. Maxx, Tanglewood Mall provides a unique and exciting shopping environment. Inside the mall, shoppers will find Bath & Body Works, Kay Jewelers, Jaclyn's Hallmark, Payless Shoes, Perrywinkle Toys, Sun Specs, and much, much more. No time to shop? Gift certificates are always the perfect fit and are valid at all stores with no fees attached!

### *Holiday Happenings at Tanglewood*

For more than 35 years Tanglewood Mall has been a shopping destination for the holidays. This year is no different. Starting Nov. 1, Tanglewood Mall will transform into a winter wonderland and visitors will delight in the sights and sounds of the holidays as they shop.

On Saturday, Nov. 14, children can welcome Santa to the Mall and have breakfast with the jolly old man who will be available for visits and photos through Christmas Eve. For all you pet lovers out there who want to get a photo of your four-legged friends with Old Saint Nick, bring your pet to the mall on Sunday, Nov. 29 or Sunday, Dec. 6 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tanglewood Mall also presents its annual *Sounds of the Season* from Friday, Dec. 4 through Tuesday, Dec. 8. Enjoy music as local high school and community groups perform holiday tunes. There is much to see and do at Tanglewood this holiday season. For a complete listing of stores and events visit [shoptanglewood.com](http://shoptanglewood.com)

### *Mark Your Calendar*

#### **Holly Jolly Days**

November 1 - December 10, 2009

*(Bring your \$25 shopping receipts to customer service kiosk for entry)*

- Nov 6 Win \$250 Gift Certificate!
- Nov 13 Win \$250 Gift Certificate!
- Nov 20 Win \$250 Gift Certificate!
- Nov 27 Win \$250 Gift Certificate!
- Dec 4 Win \$250 Gift Certificate!
- Dec 11 Win \$1,000 Grand Prize!

#### **Winter Wonderland**

- Nov 1 Holiday Decorations Arrive!

#### **Santa Claus**

- Nov 14 Santa Arrives!
- Nov 14 - Dec 24 Santa Visits & Photos!
- Nov 29 (6pm - 8pm) Santa & Pet Photos!
- Dec 6 (6pm - 8pm) Santa & Pet Photos!

#### **Sounds of the Season**

- Dec 4 - Dec 8 Music from High Schools & Groups!

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## Holiday Stores

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And More.....



**Natalie Siegel (left) and Lisa Anthony:** "Even the pool guy next door likes to come in to relax and find a quiet moment."

Becky Hepler

## Not your mama's consignment shop >

### Executive Summary:

*Natalie Siegel and Lisa Anthony wanted a consignment shop that looked like something entirely different than what you're used to. And they have it.*

### By Becky Hepler

It's called retail therapy, but Natalie Siegel was surprised at how it came to apply to hers and Lisa Anthony's joint venture, the Upscale Attic, a home décor consignment store in Christiansburg.

"We have many customers who tell us they love to come here because it's so pleasant

with so many beautiful things to look at," Siegel says. "They say it's like a retreat," Anthony adds. "Even the pool guy next door likes to come in to relax and find a quiet moment."

Perhaps it shouldn't be a surprise. Siegel and Anthony are fans of antique, consignment and thrift store shopping. But they are also clear on what they don't like about those venues—the dust, the musty smells and the bad lighting. "There's no staging," says Siegel. So when they decided to open a consignment shop, they knew the layout would be very important.

They have succeeded. Entering the shop, the customer sees little scenes, areas set up with furniture and accessories that look good together. Potpourri gently scents the air and interesting music adds a graceful backdrop in which to see all the possibilities of the furnishings. "We are thrilled that people see it as a place to relax," says Lisa. It's also unique. "I haven't seen any other shop like ours," says Natalie.

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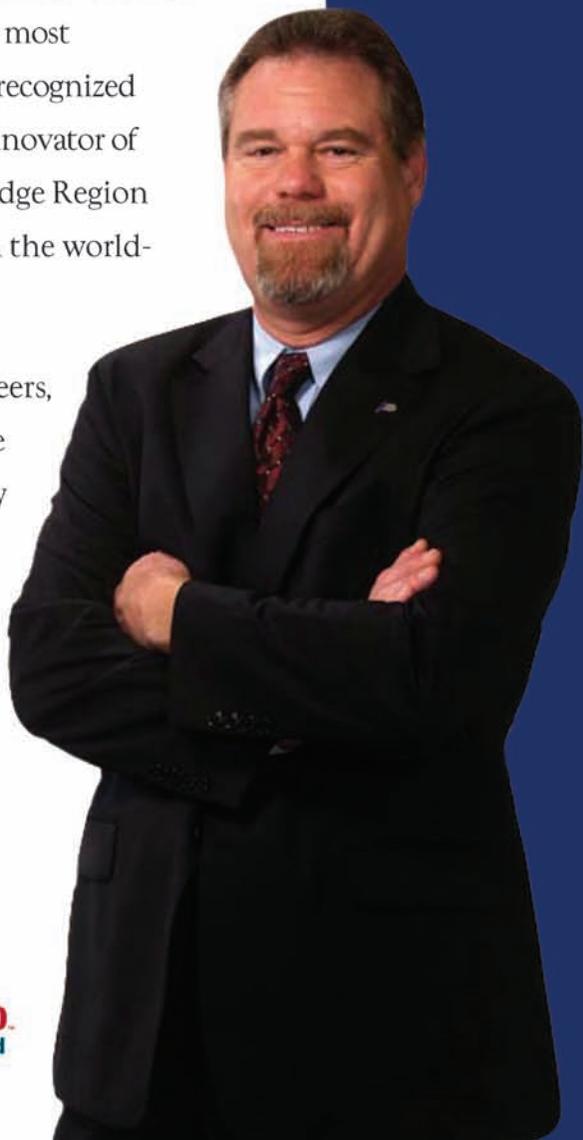
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The two came together when Lisa hired Natalie, who is an artist, to paint a mural at her house. Lisa, a business major in college who's most recent job had been setting up the business side of her husband's dental office, found they had similar dreams (to have their own business) and similar passions (home decorating).

"We opened this business at the confluence of two very important trends: the green movement and the economic crisis," Natalie says. "People are trying lots of ways to save money and the environment and consignment shops meet both of those goals by recycling things, at a much cheaper price, that might otherwise go into the landfill."

Whatever they're doing, it's working. The

shop has made it to its second anniversary and business continues to be brisk. "We're booked three weeks ahead in terms of merchandise," says Natalie. There's also fairly substantial turnover of the stock. "We have people coming back every week just to see what new things we've gotten in that week," says Natalie.

What comes in could be quite a show. While the majority is country classics and lots of entertainment pieces, such as specialty bowls, crystal glassware and different kinds of trays, two pieces stand for both shopkeepers—a fur tomahawk and a full-sized bicycle made of wicker. "Talk about your conversation pieces," Lisa says.

Nevertheless, both sold and did not have to be returned. 



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**Carvins Cove is the Roanoke Valley's fresh water supply, but it is far, far more than that.**

Photo by Virginia Outdoors Foundation

## Carefully creating recreation opportunities >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Determining just what recreational activities will be allowed at the compound is the next step in the development.*

### **By Gene Marrano**

A recent announcement that the City of Roanoke has completed the second of two conservation easements designed to protect Carvins Cove from any possibility of commercial development won't open the floodgates for recreational amenities.

The easement, co-held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) and the Western Virginia Land Trust (WVLT), was announced with great fanfare when 5,178 acres were placed under an easement in September, joining the 6,185 set aside at Roanoke City's principal water supply reservoir in 2008.

Says VOF trustee and Roanoke City Council member Rupert Cutler, the Carvins Cove Natural Reserve is a watershed, so protecting the quality of that water is paramount. That means the impact of any future recreational amenities at the cove must be considered carefully.

Cutler notes the 10 horsepower restriction on the size of gas-powered boat motors. The lakebed is owned by the Western Virginia Water Authority, which could ban all gas motors in the future. "I think there's still some negotiation to be done there," says Cutler. "At most water supply reservoirs [gas boat motors are] not permitted."

Cutler was a founding board member of the Water Authority but resigned when he rejoined City Council earlier this year; he was also founding executive director of the Western Virginia Land Trust in 1996.

The easement is a step forward says Cutler, as a "perpetual assurance of an outstanding large outdoor recreation venue." Situated in Roanoke and Botetourt counties, Cutler always likes to point out that Carvins Cove is the second largest municipally owned park in the country.

There could be improvements made to the trail system at Carvins Cove, now that the city has protected more than 11,000 acres that surround the lakebed, and there could be additional momentum for connecting trails there to the Roanoke Valley greenway system.

The incomplete Tinker Creek greenway is still attempting to overcome engineering obstacles that will eventually connect it between the Roanoke River greenway and the cove; once at the reservoir, hikers could link to the Appalachian Trail.

Considerable hiking, fishing, horseback riding and mountain biking activities already take place at Carvins Cove. Educational

kiosks, a horse stable and additional picnic areas have surfaced on a possible to-do list. "There won't be anything dramatic," Cutler vows, "there's kind of a wilderness quality to it that needs to be protected." Since 1996 he had wanted to place the cove in a protective easement.

Current restrictions (no open fires and no overnight use) help protect the cove and its water from the damage caused by humans, according to the long time environmentalist. It is already a tourist attraction to some extent, promoted as a mountain biking destination for example by the Roanoke Regional Partnership's outdoor branding campaign.

Roanoke City Parks & Recreation director Steve Buschor says future recreational development at Carvins Cove has been the subject of a recent land management plan study. Any building there, such as a nature center near the shoreline, will take a back

seat for now, in part due to budget belt tightening. "Its not really a priority at this time."

Buschor cites a "wonderful group of volunteers," that maintain trails at the cove, and says there could be other public-private partnerships helping out in the future.

The latest plan shows no more than 200,000 square feet of aggregate roofline, with no building having more than 5000 square feet of roofline. Both the VOF and the WVLT signed off on those suggested limits, according to Buschor.

A strategic recreation plan for Carvins Cove has also been outlined by the city, where public input was sought. "It's not like ... there's going to be a wholesale development of campgrounds and nature centers," says Buschor, noting restrictions set forth in the two easements. 



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Patrick Henry High School exterior.

Howard Doughty

## The secret to designing schools >

### Executive Summary:

*There is a lot to consider—other than how lovely it can be—when designing schools for local governments.*

### By Gene Marrano

Designing new schools or renovating older ones tends to incorporate many of the same considerations made when architects sit down with commercial clients, but there are nuances tailored for the educational world.

Rife + Wood Principal Richard Rife has pondered some of those considerations in the past. His firm designed the new Patrick Henry and William Fleming high school campuses. Past projects have included extensive renovations at Woodrow Wilson, Addison and Breckenridge Middle Schools in Roanoke.

Elementary schools, notes Rife, tend to be smaller and more neighborhood-based, so designing them to blend in with the surrounding environs is key. Spaces tend to be multi-purpose, like the ubiquitous “cafetorium” and “gymnatoriums.”

High schools, on the other hand, have

specialized rooms for labs, culinary arts, technology classes, etc., or as is the case at Patrick Henry and William Fleming High Schools, space was needed for medical offices that may include a nurse practitioner or a physician. “[You] won’t see that in Roanoke County, where wealthier families have regular doctors,” says Rife.

OWPR (Oliver, Webb, Pappas, Rhudy) in Blacksburg even gets students involved when designing a new school, asking them about color schemes and things they didn’t like at the old building.

“We approach it as kind of a collaborative design effort,” says architect J.D. Price. Riverlawn Elementary School in Fairlawn is the most recent local project for OWPR, which specializes in school design. It was designed with the surrounding community in mind and can be used as a gathering place by groups after school hours.

OWPR begins by surveying everyone at the school in question, then sits down with small groups, from the maintenance personnel on up, inquiring says Price, about “teaching styles, how they maintain the building—essentially at the end of the day we want to know how the building’s design can make their job easier. A lot of this is about garnering support and making people part of the process.”

High schools often feature oversized auditoriums that can serve as community



**Riverlawn Elementary curved hallway.**



**OWPR's Riverlawn Elementary School interior.**



**William Fleming High School exterior.**

centers. Middle schools wind up in the middle, but can include smaller community meeting rooms. Rife has spent his fair share of time addressing local governing bodies about capital projects and was himself a member of the Roanoke City Planning Commission.

"You have to work through what we call the program," says Rife, addressing the list of different spaces required. "How many students do you feed? How many lunch periods are there? You have to work with the client to establish a program for that school and then design to meet that program [while balancing] the budget."

While he may deal with a small handful of people on a commercial project, designing a school that everyone can sign off on is often

a different story. "You need to make the music teacher happy in the music rooms ... and the drama teacher happy in the theater [for example]. There's a whole lot more people and a more diverse set of needs to try and satisfy."

In Roanoke City, Rife + Wood meets with individual teachers and departments when embarking on a school project. Designs are typically more vanilla at the elementary school level he notes.

Dealing with the taxpayer dollars being used to build those schools is another consideration. Rife held community meetings before the massive new Patrick Henry and William Fleming campuses were built; in part because of that dialogue

## A New Building for an Old Neighborhood



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**Pete Krull**

## OCTOBER 2009 > Contributor of the Month

Valley Business FRONT congratulates **Pete Krull**, who receives the Publisher's Choice and Editor's Choice for our "Contributor of the Month" including a "One Who's in the FRONT" certificate and special gift.

Pete is a regular financial columnist on rotation for the FRONT. In October, his "Ten Steps to Market Confidence" was timely, informative, poignant. A solid performer, Krull doesn't waffle on opinion (most "advisors" wouldn't bother to tell you Step 5, for example; you'll have to go back and read it to find out).

You can read any of Pete Krull's contributions in selected back issues online at [vbFRONT.com](http://vbFRONT.com)



Fleming gym.

Dan Smith

"the two schools look very different architecturally."

PH is situated in the heart of residential neighborhoods. Rife terms the design as modern but "vaguely traditional," while Fleming, located in a corridor where commercial buildings are adjacent, is "very modern looking," a motif that expressed technology and engineering, "sort of a forward-looking building." Public input from residents in northwest Roanoke pushed him in that direction.

Both high schools include some architectural flair, be it impressive atriums or the "software company," look Rife says they were aiming for at Fleming. Getting those features signed off on by school districts means balancing budget concerns with a desire to make a statement.

Spectrum Design in Roanoke has been heavily involved on a number of school projects, both in the New River and Roanoke Valleys. An expansion at Northside High School, completed last spring, is one of the most recent—and most significant—examples.

Lead designer and vice president David Bandy says Spectrum has about 300 school projects under its belt, including the award-winning Roanoke Valley Academy of Mathematics and Science. Its design for

Goodview Elementary in Bedford County was once honored as "Best in State."

Before committing to a final concept Bandy spent two days sitting in his car, observing the neighborhood around where the Roanoke Valley Academy of Mathematics and Science was eventually built. That helped him come up with design he felt might fit in better.

Spectrum has also worked in Henry, Botetourt and Rockbridge Counties. A new elementary school in eastern Montgomery County that features a Spectrum Design will become a prototype for others to be built there, including one in Blacksburg.

"We really have concentrated on that [niche]," says Bandy, a 30-year veteran of school architecture. Making a significant contribution to the community is one deciding factor for him. Working hand in hand with teachers and administrators early is critical.

Bandy says there is one overriding factor for him when designing a new or renovated school: what is the best way to educate children within the proposed budget for that project? "We always have to be cost conscious, but that doesn't mean we have to be cheap, and that doesn't mean we can't be creative. [You just] have to spend your money wisely." 



Rob Slee (white shirt) is national advisor and Joel Williams is the institute's director.

Dan Smith

## Midas Institute: The Hokie network >

### Executive Summary:

*The VT Midas Institute lends a hand to business owners nationwide who are Virginia Tech alumni—and in turn it helps their alma mater.*

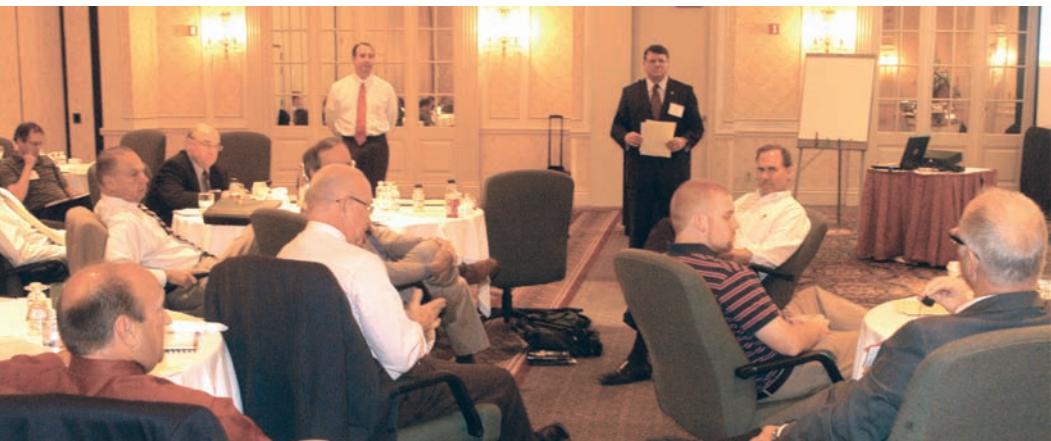
By **Tim W. Jackson**

When you talk to Joel Williams about the VT Midas Institute, he's enthusiastic. Sometimes you're just not sure about what, exactly. The VT Midas Institute is a complex program

that, when successful, benefits many different stakeholders.

Williams, the director of the VT Midas Institute, talks about the benefits to business owners who are Tech alumni. Then he shares the great opportunities presented to the program's mentors. And then he is effusive about the benefits received by Virginia Tech. The VT Midas Institute brings all those components together in creating what Williams calls, "The answer to the questions Thomas Friedman asks in his book, *The World Is Flat*."

"It's a new way of doing business," Williams says. "It's about sharing, not protecting secrets. It's about having the world to help you with problems."



Joel Williams talks to a group at the Hotel Roanoke as Rob Slee (left) watches.

Dan Smith

The VT Midas Institute takes a national concept developed by Rob Slee, author of books such as *Midas Managers* and *Midas Marketing*, and brings it to university settings. Virginia Tech is the first institution to sign onto the program, which, according to its Web site, “advances private business ownership and value creation through a culture of sharing and reciprocity within Virginia Tech’s alumni business community.” The Institute pairs a mentor with a company and if that company grows as it’s supposed to, everyone profits.

“The concept of taking a mentor and having the mentor work with a company for three years has been done,” Williams says. “One on one relationship building has worked. What’s new is it institutionalizes the process en masse.”

Williams explains that the company has no long-term commitment and can back out of the program at any time. But if the company proceeds and does grow, then it gives back 15 percent of its gross, of which Virginia Tech gets a third, the mentor gets a third, and the Institute gets a third.

The mentors engage successful alumni business owners of small to mid-level businesses and help them to grow their business. Williams says, “Some [mentors] are approaching the end of careers but want to play one more game. Some are retired. Most people want to give back. They’ve accumulated a lifetime of knowledge, and they have something to say—something to share from a knowledge standpoint. Networking and money play a

part of the equation, but they are not the driving force. These people want to give back.”

Mentor John Emery is a Virginia Tech grad and founder and managing partner of Stone Circle Capital, a venture fund focused on a broad range of opportunistic investments, particularly in the leisure and hospitality industries. He says he got involved as a mentor because “of the university tie.”

For Tech alumni and business owners interested in learning more about the VT Midas Institute, communications director Lisa Garcia suggests investigating as you would any business decision. Garcia says go to the Web site (<http://midasnation.com/>) and then call the office and set up an appointment.

“We are interested in life learners,” Garcia says. “We want to work with people who want to be active and know more. This program isn’t really for those content to just coast along.” 



Dan Smith

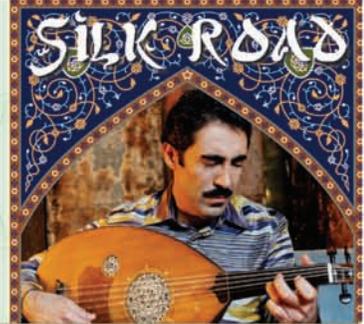
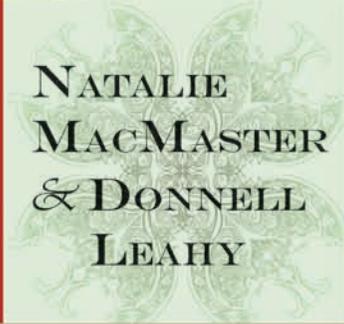
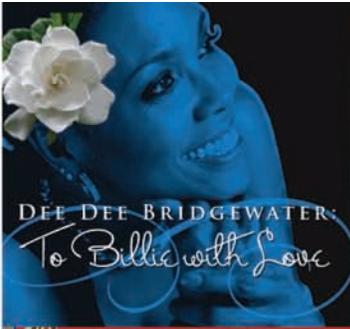
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**Gail Billingsley:** “That way we could divide the general waste we have and reduce our costs, and at the same time add a community service.”

Rachael Garrity

## New program for YMCA: Recycling >

### Executive Summary:

*A new recycling program at Blacksburg’s Y was hot stuff, but it cost too much. Enter the fund-raising guru and community consciousness.*

### By Rachael Garrity

The YMCA at Virginia Tech is, to many people, a strange anomaly. It has no sports programs. It is one of only 21 YMCAs in the country affiliated with a university campus—down from 800 in the early 20th Century.

Since its inception in 1873, it has continued to offer student leadership programs, but at the same time successfully turned its attention to the overall community, once its original campus operations began to be subsumed by university-based student activity program. It operates a host of education programs, multiple thrift shops, and a variety of other activities through which it serves more than 20,000 community members annually.

And, in the midst of the hubbub, every now and again a program so adroitly addresses a need that it rapidly outpaces its financial base. So it is with the three green recycling bins that sit on the edge of the parking lot next to the Thrift Store on North Main Street in Blacksburg.

“This all began when I contacted Waste Management to see if there were a way we could somehow reduce the costs of our trash pickup,” Executive Director Gail Billingsley recalls. “As part of that conversation the Waste Management people offered to use part of the money they had budgeted for charity to put in place a single-stream recycling pick-up. The idea was it would be a test that would last a year or two. We’d assess just how much the community would respond. That way we could divide the general waste we have and reduce our costs, and at the same time add a community service.”

The premise was that Waste Management would empty the bins twice a month. It took only one month to reveal pick-ups were required instead two to three times a week, and after another few months, that became

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three to four times a week. What had been estimated as a two-year budget was readily consumed in less than one year. Waste Management delivered the news, and Billingsley realized she had just added another fundraising project to an already full plate.

"Obviously, the need is enormous, and it's heartening indeed to see how responsible people here are when they have the opportunity to be," she argues. "As part of our emphasis on recycling, I give talks to community groups on just how much this matters. It's simply irresponsible to let it drop. This isn't just being good people; it's doing good business."

She's ready with the kind of statistics that starkly make the case—as in, 20 million Hershey's kisses are wrapped each day, creating 133 square miles of recyclable aluminum ... or, if Americans simply recycle

a tenth of Sunday newspaper editions, we can save 25 million trees per year.

Just to continue the program of the three overflowing green bins, she needs to raise \$7,000 per year just to cover the recycling collection costs, in an economy that has put a new hole in most everyone's belt. How?

"There already are three private businesses in the area that have begun programs just for their companies; I know they must already be seeing results," she insists. "Because of an existing contractual arrangement, the Town of Blacksburg can't provide any financial support, so we literally are dependent on the vision and leadership of the private business community and concerned individuals. It's difficult, but doable—I hope."

Tall order, but in a community and next to a campus where leadership is not in short supply, thanks—in part—to the YMCA. 

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Nan Mahone-Wellborn at work in Highland County

Debra Sheffer

## Painting the details of a new career >

### Executive Summary:

*When Nan Mahone-Wellborn's long-time professional gig ended (a "mutual decision"), she was more than ready with a backup plan.*

### By Linda Nardin

Nan Mahone-Wellborn makes a quick phone call, but cautions she can only speak for a second. "I just wanted to say hi," she says brightly. "But I can't really talk because I'm running out of light."

Not the usual banter. That is, unless you're speaking with a woman who's traded the accoutrements of an executive office and a high-powered job for canvas, palette, brushes and an ongoing quest for the perfect landscape to view and interpret in oils.

Until January, Mahone-Wellborn worked for The Roanoke Times and its electronic counterpart, roanoke.com, as promotion and community relations director. She managed a small group and orchestrated the work of a number of freelancers whose scope covered the newspaper's interests in marketing and

branding strategies, readership development, consumer promotions, community sponsorships and company-hosted special events—among her many duties.

Her nearly 10 years with the newspaper were good ones, Mahone-Wellborn says, but her tenure came to an end in what she describes as a "mutual decision" to leave the publication.

She is clearly a forward-thinker. "My tendency is to look ahead to the next assignment, dive in and get involved."

So how did the leap from PR person to landscape painter occur? Mahone-Wellborn looks to her own mother as her touchstone, recounting that as a child she was encouraged to keep busy by painting her mom's flower arrangements. That instilled the observational techniques she uses today.

Mahone-Wellborn reconnected with painting during the summer of 2001 when she took a "plein air" oil painting workshop at the Beverley Street Studio School in Staunton. "I hadn't painted very much, certainly not in oils, since graduating from Mary Baldwin College. The workshop was a cathartic happening for me. Not only did I reconnect with the joy of painting out-of-doors but also with my college art professors and artist friends from my time in Staunton in the early 1980s."



An artist who is “looking for projects where my networking, development, fundraising, marketing and public relations background can be of service.”

—Nan Mahone-Wellborn



Dan Smith

**Nan Mahone-Wellborn: “These long painting periods have allowed me the time to explore my big dreams and consider what really makes me tick.”**

During the past eight years she devoted as much of her free time as possible to painting and her own style began to gel. Her confidence in her abilities grew when she was accepted at Downtown Roanoke’s Market Gallery and gained entrée in juried shows. She realized that if she spent more time at it, she could push her artistic career into another realm.

Stepping away from her post at the newspaper has made way for Mahone-Wellborn to spend extended periods of time with her oils and brushes. This year she’s worked for two weeks in Key West, almost three weeks in Highland County and takes advantage of random trips to the counties surrounding Roanoke for her inspiration.

“These long painting periods have allowed me the time to explore my big dreams and consider what really makes me tick. And

through all of this, I’ve found that while I’m devoted to pushing my artist career forward, I also need other outlets to keep me energized,” she says.

An admitted extrovert, Mahone-Wellborn says her time secluded in the countryside with her painting—while fantastic on one level—is lonely on another. “I found that I miss teamwork, business enterprises and the dynamics of a work environment,” she says.

Thus she is determined to readjust her goals for her art career. “Instead of seeking out East Coast art marketing ventures I’ll step back a bit and pursue exposure throughout Virginia for the next few years ... I’ll be looking for projects where my networking, development, fundraising, marketing and public relations background can be of service.” 

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# Getting a handle on 'cap and trade' >

## My View

By **Dan Smith**  
Editor

BLOG: [ [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com](http://fromtheeditr.blogspot.com) ]

**Executive Summary:** *Cap and trade presents a market solution instead of a government mandate, but it's still facing heavy opposition from organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.*

Finding a cap and trade explanation that will fit on a bumper sticker is a lot easier for those who oppose it than those who favor it. The bumper sticker would read something like this: "Cap and trade: Energy prices up, jobs down."

A "for" bumper sticker would be more the size of a billboard and would contain history, variables, alternatives and the simple fact that most of the rest of the developed world has already bought into cap and trade.

Chad Braby, a general contractor with Ullman Scutte Construction in Roanoke, has made himself something of an expert on cap and trade, studying it with an increasing degree of urgency since he first learned about it as a junior high student in 1989. These days, he's selling it as something considerably more pleasing to business than its altruistic elements would suggest. He says, in words any Republican or Libertarian would love, "Let the free market handle the complexity and intricacy of the reduction in carbon. Allow the market to innovate and profit. That way, the government doesn't pick winners and losers" in the struggle for clean air.

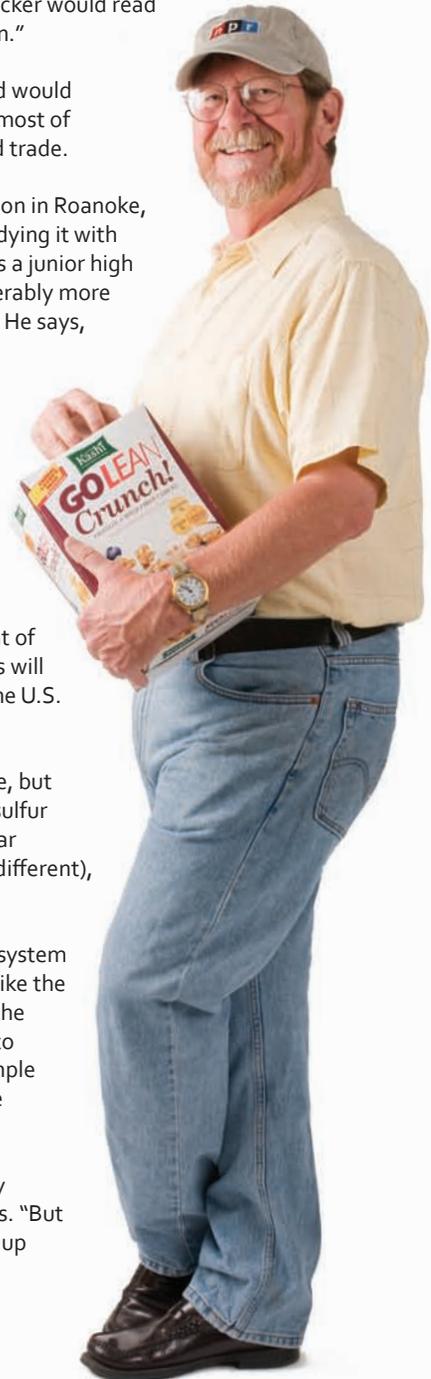
What we're getting, though, is Republican and coal-state Democrat opposition, like Virginia gubernatorial candidate Bob McDonnell who made opposition to cap and trade a campaign issue. What he didn't tell you is that the governor has nothing to do with the decision. It'd be the state-level equivalent of coming out with a plan to remove troops from Afghanistan. This will be handled by Congress or by the EPA (which was directed by the U.S. Supreme Court to do something about carbon emissions).

What we're faced with as a country is not whether cap and trade, but when and by whom. Fact is, we already have cap and trade for sulfur dioxide. If Congress fails to reach a compromise on this particular carbon-centered bill (the House and Senate bills are a good bit different), EPA takes over and dictates.

The New York Times defines cap and trade thusly: "A regulatory system that sets a government limit on overall emissions of pollutants like the heat-trapping gases scientists have linked to global warming—the 'cap.' It then allows utilities, manufacturers and other emitters to 'trade' pollution permits or allowances among themselves." Simple in concept and, Europeans will tell you, effective in reducing the devastating carbons that are filling our air.

Braby says that, yes, under cap and trade energy costs will likely increase and some jobs will be lost. "The cap has a cost," he says. "But what are you comparing those costs to? Energy costs are going up

continued to Page 65



## Death by spreadsheet >

By Tom Field  
Publisher

## On Tap from the Pub

BLOG: [ [ontapfrompub.blogspot.com](http://ontapfrompub.blogspot.com) ]

When is research and analysis ever a bad idea? Apparently, it's more often than you think. Whether it's employed as a crutch, a stall tactic, a defense of some activity you have planned, or a legitimate quest for better understanding, research can be deadly. At least the kind of research so many middle managers (and upper management, increasingly) commission.

Who can argue with the imperative that "we need more research!?" It's such a noble objective. You can never have too much information, can you?

Yes. You can have too much data if it paralyzes you or removes you from your more important tasks at hand. Happens all the time.

In a most recent application I watched an entire business effectively shut down because an appointed bean-counter insisted on a benchmarking study, where other similar products were gathered and reviewed. The measurements were comprehensive, requiring hours and weeks and months of study.

"But, we already have all this information," I argued. In fact, the R&D-type lab I referred to was an actual war room where competitive and cross-market information resided. In addition to the physical data, like most businesses, I also had access to decades of knowledge in the minds of experienced industry veterans.

But it wasn't on a spreadsheet.

In one Saturday, I could supply a spreadsheet. A good study and useful snapshot from all that compilation.

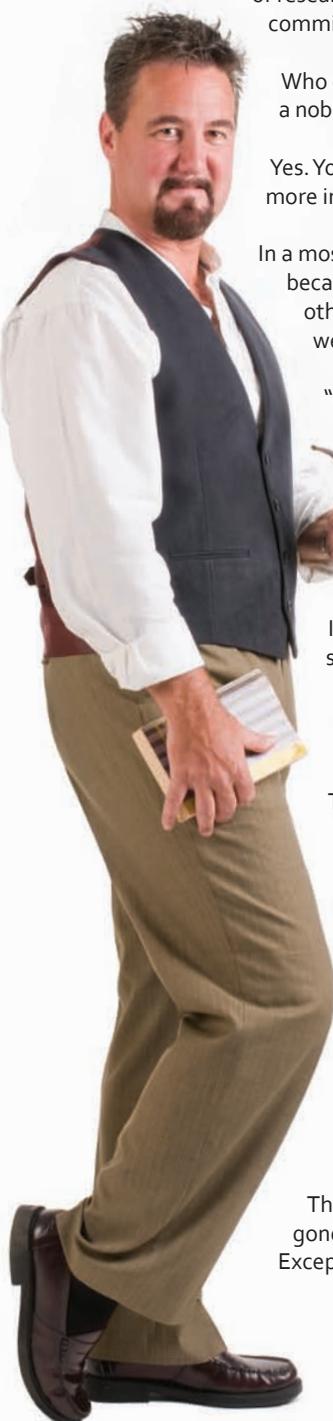
But it wasn't a multi-colored, multi-faceted spreadsheet, complete with mirror-market entries and cross-linked data fields.

Three weeks later, we had our spreadsheet...template, that is. And exactly three months later, we had tons of our cells filled out, from many overtime hours. All the while, the great spreadsheet distraction sapped from our productivity. I noticed, ever so slightly, the business was beginning to dip. The irony is the commissioned study was thrust on the business right at the crux of its highest performance level in history.

The spreadsheets? Finally completed. The results? Not a shred more enlightening than what we already had before the study. But we sure had some nice data at our fingertips. Yeah!

No one popped a bottle of champagne though.

The leaders, the ones who know how to act—and not just react—had all gone. The business model that was working its way up no longer exists. Except on a spreadsheet somewhere. 



# Letters

## 'Incredibly brave woman'

Editor,

Kerry Edwards ("Working through the cancer," Oct. FRONT) is a friend and a professional colleague of mine. In fact, I just met with her [recently], then, I read her article in VBF. I was so touched that I don't have the words. What a lovely tribute to an incredibly brave woman. I had to write a little note and say thank you.

**Melinda J. Cox**  
Existing Business Program Manager  
County of Roanoke

## Well written

Editor,

I wanted to compliment you and your writer, Becky Hepler, on a nice article on Catawba Landcare and the Catawba Sustainability Center in the October Valley Business Front ("Sustainability in the country"). Becky pulled together a clear, well thought out article, given a very time constrained situation, by expertly teasing out key information.

**Christy Gabbard**  
Catawba Sustainability Center  
Roanoke

## 'Real pro'

Editor,

Great job on the Catawba Sustainability piece in the October issue ("Sustainability in the country"). I have been contacted by several of the players and they were delighted with the quality of the article. As one who worked with Becky Helper, call her a "real pro."

**Bill Cochran**  
Catawba

*(Bill Cochran is a journalist and a member of the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame.)*

## VMT's story

Editor,

I wanted you to know how much the [Virginia Museum of Transportation] appreciates the wonderful story ["A triumph of passion," October FRONT]. It sure does mean a lot to us and my mom would love it. You spent too much time on me but your interest in our progress and success means more than words can say. Thanks so much.

**Bev Fitzpatrick**  
Virginia Museum of Transportation  
Roanoke

## Sign of fall

Editor,

October's reward to us is the promise of a glorious bright blue sky; crisp cool nights; woods alive with yellows and reds; and butterflies saying farewell to the last blooms of summer. There are more sneakers seen on the greenways and orange bags along the waterways.

This October is also the celebration of the first year Valley Business FRONT which has found its way into our mail boxes. The size is wonderful and the copy fresh. The covers intriguing if not questionable! It is a bright new publication beginning its second year in a new location. We know you are here for a long, long time.

**Ann Masters**  
Clean Valley Council  
Roanoke

## Paving the way

Editor,

It's been clear for some time now that journalism, and the various mediums in which readers receive their news, is at a turning point. There seems to be some "cool" new way to deliver information just about every day—from Facebook status updates to Twitter feeds to

*Send letters to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto: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](http://www.vbFRONT.com)*

Dan Smith actually authoring a blog. Catching people's attention for more than a millisecond— isn't easy in an age where information surrounds our every move. That's why having a successful, innovative business magazine in Roanoke is a huge accomplishment.

[October's] issue marks a year since Tom Field and Dan Smith ventured out of their comfy office overlooking West Campbell Ave. and became proactive in their effort to save a dying art. And so far, they've been pretty darn successful. As you might imagine, the magazine isn't rolling in money or winning any Pulitzers (yet) but what's certain is that publications run by men and women who not only have a good feel for the industry but are motivated by a passion for journalism, will pave the way for the future of information delivery.

What FRONT has done and will continue to do is not only brave but also influential. I can say with certainty that publications like FRONT have begun to pave the way. I hope you will all

join in me saying congratulations and thank you for taking a chance.

**Annie Johnson**  
CQ-Roll Call Group  
Washington D.C.

## Clarification

Editor,

In reference to FRONT's October cover story "The Growing Demand for the Consultant," let me note that what makes CIE Partners unique is the scope of our clients and the fact that we work with both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. The article only mentioned our work with small businesses and entrepreneurs. At least half of our business comes from nonprofits.

**Jenny H Bradley**  
CIE Partners

## Smith / My View

from Page 62

anyway. Same with the jobs; whose jobs will be lost? There's a potential for misleading catch-phrases."

Braby hammers away at the free market solution, talking of innovation and technology that will be loosed on the problem under cap and trade because there will be a big pot of money to be made—a lot of American-value incentive, in short. "An alternative here," he says, "is to tax carbon emissions." And we know the hot-stove

aversion to the "T" word in Virginia.

Because of that—if for no other reason (like it being the right thing to do)—Braby says "cap and trade will pass" but "the question is how watered down it will be" after the various influences have had their say. There is a chance, Braby admits, that the bill will eventually be so weak that the court may have to intervene again and turn the EPA loose on the problem.

And we all know how those nut-case gov-mint bureaucrats are. 



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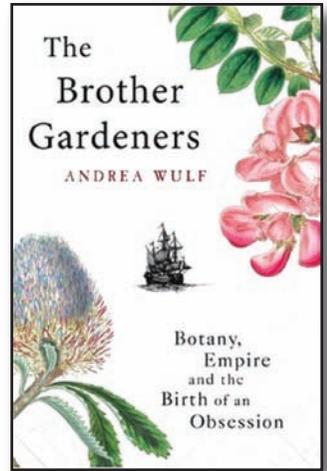
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## Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our publishers and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Each month, we ask or assign readers to submit 125 words about a book they've read lately. You're invited to take part.



### *English gardens*

If you've ever wondered why the English garden gets the hype it does, the answers lie in Andrea Wulf's *The Brother Gardeners* (Random House, \$35). Set in 18th Century England, this historic stroll guides the reader through four decades of transformation from the clipped and pristine parterre to a wild, lush countryside filled with flora from across Britain's global empire.

Wulf's portrayals of these "brothers of the spade" are strong and uncompromising, their relationships growing out of envy, respect and an unquenchable thirst for discovery. Her description of Sweden's Linneus as egocentric and petulant is delightful. These are the men that transformed gardening from the pleasure of a privileged few to an everyday obsession of the working class.

Of particular interest are the berries, seeds and cones England receives from her American Colonies. Prior to this, the British had never seen tulip poplar, scarlet oak, flowering dogwood, or magnolia. Nor could they get enough of our mountain laurel, rhododendron, azalea, and balsam fir.

After reading "*The Brother Gardeners*" you will never look at our Virginia landscape the same. But consider reading it at night or on a rainy day. Otherwise you may be tempted to set it aside for a walk in your own garden to prune, pluck, gather and gaze.

—Jennifer Bowman

### *Fine storytelling*

Reading the Pulitzer Prize winner *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout (Random House, \$24.95) is like spending the week at Lake Woebegone. It's life in a small town with interesting and eccentric people, trying to make their way in a 21st Century world, armed with Eisenhower-era values.

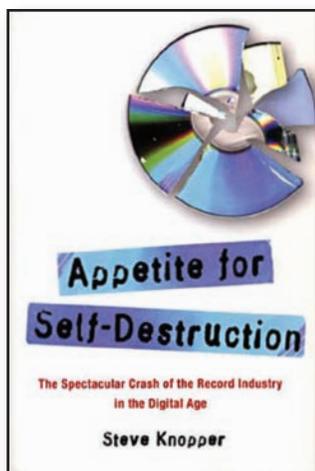
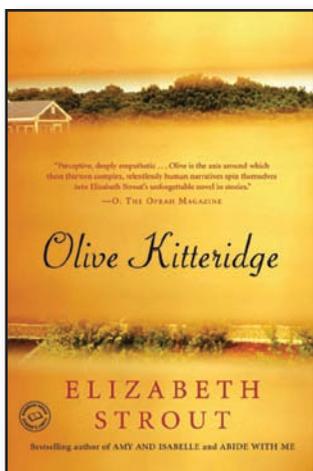
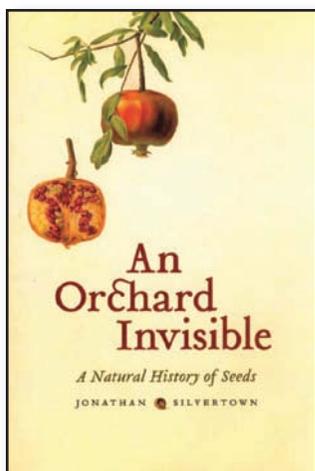
In the middle is the title character, Olive, a retired math teacher with a lot of opinions and a strong moral compass, though few social graces and a low tolerance for fools. You might think she'd be a tiresome person, but you would be wrong.

Strout deftly unfolds her story through 12 short stories that could stand on their own, but taken together, show a compelling picture of love and loneliness and what constitutes a family and a community. The brush strokes are few, but the picture is incredibly detailed. If you love good storytelling and elegantly efficient language, you won't want to miss this book.

—Becky Hepler

### *Musical meltdown*

Steve Knopper's *Appetite for Self-Destruction (The Spectacular Crash of the Record Industry in the Digital Age)* (Free Press, \$26) is a cautionary tale that has broad application: pay attention to the technology and where



it's going, and for heaven's sake don't diss your fans.

This is a chapter-and-verse look at the music industry and how it ignored what the public wanted, preferring the familiar, the highly profitable. Like the newspaper business, it became fat and lazy while the technology passed it by and continues to do so as it becomes a buggy in the age of the personal airplane. Knopper is a veteran journalist (Rolling Stone, Esquire, Wired, Entertainment Weekly) who has written and edited four books, mostly about music and the biz.

*Appetite* goes deeply into issues like Napster, KaZaA, lawsuits against fans, iPod, YouTube and CD longbox with a storyteller's intensity and a journalist's quest for accuracy.

—Dan Smith

affects wild grasses and cereal grains and is responsible for St. Anthony's Fire, a particularly virulent disease caused by ergot poisoning. Historians believe Oliver Cromwell died of ergot poisoning and its symptoms may have led to the Salem Witch Hunts. Today a medication derived from this fungus is used to treat migraine headaches.

Silvertown says coffee beans (or seeds) are the world's most prized seeds, second only to oil in world commerce. He talks of caffeine as a crucial defender of the coffee bean, poisonous to insects, inhibiting the growth of bacteria and fungi and a killer of slugs and snails. It is, he says, a "little fruit that is the source of all happiness and wit." *An Orchard Invisible* charms, delights and informs. I enjoyed it immensely. It's well worth the read.

—Nancy Agee

## Seed catalogue

I leafed through the 175 pages (with pictures) of Jonathan Silvertown's *An Orchard Invisible: A Natural History of Seeds* (University of Chicago Press, \$25) and found it a gem. Silvertown writes like a poet, not a scientist, deftly combining history, science and literature in a delightful read. This is a collection of interesting essays, woven together to describe the role of seeds in historical events or as powerful drivers of the economy.

One story describes the fungus ergot, which

(**The reviewers:** Jennifer Bowman is a telecom project specialist at Cox Communications in Roanoke. Becky Hepler is a Montgomery County school librarian and freelance writer. Nancy Agee is COO of Carillon in Roanoke. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT.)

## Freakonomics at the Forum >

The **Roanoke Regional Forum** hosted Stephen Dubner, popular author of *Freakonomics*, who introduced pre-released copies of his new book, *Super Freakonomics* at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke on October 13. The all-seats-occupied event was the first of the Forum's inaugural season, bringing international and notable speakers to the Roanoke Region. The program is sponsored by Valley Business FRONT, Access Advertising/PR, and other business leaders, including Roanoke College, where President Michael Maxey said the Forum will attract attention and engage dialogue at a level comparable to other larger markets. The schedule of upcoming events is available at [roanokeregionalforum.com](http://roanokeregionalforum.com).



photos: Tom Field



photos: Dan Smith



## Tech Expo

**NewVa Corridor Technology Council Board** Chairwoman **Mary Miller** chats with Executive Director **Cory Donovan** at the Sept. 17 Demo Day & Tech Expo at the Roanoke Civic Center. Four-year-old **Madeline Smith** accepts a purple bear from **Jamie Stant** of Extreme Networks, while **Ken Ferris** of Wireless Medicare in Roanoke talks with **Katie Gardner** and **Jennie Young** of CSS Inc. in Christiansburg.

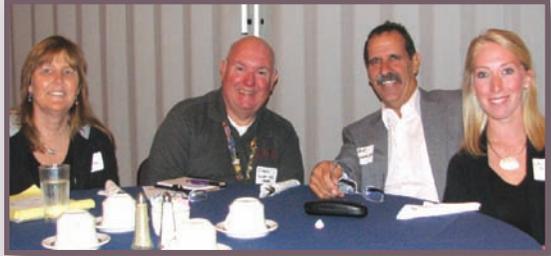
## Hilton Garden Inn opens >

Crestline Hotels & Resorts announced the opening of the new Hilton Garden Inn in Blacksburg. Left to right: Joy Jolin, Regional VP Operations, Jeremy Allen, General Manager; Bruce Smith; The Hokie Bird; Nancy Creed, Director of Sales; Christopher Harvey, VP Hotel Development

photo: Jane Dalier



Valley Business FRONT is FRONT'n About at many events each month. Check the blog links at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com) for more coverage.



photos: Jane Dalier

## Social swirl >

The Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of commerce presented a popular seminar Sept. 22 "Personal & Business Branding through Social Media" featuring presenters (from left) **Patsy Stewart** of Optimized Strategies, **Janeson Keeley** of JTK Web and facilitator **Charlotte Mason** of Advantage Resource Group. Stewart and Keeley are among those commenting for FRONT in a new column on social media. Enjoying the presentation were (from left) **Debbie Hite** and **Carey Harveycutter** of the Salem Civic Center, **Pete Lampman** of Virginia Amateur Sports and **Lori McMillan**.



photos: Tom Field



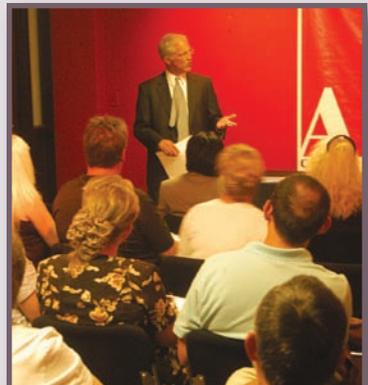
## Hughes turns 25

**Hughes Associates Architects**, in Roanoke, celebrated the firm's 25th Anniversary on September 24 at its office on Elm Avenue. The building, one of the group's own projects, was converted and combined from a service station and grocery store. The open house showcased LEED design principles before such certifications existed, says architect **Martha Chester** (left) standing beside chairman and founder **Richard Hughes**.

## Writers hear legalese >

Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore attorney **David Paxton** addressed the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge's Writers Workshop Sept. 15, discussing the rights and obligations of freelance writers. Novelist Sharyn McCrumb is scheduled to talk to the group at Center in the Square, 7-8:30 p.m. November 17. Workshops are sponsored by Valley Business FRONT. Call the Arts Council at 540-224-1205 to reserve a spot.

photo: Dan Smith





Dan Smith

**Ken Ferris: “Each [startup] involves planning and an ability to envision the bigger picture.”**

## In the beginning, there was Ken Ferris >

### Executive Summary:

*Ken Ferris is the classic entrepreneur in that he loves starting businesses more than he loves running them for a long time. But, oh, is he a great starter!*

### By Alison Weaver

Ken Ferris is always starting something.

The Roanoke executive’s modest, soft-spoken demeanor belies his reputation as the go-to guy for launching heavy-hitter businesses. He was a key player in the founding of Luna Innovations, Luna iMonitoring, Millennia Systems and FiberCom all of which rapidly became multimillion-dollar endeavors. And his interests aren’t limited to telecommunications and technology: he has two churches, a couple of subdivisions and several nonprofits under his belt.

As early as junior high, Ferris set his sights on becoming an architect. That morphed into

an interest in civil engineering and eventually into his chosen field of electronic engineering. During college, Ferris spent two summers working at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers district office in Huntington, W.Va. His work on the Belleville dam on the Ohio River introduced him to software development and taught him how to plan a complex project.

After college, he worked at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, designing an electronic mechanism to help pilots eject from their seats, and on special assignments that “that taught me a lot about taking a systems approach to a problem.”

In 1980, Ferris moved to Roanoke to join ITT as program manager in fiber optics and in 1983, Ferris joined three former ITT co-workers in a start-up enterprise called FiberCom, where he was responsible for managing and developing fiber-optic communications system products. FiberCom became a leader in the field, employing some 200 workers at its peak. Two of its products—the industry’s first fiber-optic Ethernet product and a tactical fiber-optic system for the U.S. Army—have generated more than \$100 million so far in lifetime revenue.

After Litton Systems Inc. purchased FiberCom in 1994, Ferris stayed on as vice president of development and marketing for four years,

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

but he was itching to get involved in another start-up.

At the beginning of 1998, Ferris and Dr. Phil Couch ponied up \$30,000 each and launched Millennia Systems, a provider of communication equipment product development services. It attracted major customers and two and a half years later, Carrier purchased Millennia for \$13 million in cash and stock. Ferris worked for Carrier for two more years before the start-up itch struck again. He admits, "I'm probably driven by the intersection of feeling antsy and feeling like the start-up work is complete."

And so it was on to the Luna iMonitoring (CEO), a spin-out of Luna Technology. He managed the start-up of the company and 17 months later, IHS Energy bought it for \$10 million. Ferris again worked for IHS for two years before seizing upon his next adventure, joining Luna Innovations in January 2006, establishing its Advanced Systems Division. The division helped adapt technology to new markets, particularly medical applications. By the close of the following year, the division was generating some \$4 million in annual revenue.

In late 2007, Ferris made plans to settle into semi-retirement and real estate development. He began winding down his duties, but the stagnant real estate market and an intriguing opportunity enticed him to delve into yet another endeavor: Wireless MedCARE.

Founded by CEO Dan Wrappe, Wireless MedCARE seeks to address the two biggest concerns in nursing homes: bed sores and falls. The company is in the testing phase of a product that uses wireless sensors on beds to alert the staff to re-position a nonmoving patient to help prevent pressure ulcers. The devices also alert the staff to restless patients or those who leave their beds so the staff can intervene to prevent falls.

Says Ferris, "The appeal of getting into a start-up was very compelling." Ferris is overseeing final product verification and is working on filing for FDA clearance, which he hopes to receive in early 2010. At that point his duties will shift to setting up manufacturing, sales and marketing divisions.

## In Brief

- Name:** Ken Ferris  
**Age:** 61  
**Company:** Wireless MedCARE LLC  
**Location:** Roanoke  
**Title:** Chief operating officer  
**Education:** Two years at Bluefield College; degree in electronic engineering from Virginia Tech; graduate courses in systems engineering, business and electrical engineering at Tech and the University of Virginia  
**Personal:** Married to Trisha for 39 years; a grown son and daughter; six grandchildren  
**Affiliations:** NewVa Corridor Technology Council (board member and past president); past member of Virginia Information Technology and Telecommunications Steering Committee; founding member and past board chairman of Blue Ridge Women's Center; past board member of Science Museum of Western Virginia; board member of Great Dads; active in Christ our Redeemer Community Church; volunteers as a cook at the Samaritan Inn; active with Angel Food Ministries

Even while launching multiple multimillion-dollar companies, Ferris has found the time to design and build two homes and to start two subdivisions in Botetourt County (he and partner John Garland of Spectrum Design even did the landscaping themselves). He is deeply involved with non-profits and church work.

Most recently, he and Garland purchased the Downtown Fitness Center in downtown Roanoke with the idea of developing it. "A start-up is a start-up," he says. "Regardless of the scope, each one involves planning and an ability to envision the bigger picture. I've always enjoyed that." 

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



**Brown**

### Accounting

**Erin Brown** has joined McLeod & Company in Roanoke as a consultant and auditor.

### Banks

SunTrust Bank in Roanoke has named **William Newell** executive vice president and director of the region's commercial business line.

**Kathy Caldwell** and **Jennifer Theimer** of the Bank of Botetourt have graduated from the Virginia Bankers School of Management at UVA.

**Joe Cundiff** is a new mortgage banker for Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group in Roanoke.

## LEGAL FRONT



**Densmore**

### Law Firms

**Douglas W. Densmore**, a partner with the Roanoke-based Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore has been named 2010



**Moore**

Roanoke Banking Lawyer of the Year by The Best Lawyers in America, a legal peer-review publication. **S.D. Roberts Moore** of the firm was the Roanoke Personal Injury Litigator of the Year. One attorney in each specialty in each community is honored.

**Ann Green** of Anderson, Desimone & Green in Roanoke is Best Lawyers in America's Elder Law representative. **Raphael Ferris**, **Lenden Eakin** and **Richard Thomas** of Ferris, Eakin & Thomas in Roanoke have been named to the list in their specialties, as well. **Frank Rogers III** and **G. Marshall Munday** of Mundy Rogers & Associates are on the list.



**Knobbe**

Spilman Thomas & Battle has added **Travis A. Knobbe** as an associate, focusing on commercial litigation, creditors' rights and bankruptcy.

**Michael J. Finney** has joined the law firm of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore in Roanoke as an associate attorney in



**Finney**

the commercial litigation practice group.

## TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



**Miyajiwala**



**Everett**



**Beasley**

### Services

Rackspace in Blacksburg has made the following new hires: **Taizoon Miyajiwala** and **Mark Everrett** as software developers; **Ashleigh Beasley** as office manager; **Judith Alfano** as HR assistant; **Brooke Jackson** in marketing; **Stuart**



**Alfano**



**Jackson**



**Mease**



**Jenkins**



**Ferranti**

**Mease** in recruiting; **Larry Jenkins** as VP of marketing; **Michael Ferranti** as a marketing analyst.

**David Hodges** has been named an account exec at Cobb Technologies.

## Have a career announcement?

Send announcements to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto: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.

### DEVELOPMENT FRONT

#### Architects, Engineers

Roanoke's SFCS architectural interns **Kelly Noll** and **Rachael Smith** have earned LEED accreditations.

**Richard Thrasher** of Hughes Architects in Roanoke has earned LEED certification.



Slaughter

#### Concrete

Roanoke Cement in Troutville has named **Raymond Slaughter** maintenance manager.

#### Real Estate

**Michael M. Waldvogel** of Waldvogel Commercial Properties in Roanoke has been named a Certified Manager of Community Associations by the National Board of Certification for



Waldvogel

Community Association Managers. It is a certification for managing condominium and homeowner associations and cooperatives.



Misjuns

Long & Foster has made the following hires: **Marty Misjuns** in Forest; **Rodney Maynard** and **Hank Schneider** in



Maynard



Schneider



August

Blacksburg; and **Erin August**, **Barbara Evans** and **Seth Hillis** in Roanoke.



Evans



Hillis



Moon

Richmond-headquartered Thalhimers has added **Norman Moon Jr.** and **George Lupton**

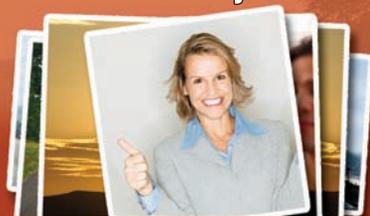
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# Career FRONT



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to man a new office in Lynchburg.



Rust

Prudential Waterfront Properties announced **Genie Rust** has joined its sales team.

## RETAIL FRONT



Eddings

### Auto Parts

Advance Auto Parts in Roanoke has named **Steve Eddings** VP of energy and facilities management and **Edwin Colon** to regional VP.

### Office supplies

**Beth Abbott** has joined The Supply Room Companies in Roanoke as a sales representative working Roanoke and Virginia Tech.



Nelson

### Shopping Centers

**Jenna Nelson** has been named marketing manager for Tanglewood Mall.

## RECREATION FRONT

### Gym

**Eddie Dail** of Gold's Gym in Roanoke has been named the winner of the Visionary Award.

## EDUCATION FRONT

### Consulting

AdvantusStrategies of Richmond and Roanoke has named **David A. Johnson** a consulting director in its Environmental and Energy Practice area.

### Colleges

Ferrum College has named **Elizabeth "Libby" Legg** director of campus safety and chief of police.



Badawy

**Michael Badawy**, professor of management at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College

of Business, received the International Association for Management of Technology's 2009 Lifetime Achievement Award.

### Public relations

**Robert J. Reid** has been promoted to associate media director at Neathawk Dubuque & Packett in Roanoke. **Whitney Pratt** is the new director of the interactive and new media group.

Members of the Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development of the American Hospital Association have elected **Susan Dubuque** as a member of the 2010 SHSMD board of directors.

## CULTURE FRONT



Eberly

### Organizations

**Michelle Eberly** has joined the Foundation for Roanoke Valley as program assistant.

Opera Roanoke has elected the following directors: **Carol Dalhouse**, community volunteer; **Powell (Nick) Leitch** of LeClair Ryan; **George Lester**, George Lester Inc.; **Roger Dalton**, National College; **Linda Fallon**, community volunteer; and **Brian Gibson** of Advance Auto Parts.

Officers of the organization for fiscal year 2009-2010 are **Jeff Marks** of WDBJ-7, president; **Brian Gibson** of Advance Auto Parts, vice president; and Lester, treasurer. Also on the executive committee will be **Barbara von Claparede-Crola** of Kitchen Design and Consulting and **Meredith Hunter** of Hollins.

### Foundations

**Michelle Eberly** has been named program assistant for the Foundation for Roanoke Valley.

## OTHER FRONTS



Loope

### Government

**Jill Loope** of Roanoke County's economic development department has been named Virginia State Director for the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC), the oldest and largest regional economic development association in North America.

### Security

**Seth Oginz** of Roanoke's Security Consultants has been reappointed to the Private Security Services Advisory Board.



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Sean Luther

## DRI names new head

**Sean C. Luther**, a 27-year-old economic development specialist for the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership in Pennsylvania, has been named director and CEO of **Downtown Roanoke Inc.** He is responsible for leading DRI in several projects including renewal and improvements to the Market Square and the Historic Roanoke City Market.

"Sean possesses a depth of experience in downtown revitalization that exceeds his standing as a young professional," says DRI Board Chairman Ben Motley. "We're excited to have someone with his talent, vision, and energy coming on board to work with downtown stakeholders at this critically important time to help guide the future of downtown."

Luther earned his bachelor's in political science and his master's in real estate development from Clemson University, and he earned his Economic Development Finance Specialist certification from the National Development Council. Luther has been engaged in a reactivation of Market Square in downtown Pittsburgh, a \$1 million streetscape grant program.

## Chamber award winners

Chris and Betsy Head, who started **Home Instead Senior Care** just eight years ago, walked away with the majority of the hardware at the **Roanoke Regional Small Business Awards** ceremony before more than 500 people at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center.

In addition to winning the overall award, Home Instead also won the Business-to-Consumer Services category, one of the largest of the 12 categories (there were more than 100 nominated individuals and companies in all categories).

The prestigious Small Business Advocate Award was presented to a stunned **Lynda McNutt Foster**, who had spent much of the early evening taping nominees for Webcast on WFIR's Web site. Foster, who works for Wheeler Broadcasting, is a tireless educator and promoter of small business people. Her series of seminars almost always draw packed houses. (Among those taped for broadcast were **Valley Business FRONT** publisher Tom Field and editor Dan Smith, who were nominated for the Advocate Award, Smith for the fifth time. He has been called "the Susan Lucci of business advocacy.")

Other winners were:

- Small Business Veteran: Charles R. Allen Jr.
- Construction/Real Estate: Hughes Associates Architects.

- Micro-Business: Anstey Hodge Advertising Group.
- Wholesale-Retail: Burris Computer Forms.
- Manufacturing: M&W Fire Apparatus.
- Technology: Interactive Achievement Inc.
- Legacy: Blue Ridge Beverage Company.
- Not-for-Profit/Arts & Culture: Taubman Museum of Art.
- Not-for-Profit/Health & Human Services: Rescue Mission Ministries.

## Free coffee

Roanoke's **Quality Coffee Company** is among the first companies in the United States to introduce a groundbreaking new eco-friendly single cup coffee system for offices and you can have coffee free for your office in November. The system features Reunion Island coffee in biodegradable pod format. "More and more employers have realized that offering a gourmet office coffee program is an inexpensive perk that goes a long way with employees," says QCC president David Booth. He says that the typical office coffee set-up has slowly evolved from glass pot systems to innovative single cup coffeemakers that offer variety and convenience. For November, Quality Coffee Company is offering businesses with 30 or more employees the opportunity to try the Reunion Island program in their offices

with no cost or obligation. For more information, call Mike Dowdy at (540) 982-0941.

## Picks marketing firm

**HomeTown Bank**, a Roanoke-based bank has chosen Neathawk Dubuque & Packett (ND&P) as its marketing and advertising agency of record to assist the bank in their efforts to grow and strengthen their business in the Roanoke Region and New River Valley.

## Award winner

**StellarOne Bank** has won the American Bankers Association 2009 Financial Marketing Award in the Impact Campaign category for banks \$1 billion to \$5 billion in asset size. The ABA Financial Marketing Award is one of nation's most prestigious honors for financial marketing. StellarOne Bank's award-winning campaign, "Back in the Game," included several components: commercials aired on local television stations; print advertising in area newspapers and magazines; and radio advertisements within the StellarOne Bank footprint.

## Closing services

**Carilion Clinic** will close its private duty services, referring patients to other existing private duty providers in the region. The decision affects all Carilion Clinic Private Duty service in Southwest Virginia.

Carilion patients will be referred to other local, independent providers.

independent providers for these services, including Maxim Healthcare Services and Interim Home Care. Private duty professionals provide both nursing and non-nursing care to patients when they need extra assistance, including ventilator and feeding tube maintenance, bathing and companion services. The closing affects approximately 90 employees. Most, if not all, will have the opportunity to take other positions inside Carilion, or transfer with their patients to the

*Carilion, FTC agree*

**Carilion Clinic** of Roanoke will offer for sale two outpatient clinics it bought recently. The purchases were challenged by the **Federal Trade Commission** and rather than get into a protracted disagreement with the FTC, Carilion agreed to sell the Center for Advanced Imaging and the Center for Surgical Excellence. Carilion PR head Eric Earnhart called the centers "a very small part of our overall business" and that the

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settlement ends the disagreement quickly.

*NanoSonic moving*

**NanoSonic Inc.**, a high technology research and development company that concentrates its efforts in the field of advanced materials, is moving to EcoPark in

Giles County. NanoSonic is a spin-off company of Virginia Tech's Colleges of Engineering and Science and employs 60 people.

Founded in 1998 in Blacksburg, NanoSonic emerged as the overall leader of a 13-state study about the strength of small

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# Career FRONT

nanotechnology businesses. NanoSonic led all nanotechnology companies in both the dollar amount of contracts received, \$10,347,956, and in the total number of grants awarded to a single company, 39.

"We are extremely excited to locate in Giles County," says NanoSonic President Rick Claus, an expert in advanced materials and structures and the 2001 recipient of Virginia's Outstanding Scientist Award. "Eastern Giles County is a short drive from Blacksburg, and EcoPark will allow us to responsibly grow our manufacturing business with minimal impact on the environment. We rent office and research space in Blacksburg, but as we ramp up with the manufacturing of our products we need additional space."

## Volvo lays off 50

The **Volvo** truck plant in Dublin has announced it will lay off 50 more employees in mid-December because of declining market conditions, according to a plant spokesman. The plant has 1,200 employees.

## Moving to Blacksburg

**Cobham Sensor Systems** of Roanoke plans to relocate its manufacturing, research and development operations to the Technology Manufacturing Building in the Blacksburg Industrial Park. Cobham

acquired M/A-COM's defense business in 2008, including the Roanoke facility, and will lease 50,000-square-foot of office, laboratory and manufacturing space.

The move from Roanoke's ITT Building is expected to take 90 jobs to the facility with a total \$7 million invested in its relocation and expansion over the coming 12 months. Cobham Defense Systems is a division of the British defense contractor Cobham plc, which generates more than \$2.1 billion in annual sales and employs 12,000 people worldwide. This division develops and manufactures critical technology for the aerospace and defense industries.

## Home show

The New River Valley Homebuilders Association's **2010 Home Expo** is accepting booth registrations for its March 12-14 show at the Christiansburg Recreation Center. More information is available at 540-381-0180.



Effie Moore

## Plant Culture wins award

**Plant Culture Inc.**, a Roanoke specialist in

interior plant design and maintenance, has been awarded "The Best Profit Improvement for 2008" by the National Intiorscape Network. Effie Moore is president and founder of Plant Culture, which is celebrating its 25th year anniversary.

## Roanoke College grows

**Roanoke College** has set an enrollment record for the fifth straight year. Total enrollment on the Salem campus stands at 2,046. This is the third straight year the College has had over 2,000 students. Roanoke also has a record number of full-time students at 1,936.

## Institute gets \$27M

**Virginia Tech's Bioinformatics Institute** will receive an award of about \$27 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The five-year contract from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) is the largest, one-time federal award in the history of Virginia Tech.

The funding will be used by the CyberInfrastructure Group (CIG) to support infectious disease research across the globe, namely to integrate vital information on pathogens, provide key resources and tools to scientists, and help researchers to analyze genomic, proteomic and other

data arising from infectious disease research.



Elinor Ostrom

## Tech researcher wins Nobel

The first woman to win a **Nobel Prize** in economics is a researcher for a Virginia Tech-managed international program. Elinor Ostrom has won a share of the 2009 prize based on her work on how community institutions can prevent conflict.

The 40th Nobel Prize goes to Ostrom, a researcher for the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP), managed by Virginia Tech's Office of International Research, Education and Development. Ostrom shares the \$1.4 million prize with Oliver Williamson, a professor in the graduate school at the University of California, Berkeley.

## RC seeks students

**The Management Institute**, sponsored by Roanoke College's Business Administration and Economics Department, is accepting nominations for the 2010 Management

# Calendar

## Tenth Annual Green Living and Energy Expo

November 6-7  
10 a.m.—6 p.m. on Friday  
10 a.m.—4 p.m. on Saturday  
Roanoke Civic Center, Special Events Center,  
Information: 540-745-2838,  
aecp@swva.net

## Technology & Toast

November 19 / 7:15—9 a.m.  
Inn at Virginia Tech  
www.thetechnologycouncil.com

## Montgomery County Chamber Annual Dinner

November 19 / 6—9 p.m.  
Site TBA  
azenobia@montgomerycc.org

## Rotary Club of Roanoke Valley

Bob McAdam, 540-776-2583

## Rotary Blacksburg Noon Club

info@blacksburgrotary.org

## Salem Rotary Club

Aaron Garber, 540-389-4963

## Civitan Club of Roanoke

Larry Mattox, 540-342-5355

## Civitan Club of Botetourt

John Markey, 540-977-4222

## Kiwanis Club of Roanoke

Judy Clark, 540-344-1766

## Cosmopolitan Club of Roanoke

Mike Russell, 540-772-2778

## Toastmasters International Clubs (Roanoke Area)

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Program. The application deadline is Friday, Nov. 13. The program will be held during the spring semester, beginning Jan. 12, 2010. To become a participant, an individual employee must be nominated by an executive sponsor. Organizations may nominate more than one employee. A maximum of 22 candidates will be admitted to the program. The cost per person is \$1,250. For further information, call TMI Director, Larry A. Lynch, (540) 375-2413.

### Hollins theater \$

**Hollins University** is embarking on a comprehensive renovation of its theatre,

thanks to a \$3 million commitment from the James S. McDonnell Family Foundation. Hollins will receive \$1 million annually from the foundation over the next three years, beginning this year. Based in Lincoln, Mass., the James S. McDonnell Family Foundation is named for the noted aviation pioneer and founder of McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, which later became McDonnell Douglas Corporation. The organization's mission is to support scientific, educational, and charitable causes locally, nationally, and internationally. McDonnell's daughter-in-law, Elizabeth Hall McDonnell, is a member of Hollins' Class of 1962 and serves on the

university's Board of Trustees. Her husband, James S. McDonnell, III, is a member of the foundation's Board of Directors.

### JA Hall selections

Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia has named **Spencer Frantz** of Graham White Manufacturing and **Claudia Whitworth** of the Roanoke Tribune laureates for the 19th annual Southwest Virginia Business Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was established in 1990 by the Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia.

Selection is based on leadership in the free enterprise system and business success, as

well as contributions and involvement in the community. A committee of their peers selects laureates, who must be retired or no longer in the position in which their principal business contributions were made. This year's Laureates will be recognized on November 10 at the Business Hall of Fame dinner at Fitzpatrick Hall in the Jefferson Center. Reception begins at 6 p.m., with dinner at 6:30.

*Compiled by Dan Smith*

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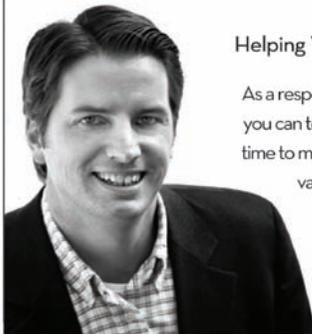
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“ ”  
 We are dealing with... a lifestyle choice. It isn't salary. — Page 26

# Trust Strategy Values Progress



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