

Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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Office Parties

Seafood Safe

Materials
Science

RSO

VTC

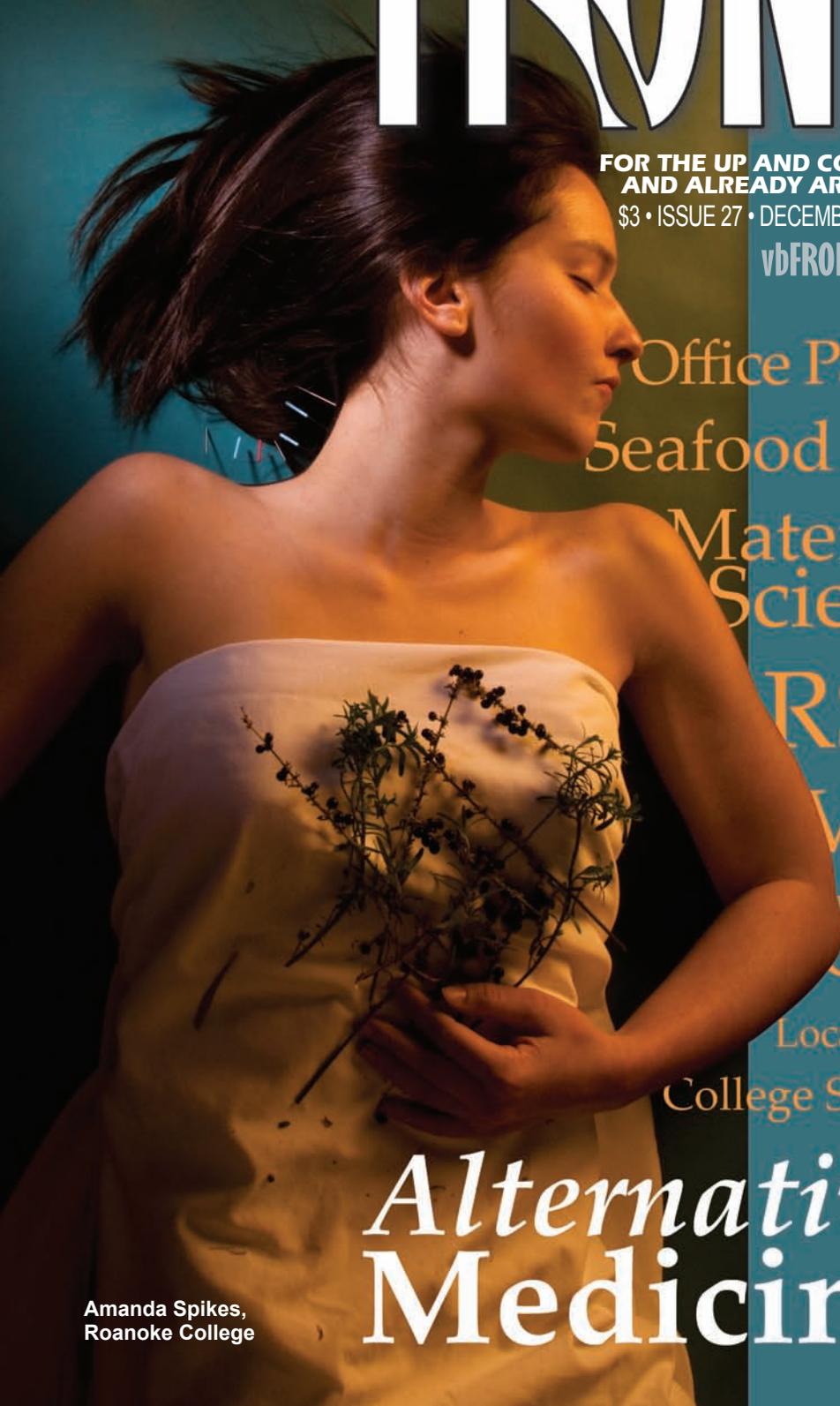
Website
Costs

Local Foods

College Savings

Alternative
Medicine

Amanda Spikes,
Roanoke College



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WELCOME to the FRONT

This month's cover story represents a departure from mainstream business thinking, but it is a strong business story, nonetheless. Alternative and complementary medicine, which has been on the fringes of respectability for many years in our country, is slowly becoming incorporated into more traditional medical treatments by a system that is desperately searching to lower costs while delivering treatment that works.

Much of this alternative medicine is based in treatments as old as 10,000 years and with proven records of success elsewhere in the world (acupuncture, for example, is a broad-based routine treatment in more than two thirds of the world and therapeutic massage consistently gets rave reviews from even the most skeptical).

The time has come to put aside prejudices and suspicions and to allow the licensing of many of these practices so that the best of the practitioners can continue to work and the Charlatans can go where Charlatans go. Medicine is entirely too serious to be haphazard.



Tom Field



Dan Smith



all of us at the FRONT
wish each of you a joyous
holiday season and a
most prosperous new year



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Alternative Medicine

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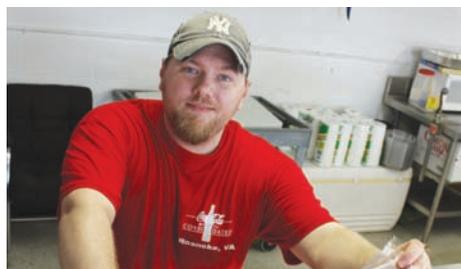
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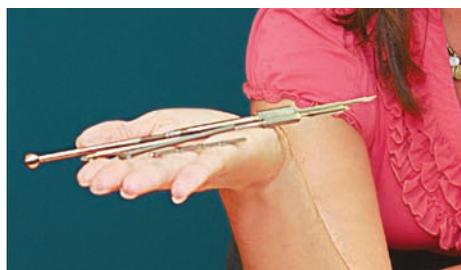
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Cover photography of Amanda Spikes
by Greg Vaughn Photography.

Valley Business
FRONT

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

Staff

Publisher / Creative Director Tom Field
tfield@vbFRONT.com
(540) 389-9945

Editor Dan Smith
dsmith@vbFRONT.com
(540) 556-8510

Account Executives Jane Dalier
(540) 239-2610

Jo Lynn Seifert
(540) 589-1439

Graphic Designer Nicholas Vaassen
nvaassen@berryfield.com

Production Berryfield, Inc.
PO Box 1041
Salem, VA 24153
(540) 389-9945

Departmental Contacts

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

(540) 389-9945
vbFRONT.com
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Susan M. Ayers



Anne Giles Clelland



Janeson Keeley



Gene Marrano



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 56.

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



Jane Dalier



Donna Dilley



Tom Field



Rachael Garrity



Rob Johnson



Michael Miller



David Perry



Anne Piedmont



Jo Lynn Seifert



Dan Smith



Greg Vaughn



Alison Weaver

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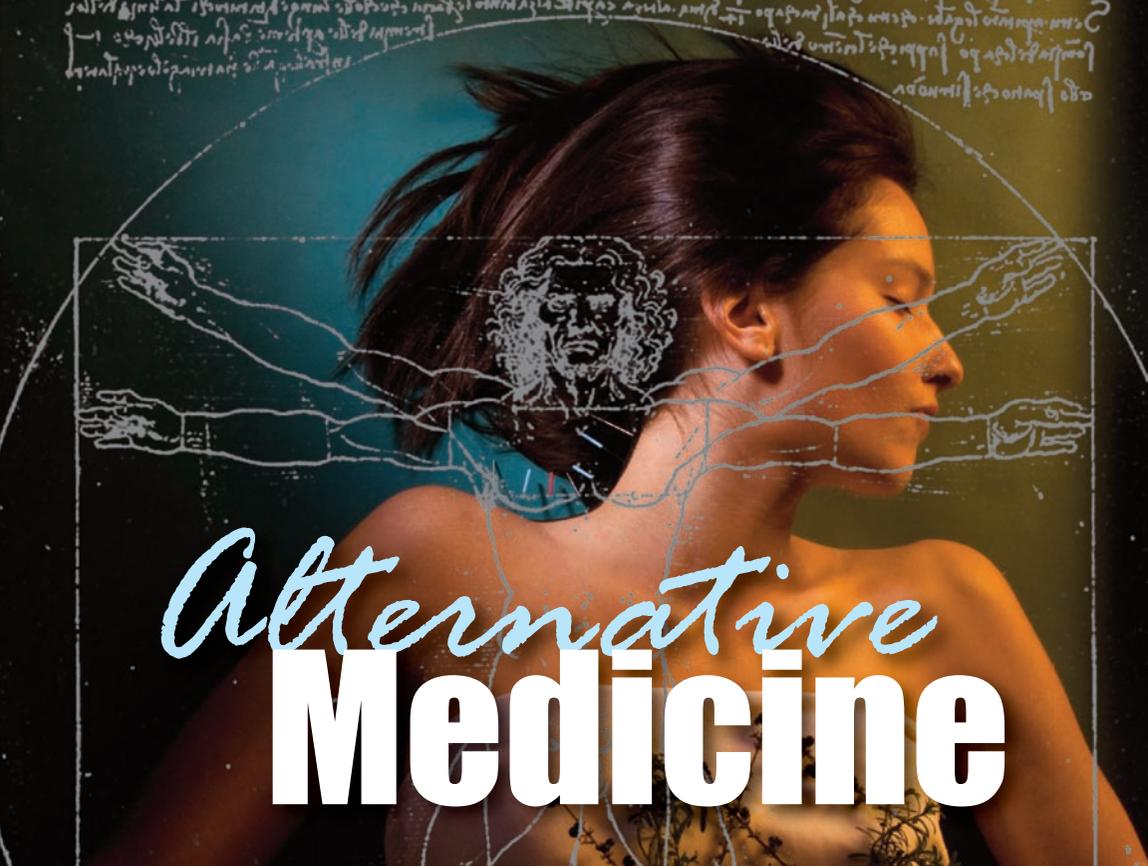
You will note that the Board is comprised of experts in many different business / industry "fronts." This is intentional, as we are reporting on all the areas that affect our regional economy and are important to you. In keeping with our policy of being "the voice of business in the valleys" we ask each 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.

“let's get one thing straight: scientists are people, too”

— Page 36



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



Alternative Medicine

Playing the acupuncture herbal remedy patient, our FRONTcover model, Amanda Spikes is a student at Roanoke College. Practitioners want you to know the needles in this image are staged.

Seeking alternatives In healing ourselves >

Executive Summary:

It is both "alternative" and "complementary" right now, but these sometimes criticized forms of medicine are moving slowly toward the mainstream, at least in the eyes of their "clients."

By Alison Weaver

Energy auras. Therapeutic magnets. Meridians. Distance healing. Chakra alignment.

There's a reason they call it "alternative medicine."

The National Institutes of Health defines Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) as "a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine." CAM is treatment rendered by practitioners other than medical doctors and doctors of osteopathy and their allied health professionals such as physical therapists, nurses and psychologists.

It's a booming, \$2.7 billion dollar industry in the United States, and growing by leaps and bounds. A 2007 study by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (part of the National Institutes of Health since 1998) found that 38 percent of adults and 12 percent of children were using some form of CAM— whether it be herbal remedies, aromatherapy, acupuncture or psychic healing.

The number of CAM practitioners is anybody's guess; few states require licensing or registration for most types of CAM providers. In Virginia, only acupuncturists and massage therapists are required to be certified and licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine.

Southwestern Virginia may lag behind the rest of the state in embracing CAM, but many area practitioners estimate that their numbers have quadrupled in the past decade. Few advertise in mainstream media; in fact, many say they rely on clients finding them primarily via word of mouth or Internet searches.



Dr. Linda Cheek: "They don't talk about it."

Dan Smith

'I'll go to prison if I have to' >

Dublin's Dr. Linda Cheek is a board-certified family practitioner who entered medical school later in life—at 39—after being a teacher for 20 years. She completed an internship and then her residency in 1995.

"By 1997, I knew I was doing no good whatsoever," she says. She subscribed to the Latin root of the word doctor, "docere," —to teach. "I thought we should all be teaching people how to be healthy." Instead, she says, medicine centers on prescribing drugs to treat symptoms, not to fix the problem.

She learned acupuncture in 2000 and then began studying homeopathy. "Conventional medicine is really only good in emergencies," she says. "If a person wants to heal, conventional medicine does them no good."

"Conventional" is probably not a term many of Cheek's M.D. colleagues would use to describe her. She rattles off a list of her beliefs, few of which are mainstream: treating infants with antibiotics and vaccines leads to auto-immune disease; injuries can be treated by injecting dextrose (a sugar solution) into ligaments; homeopathic remedies can knock out a cold in two or three days; the government doesn't want people to live past age 65.

Ironically, Cheek's use of alternative treatments hasn't caused her problems; her prescribing practices for traditional pain medications have. She became a convicted felon in 2008 stemming from Medicare/Medicaid fraud so she no longer accepts Medicare or Medicaid patients. Federal agents raided her office again in June, and she says the U.S. Attorney has told her the government plans to pursue charges of aiding and abetting the diversion of drugs.

"I will continue to fight to treat my patients the way I want to. I'll go to prison if I have to," she says. "God will take care of it."

—Alison Weaver

““

Energy is a form of healing that conventional medicine knows nothing about. Pills are a stick of dynamite; energy is an atom bomb.

—Dr. Linda Cheek, MD

““

My last five clients were four nurses and one doctor. But they aren't referring patients to me, at least not as far as I know.

—Donna Cox



Dan Smith

Lynn Mace: “People are coming because they’re not getting their needs met.”

“There are a lot of alternative people out there; they keep a low profile and they don’t talk about it,” says CAM practitioner Dr. Linda Cheek.

Fulfilling a need

By common definition, alternative medicine refers to treatments not verified through peer-reviewed, controlled studies—or ones that have failed such studies. But that doesn’t deter legions of devotees.

“Modern medicine is really good for things like trauma and infectious diseases. There’s been such a rise in complementary medicine because Western medicine does not deal with the chronic and degenerative very well,” says Lynn Mace, who does craniosacral treatments and massage therapy in Floyd and Salem. “People are coming because they’re not getting their needs met [with traditional medicine].”

Many CAM practitioners talk of a medical crisis in the nation. “The country has come to where we’re losing control of the medical system and the pharmaceutical companies are running it all,” says Jeanne Greening.

Greening has been in the alternative medicine field for 40 years, and has provided Quantum Biofeedback in Roanoke for the past three years. She attributes the rise in CAM to the decline in traditional medicine. “Forty years ago, the medical field had not had such disastrous mistakes—scalpels left in people, etc.”

““

When I got into massage 25 years ago, my dad said, “You’re going to be a prostitute?”

—Lynn Mace, *Craniosacral, Myofascial and Massage Therapist*

““

The majority of what I do as a medical acupuncturist is to understand the patients.

—Dr. Greg Jamison, MD



Greg Johnston: “[You can’t] determine what a patient needs in 10 minutes.”

Tom Field

Greg Bryson, a Blacksburg acupuncturist and certified massage therapist, says people “are seeking therapies they perceive to be more natural and/or safer. People are naturally cautious about surgery and they are becoming increasingly aware that the drugs used to treat many conditions have unpleasant and sometimes dangerous side effects. People reason that if bodywork, herbs, yoga, acupuncture or something might help them, they would prefer that.”

Donna Cox, a certified massage therapist at Mountain Song Center for Life in Roanoke, notes, “It’s natural to seek out natural means to stay healthy. This encourages people to take responsibility for their well-being. A lot of this is just practical, common sense.”

Predominately female

The typical CAM client in Southwestern Virginia is female, middle-aged, well-educated and middle- to upper-income, according to most of the practitioners interviewed.

The higher income level makes sense; health insurance doesn’t often cover CAM procedures in this area so clients must have the means to pay out of pocket.

Greening says her clients range in age from 5 to 80, but they’re “mostly white, mostly female, some older males. Men are too staid in their thoughts, but that’s changing.”

Lynn Mace estimates that 75 percent of her clients are female.

“

Just because you’ve never been exposed to something doesn’t mean it’s invalid.

—Greg Johnston,
Acupuncturist



Dr. Joan Fisher: “Even if it is all a sham and it works, who cares?”

Dan Smith

Combining conventional care with ‘complementary’ care >

by Dan Smith

Carilion physician Dr. Joan Fisher straddles the worlds of the conventional and what she calls “complementary” medicine, often mixing the two for what she believes will deliver the best results.

She specializes in treating sick children: pediatric hematology and oncology, or pediatric palliative medicine. She treats children who are dying or are very serious. Sometimes she uses or recommends “complementary” medicine—hypnosis, aroma therapy, acupuncture, music evoking energy therapy and others—to treat her patients. She uses some of the alternatives for her own various conditions because, she says, “I have been blessed with bad health.”

Basically, she says, some of the alternatives are quite effective in preventive medicine, long-term care, pain therapy, stress reduction, sleep problems, depression, anywhere “that the mind is disconnected from the body.”

She’s frank about it: “Even if it is all a sham and it works, who cares?” A number of treatments that would have been considered out of the mainstream at one time are routinely used in her field in this region today, she says, and acceptance is growing. “Some of it is starting to be integrated” in a number of fields, she says.

Western medicine, she insists, “does acute care well, but is not so good on long-term care and follow-up.” Complementary medicine is good at those specifics. For example, “if you have chronic pain, you need more than a pill. You need a support system to work with you.”

Therapeutic massage, she says, “is fabulous. If you’ve ever had Esalen massage, you will never have felt so good.” Aroma therapy is “very powerful”; Reiki therapy is “phenomenal” and yoga is a marvelous “tension release.” 

“Women seem to know how to take care of themselves better. Women are a little more open about their pain; men tend to be more stoic.”

At Dancing Crane Center of Chinese Medicine in Salem, acupuncturist Greg Johnston says that his practice initially was about 70 percent female but over the past six years it “has evened out to about 50-50. Ages are 25 to 55 for the majority, but I also see children and the very elderly.”



Greg Bryson: “Seeking therapies they perceive to be more natural and/or safer.”

Suzanne Santamaria

Pain brings them in

Leaf through CAM practitioners’ brochures and fliers and you’ll see references to the same ailments over and over: fibromyalgia, back pain, lupus, irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, chronic fatigue syndrome, stress, migraines, insomnia, infertility. In short, conditions that are often chronic and cyclical.

“The No. 1 complaint that drives people in is pain. Western medicine tells them, ‘You’re going to have to live with it,’” Johnston says. “Now that I’ve been around as long as I have ... about half of my patients are coming in for fertility issues, period problems or gastrointestinal ailments.”

Troutville acupuncturist Deann Bishop says, “Pain management might be why they initially come in, but then they realize that’s the tip of the iceberg” in terms of what acupuncture can address. “Women’s health, ob/gyn and menopausal issues are some of the main things I see.”

“It’s always pain,” that brings clients to her, Greening says. “Most all of it is caused by stress: diabetes, lupus, fibromyalgia, leaky gut.”

Many CAM practitioners report that they’re frequently a

““

Conventional biomedical medicine is a relatively new science and is still evolving. When new evidence reverses diet advice and treatment protocols, it can shake the confidence some people have in it. Naturally, they will look elsewhere for alternatives or complementary approaches.

—Greg Bryson,
Acupuncturist/massage
therapist

““

If you have chronic pain, you need more than a pill. You need a support system to work with you.

—Dr. Joan Fisher, Carilion



Donna Cox: "A lot of this is just practical, common sense."

Dan Smith

“ ”

It's funny that it's called alternative medicine. It was actually the first medicine.

—Donna Cox, Certified Massage Therapist

last resort when traditional medicine hasn't worked. "People come in for these therapies after they've tried everything else," Cox says.

As Bryson puts it, "They go through drug after drug and find themselves getting worse and worse. So they say, 'What else can I do?'"

Taking time

A huge difference between CAM practitioners and traditional doctors is the amount of time spent with patients.

"I spend one hour to an hour and half with new patients," Johnston says. "How can you determine what a patient needs in 10 minutes? Physicians didn't create this. They're slaves to the system. They don't like it, either."

Bryson says he tries to block off about two hours to see a new patient. "Clinics and hospitals have physician-to-patient ratios that preclude giving any individual a large amount of time for most conditions. A visit to the doctor can be a very stressful experience in itself. After waiting an average of over 20 minutes, sometimes much longer, patients then only have seven to 20 minutes with the physician."

Bryson says he's not criticizing doctors. "I think most doctors care about their patients and work hard for their patients, but I believe the system under which they work has some flaws."



Deann Bishop: “Pain management might be why they initially come in, but then they realize that’s the tip of the iceberg.”

Dan Smith

MD heads East >

“East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,” wrote Rudyard Kipling, but some Western medicine doctors in this region of Virginia are joining up with Eastern medicine practices.

Dr. Greg Jamison has been an internal medicine physician and general practitioner since 1986. He still practices part time at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Salem—he won an Outstanding Physician award for his work with the U.S. Air Force Reserves in 1992—but his field of focus is gravitating elsewhere.

He began taking a medical acupuncture course for physicians through UCLA’s Helm Institute in 2006 and opened Mount Chestnut Medical Acupuncture in Roanoke County in January 2008. “I’ve always had a somewhat complementary lean to my perspective,” he says. “Part of the impetus to add acupuncture to my medical repertoire was the limitation of Western medicine to help those with chronic issues. Those who used both wisely did get an added level of function and relief.”

In 2010, Jamison became one of about 600 MDs nationwide to attain Medical Acupuncture board certification. He is in the process of getting credentials to offer acupuncture at the VA. “I focus strictly on medical acupuncture in my clinic, viewing it as a specialty,” he says. “One could incorporate acupuncture with a general medical practice but I feel that it would be dilution of the acupuncture skill set and too time-consuming in the medical office setting.”

—Alison Weaver

““”

Part of the obstacle is that patients aren’t telling their medical doctors that they’re getting these treatments—and that they’re working.

—Deann Bishop,
Acupuncturist



Carolyn Bratton: A seeker and an idealist.

Dan Smith

Dipping into Lifestream >

by Alison Weaver

Carolyn Bratton is a beautiful, beaming figure as she warmly greets visitors to Lifestream Center on Windsor Avenue in Roanoke. She helped found the nonprofit learning center more than a dozen years ago and serves as its executive director.

Creating the center was a long-term goal for Bratton, who is trained in Feng Shui, energy balancing, Reiki and 22-Strand DNA activations. She is also an ordained minister and Intuitive Counselor. "I've always been a seeker. I've always been an idealist," she says. She asked for divine guidance to help her deal with what she terms a "less than ideal childhood," and was led to start a healing group. She steadily became more immersed in exploring alternative therapies.

Lifestream provides space for a variety of alternative practitioners who offer modalities such as Reiki, craniosacral, massage, tarot-card readings and aromatherapy. "We love what we do and we're here to help people," Bratton says.

Candace Canfield, a reflexologist, stops to chat in the hallway about using somatic movement for anti-aging. "We can reverse physical habits that we attribute to aging but that can be undone." Canfield excuses herself to head to another appointment and Bratton leads the way to a room containing one of the center's crown jewels: the Amethyst

Happily ever after?

For the time being, CAM practitioners in this area don't appear to envision a scenario where they work in conjunction with medical doctors.

"I'd refer clients to medical doctors if the doctors would agree to let me work alongside," Greening says, adding, "Ha!"

"My last five clients were four nurses and one doctor," says Cox. "But they aren't referring patients to me, at least not as far as I know."

Johnston points to the new Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine as evidence to the contrary. "I don't see anything

Therapeutic Bio-Mat.

According to the bio-mat's literature, the mat uses infrared rays, negative ions and amethyst crystals to reduce acid levels in the body, improve circulation, reduce pain and inflammation, and remove toxins. At \$2,500 for a twin-size mat, it's not likely within too many family budgets, but visitors to the center can experience it for \$25 an hour.

Bratton is excited about an upcoming visit by members of the Federation of Damanhur, a spiritual community in northern Italy. The community of 1,000 has constructed an underground cathedral, complete with frescoes, columns and vaulted ceilings. "Isn't it marvelous?" Bratton asks, showing photographs. "They've mastered the art of time travel—both forward and backward—so they incorporated architecture from the past and from the future."

In another room, Sue Wallace, a psychic and magnetic healer, is swinging a pendulum back and forth over anatomical drawings as a client sits in consultation. When the pendulum begins swinging in a circular motion, it tells Wallace that something is wrong with that part of her client's body. She picks up her "zapper," points it down at the drawing and clicks repeatedly, using

psychic energy to heal the client. How long does it take to feel the healing effects? "Oh, right away. It's instantaneous," the client says.

When the woman expresses concern about her weight, Wallace, who also offers nutritional consultations, reminds her to be diligent in drinking an herbal tea remedy and advises her to eat grapefruit. "Grapefruit burns fat and builds muscle. You absorb the testosterone out of the grapefruit," Wallace explains.

Wallace's next client emerges from her consultation bubbly and glowing. She has been given a new first and last name because her name was problematic, according to the rules of Numerology. 



Candace Canfield: "We can reverse physical habits that we attribute to aging but that can be undone."

Dan Smith

there incorporating alternative medicine. It's the same old medicine. Harvard, Duke, the other major hospitals have that component. Ten years from now, acupuncture is going to be everywhere. There will be 100 to 150 [acupuncturists] in the valley. Hospitals need to get on board." (See the sidebar on Dr. Joan Fisher of Carilion, who's bucking this practice.)

Bishop says she gets more referrals from dentists and doctors now than when she started in Virginia 10 years ago. "Even though they may just say to the patient, 'Hey, who knows if it works? Give it a shot,' At least they're still making the referral."

Still, at 40, Bishop doubts that she'll see acupuncturists and MDs working together in her lifetime. "I want to see it more normalized. I want to be a part of that." 



Traditional and complementary medicine do co-exist all over the world—everywhere except here.

—Jeanne Greening,
Quantum Biofeedback



Holiday business party behavior >

'Tis that most wonderful time of year when businesses are hosts for their company's holiday party. This event can be an opportune time to strengthen and build relationships, but it can also be a time when poor judgment is on display. Listed below are six helpful hints for avoiding the latter.

Respond to the invitation promptly. Hosting a party is an expensive endeavor. The event planner needs to have an accurate count of attendees in order for the appropriate amount of food and drink to be on hand. A gracious and thoughtful person will be considerate of the host and reply by the date requested.

Wear appropriate attire. With few exceptions, the company holiday party is a festive event and one that calls for festive attire, not jeans and a T-shirt. A little (but not too little) black dress for women and a dark suit for men are always appropriate when in doubt. Ladies should take care to not show too much cleavage or skin. Ladies and gentlemen avoid heavy perfumes or colognes.

Mix and mingle with those outside your work area. It's a natural desire to mingle with those most familiar to us but step outside the comfort zone and meet new people. Be willing to introduce yourself to those from other departments and from upper level management.

Eat and drink in moderation. The smoked salmon and capers may be the best ever but there are others in attendance that would like to partake in the spread. Taking more than a normal portion size causes a shortage. Unless the event features a full luncheon or dinner, don't plan to make a meal of the hors d'oeuvres.

While the drinks may be free, excessive drinking at a company party is a career killer. Either completely pass on the alcohol or have a limit of no more than two drinks.

Arrive and depart promptly. It's not appropriate to be fashionably late to a business function. Arriving on time to a party shows respect for the host, the other guests and yourself. If the party begins at 7 p.m., it is polite to arrive at 7 or up to 10 minutes late. If there is an unforeseen circumstance or emergency, an explanation should be made to the hosts as soon as possible. Departing too early or late is a blunder as well.

Express appreciation. A sincere thank you expressed to the hosts at the conclusion of a party creates a favorable lasting impression.

It's important to keep in mind that the annual office holiday party is still a business function. People observed exhibiting appropriate behavior at the office holiday party may be remembered as ones that are able to represent the company favorably in other situations. 

(Email questions relating to business protocol or customer service to donna.dilley@gmail.com.)

Business Etiquette

By Donna Dilley

Executive Summary:

It's a party, it's a business function. Remember the distinction.

Is it theft or just sharing? >

Dear Getting a Grip: So, I take home a package of paper from work every once in awhile. I work from home on weekends and print documents for work. Why should I use my own personal supplies for the company's work product? They won't miss it anyway. What's the big deal?

Dear Paper: With so many people at so many companies working remotely, working overtime, and going the extra mile—all at home—the divide between work and home barely exists. Many people use their personal computers and laptops, mobile devices and office supplies, just to get the job done so when they're done, they can really be at home.

When employers and employees have clearly expressed expectations of who's doing what, where and for how long, clarity about whose stuff will be used to do the work is straightforward to determine or negotiate. When those expectations aren't spelled out, or are unspoken, the work/home divide and the company property/personal property divide are ethics-challengingly blurry.

Many employees feel overworked and underpaid and can feel they deserve to take home a package of paper, highlighters for the kids, or the change left over from a petty cash purchase. Deserved or not, unless it's in the contract that an employee is to be compensated with such, it's stealing.

Getting a Grip: To engage in theft at any level is a personal, moral defeat.

The temptation to steal at work usually comes from legitimate resentment about unrewarded work time. "What would be a fair way for me to be allocated company supplies for work I do at home?" or "I do a lot of printing at home. How about I take home a ream of paper on the last Friday of each month?" are fair questions to ask. Instead of stooping low to pick up a pack of paper, maintain a posture of integrity and take up the issue with your boss. 

Need to start "Getting a Grip" on a personal problem at work? E-mail your question to grip@handshake20.com.

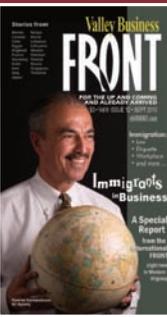
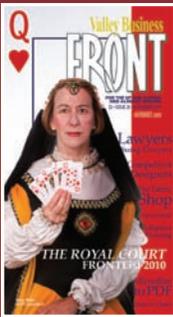


Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

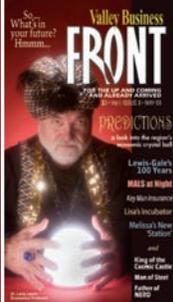
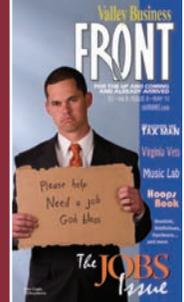
Executive Summary: When you take things home from the office, be sure you and your supervisor are clear about whether it is OK.

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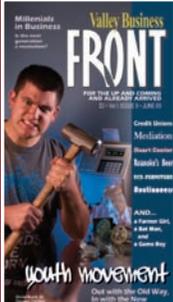
Coming Up..

January 2011



Success in Hard Times

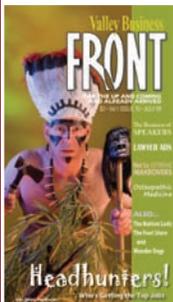
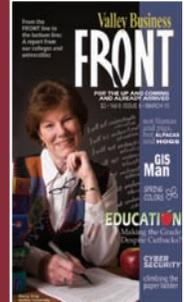
It never hurts to have a reminder that there are businesses thriving—even in these tough times. The time for that reporting is now. Join FRONT in January for a special compilation of successful business profiles. It's inspiring.



February 2011

The Business of VT

There's nothing hokey about the February issue of FRONT. But there's everything Hokie about it. Sure, you know Virginia Tech is a big deal. But do you know how big? As a regional generator, VT's impact is *GINORMOUS!* It turns out maroon + orange = GREEN. And you'll see why in February.



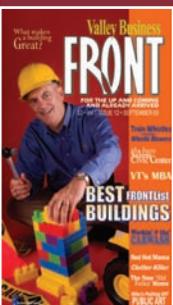
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Dressing for the office party >

The season of holiday office parties is upon us and along with it the decision about what to wear to the office party. Dress codes can be confusing lately, but common sense still prevails. Keep it reserved and appropriate. After all, you have to face these people at the office on Monday. Despite the fact that it's a social event, often you are being evaluated even while socializing. View this as an opportunity to network and increase others' confidence in you.

If you wear a business suit to work, bring a more casual shirt or blouse and change before arriving at the party. Add a funky or festive accessory or two. They will be a starting point to begin a conversation if you don't know a co-worker well, while not bombarding him with Too Much Information.

If you wear business casual to work, don't assume you can go very casual for a workplace holiday party. Stick with dress pants or khakis and add an open-collared shirt in a casual or festive color. "Office Party" means relaxed and festive, not jeans and a T-shirt. You can never go wrong with black, gray or another neutral color paired with a bright touch of color in a shirt or blouse. Aim to look a little special—as if the other attendees are important to you. The effect it creates will be contagious. If you wear jeans to work, this is not a chance to dress in your most worn out jeans. Wear your best jeans, preferably with a dark wash and little topstitching. Add a crisp shirt or blouse and nice accessories. Arriving dressed too casually for an office party shows disregard for the special efforts by the upper management to treat all the employees as important and part of the team.

If your employer has ordered food, rented an event space and sent out invitations, it would be respectful to show up looking relaxed, but attractively dressed. Remember, this is a holiday office party, meaning it is a slightly more festive and relaxed get together than the normal workplace.

One final caution: avoid revealing clothing, don't show the tattoos you've been keeping under wraps, and leave your sports logo shirts and hats at home next to the TV. Everyone at the party will thank you for it. 



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
Appropriate dress is always fashionable.



Joseph Ribkoff

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Wayne Firebaugh: The state charges higher than the average mutual fund fees.

Dan Smith

was the first to sign up for a prepaid plan in the Commonwealth—thousands have opted for the Virginia Prepaid Education Program (VPEP) or the Virginia Education Savings Trust (VEST), which allows the money saved to be used for more than just tuition.

Roanoke-based Certified Financial Planner Wayne Firebaugh Jr. cautions that the state charges higher than the average mutual fund fees to manage 529 accounts. People who save in a private fund college savings account might see as good or higher returns with lower fees, than those who opt for a tax-sheltered Virginia 529 prepaid plan, he says.

A \$4,000 maximum deduction on Virginia state income tax returns is allowed annually, per each account. No deduction is allowed on tax returns if saving in a prepaid plan for college tuition out of state.

“The reason people buy it is because they are trying to get cost certainty [guaranteed tuition rates and fees] for college,” says Firebaugh. “The problem is with prepaid plans ... is that you still have to have another way to save [for books, room and board etc.]”

The lack of certainty in committing to a fixed payment amount every month for many years sends some parents looking for a more traditional college-dedicated savings account, according to Firebaugh.

Still, others like the notion of locked in tuition rates and accept the fixed payments. “That’s the battle people are facing,” adds Firebaugh. Two year and four year college plans are available; if a student doesn’t graduate on time they are on their own however, cost-wise.

Relying on actuaries who estimate investment growth and tuition inflation 5, 10 or 20 years down the road may mean higher monthly

A head start on college costs >

Executive Summary:

Determining the right way to save—and getting the best return on that investment—is a challenge for many.

By Gene Marrano

Virginia 529 prepaid college savings plans won’t pay for all expenses associated with the cost of higher education at a Virginia public college. These sorts of plans do have their detractors, but many have found them a good way to help secure a future for their children.

Here’s a hint: however you choose to pay for a college education down the road, start early.

Introduced after General Assembly legislation in the mid 1990s—then Gov. George Allen

529 payments than is necessary, according to Firebaugh, who has written about prepaid plans on his blog, mycollegewallet.com.

Barry W. Simmons Sr., the director of the Office of University Scholarships and Financial Aid at Virginia Tech, says Virginia 529 plans work best, "if you start when the child is very young. [Then] it's the best thing since sliced bread." VPEP plans can be taken out of state or used for private institutions, although tuition is not guaranteed in those cases. Plans can also be transferred from one child to another, or even to a grandchild.

"It is becoming increasingly popular," says Simmons, who also sees out of state students arrive at Tech with prepaid plans, which are then assigned a market value towards their tuition in Blacksburg.

The VEST option, as opposed to VPEP (locked in tuition), allows money to be used for any legitimate college expenses, as determined by the financial aid office. A VPEP account can be transferred to VEST—if Johnny arrives at Tech with a scholarship for example he may already have his tuition covered.

"There's a fair amount of flexibility there," notes Simmons, who fields questions about 529 plans on financial aid nights. Until a few years ago prepaid plans counted against other financial aid a student might qualify

for; Simmons says that is no longer the case most of the time, depending on the particular institution's guidelines.

The Virginia529.com Web site also highlights two other plans (CollegeAmerica, CollegeWealth) that are provided via partnerships with financial advisors and banks, but VPEP and VEST are run by the state. Mary G. Morris, CEO for Virginia 529, says her agency manages about 70,000 prepaid VPEP plans, with about twice as many VEST accounts, which offer a number of mutual fund options.

Plans are also available in one-year increments, beginning at \$30-40 per month. A two-year university contract, started early, may cost \$150 per month or more. Morris says, "If you really want to hedge against tuition inflation...then the prepaid program is a great way [to do that]." 



The Virginia 529 program gets a promo at a Tech football game.

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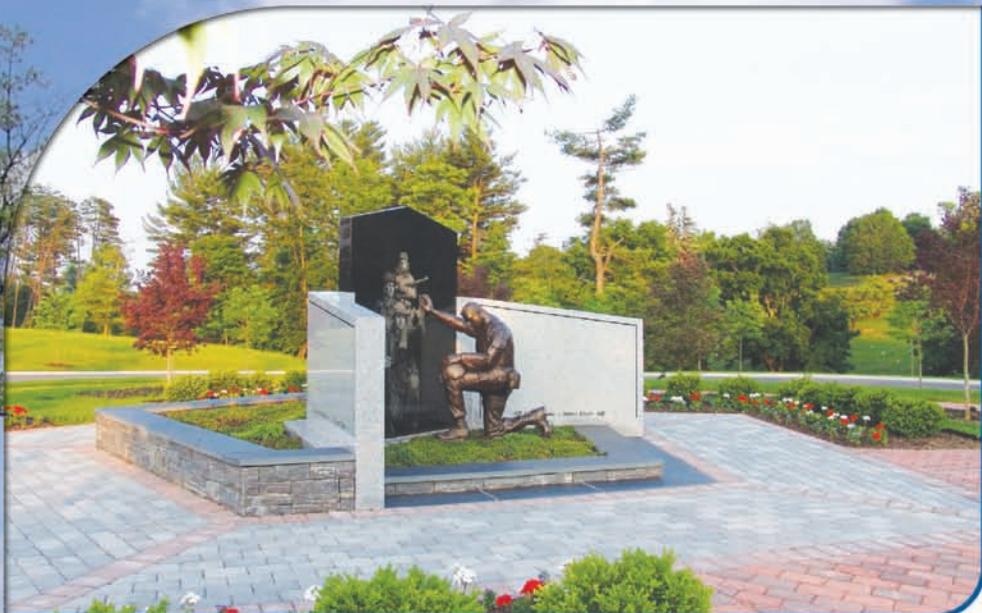
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Mingling seamlessly with the natural elegance of Sherwood Memorial Park is Belvedere Gardens Mausoleum, created from wood, stone and bronze merged with flowing water and trees. This exceptional design received second place in Valley Business Front's FrontList15: Best Buildings in the Region in 2009. Said Virginia Tech Dean of Architecture Jack Davis, "Probably the finest design and architectural execution in our area...This design is exemplary in its incorporation of the landscape and careful architectural detailing. It is sophisticated, timeless, appropriately understated and respectful."

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David Harrison in his home office: Defending patents in China.

David Perry

One-man show >

Executive Summary:

Lawyer David Harrison takes a strict view of when he is at work and when he is at home, even though they are the same place.

By David Perry

David Harrison does business with the world from a suburban home office just

off Va. 419 in Roanoke.

"I couldn't be doing what I'm doing if it weren't for the Internet," he says. "The best class I ever took was a 10th-grade high school class in typing."

As a one-man law firm, typing skills come in handy—and probably other clerical skills as well. Harrison is president of the Harrison Firm, PC, a firm specializing in trademark work, franchising and general business.

An Oregon native, moved to Roanoke in



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David Perry

David Harrison: "The best class I ever took was a 10th-grade high school class in typing."

1978 and worked in law private practice with area firms until starting the Harrison Firm in 1991. It was the flexibility of working for himself that he craved, although not having a boss looking

over his shoulder has its challenges.

"You've got to distinguish your work time from your personal time," Harrison says. "I don't wear jeans to work. I'll change clothes when I quit. When you start work, you have to have the mentality that 'I'm working.' It's too easy to do other things if you're not disciplined."

Part of that discipline means respecting your personal time as well.

"You've got to have a separate phone number," he says. "I have office hours. I get calls on Sunday morning, but I don't answer the phone."

Fortunately, the nature of his legal practice doesn't necessitate an office in downtown Roanoke. "I don't have walk-in clientele, so I don't need a glass-front presence," says Harrison. "I don't have to have a shingle out for everyone to see."

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In fact, nearly all of his business comes from other lawyers. "I had a call earlier this week from a lawyer in L.A. representing Paramount Pictures asking about licensing a service mark that I registered for a bank."

Harrison also defends patents and trademarks in emerging markets like China. Think pirated American DVDs on the streets of Hong Kong: "I represent companies that have had their products knocked off. It's a challenge," he says.

Harrison's latest challenge came this past January, when he did battle with an automobile while on his bicycle—and lost. He explains that he had just finished working on a bike safety brochure for the City of Roanoke. "I finished drafting it, sent it in, went out for a bicycle ride and got hit by a car."

The untimely accident left him with a broken clavicle, a broken scapula, five broken ribs and a collapsed lung. What saved his life was his bike helmet. "If I hadn't been wearing a helmet I wouldn't be sitting here," he says.

Harrison took up riding about five years ago when lumbar pain forced him to stop running. He became interested in the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community program. Roanoke applied three years ago and received an honorable mention and feedback on how to improve. As a result, the city formed its bicycle advisory committee with Harrison as a member. The city applied again, and received a bronze award this

In Brief

Name: David G. Harrison
Company: The Harrison Firm, PC
Location: Roanoke
Type of business: One-man law firm specializing in trademarks, franchising and general business
Background: David Harrison can sympathize with those Virginia families who have both Hokies and Wahoos in the fold—after all, he is both an Oregon State Beaver (bachelor's) and an Oregon Duck (law degree), with an MBA from American University thrown in for good measure. Having adopted his ex-wife's hometown ("It's my hometown now, basically," he says), Harrison has developed an extensive resume of community involvement and professional specialization. The father of two and grandfather of two more is all about bicycles these days, although the nature of his business allows him to drive a desk on the information superhighway from his home office.

year. He continues his commitment to make the city a bicycle-friendly locality as plans evolve. 

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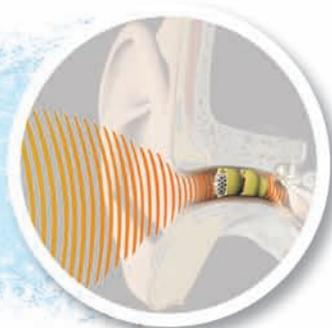
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CARILION CLINIC



Mark Seidel with student extern Melanie Penn.

Susan Ayers

Wounded, but functional >

Executive Summary:

Roanoke's MRS specializes in items that help with wound care.

By Susan Ayers

There is a flurry of activity as one phone call comes in after another, the fax machine runs non-stop and walk-in customers trickle in. Mounds of paperwork lie on a desk and a large volume of technical information is posted on several bulletin boards and other available space. There is considerable interaction among the employees and Mark Seidel, owner/CEO of MRS – Medical Resources & Solutions.

The initial observation of the office coupled with the numerous business lines and complexities can be disconcerting and mind-boggling. But it quickly becomes apparent that this office functions efficiently because of the team dynamics, effective communication and the shared passion and desire to help their clients.

"I use just-in-time management, a management tool used by Lee Iacocca," says Seidel. "Get rid of the overstocking and you can get better pricing. Just-in-time in my book is simplifying the inventory process and delivery of service – not carrying a lot of inventory. That's what allows us to stay as small and contained as we are,"

The office of MRS is on the upper level of Springwood Park on Electric Road and isn't easy to find. "We're tucked away for a reason," says Seidel. "People looking for us are coming for business. We're away from retail because of people coming and going."

Prior to starting MRS, Seidel was self-employed as a manufacturing representative for multiple product lines in wound care and orthotics. MRS originated out of Seidel's home 10 years ago. When he relocated the business from his home, "we started getting more walk-ins instead of just working with nursing homes and home health care," he says. His experience comes from learning from other medical professionals, taking short classes and passion.

A company specializing in wound care, MRS has two full-time employees including Seidel, two part-time employees, three externs and family members to help as



Susan Ayers

needed. Seidel serves as the manager of marketing and operations.

The staff is required to do customer and personal relations. The staff does customer demographics, including diagnosis information, and is required to know the HIPAA laws and privacy laws. The need is substantiated by a physician's order. The company is not allowed to solicit.

Seidel has worked in the medical equipment field for more than 12 years. He has a certification and a broad background in orthotic fitting and has extensive knowledge of wound care dressing supplies in addition to many other medical products. When applicable, applying diversified air mattress systems allows him to know the correct type of mattress to use for optimum results and faster bed sore healing.

MRS provides specialty medical equipment including beds for bed

sores and dressings for wounds.

MRS has several niches to its credit, according to Seidel.

- He says MRS is the only wound care company in the Roanoke metro area that is Joint Commission Accredited, a symbol of quality.
- The company is, he says, the only one in the Roanoke metro area that rents stair lifts. It also sells the lifts.
- The company, says Seidel, is the exclusive provider of infrared light treatments in Virginia. Seidel says the treatment is used nationally and in pockets of places with great success.

The mantra of MRS is "We are medical resources and solutions and if we don't have a resource or solution, we'll find one for you." 

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CEO Nanci Hardwick shows some of the company's products.

Mike Miller

An evolution from product to process >

Executive Summary:

Schultz-Creehan of Blacksburg still does both, but its entire corporate focus now hinges on finding what works best and getting it done.

By Michael Miller

Jeff Schultz and Kevin Creehan started Schultz-Creehan Holdings based on a model similar to many tech companies in this area: they leveraged a government contract to provide the initial working capital. But unlike many tech startups, Schultz-Creehan found a way to successfully sustain and grow the business through the inevitable lean times new companies face. And it all happened because of a softball game.

In 2004, Kevin, director of the Center for High Performance Manufacturing (CHPM) at Virginia Tech, and Jeff, a materials scientist, were working together on a Naval Research-sponsored proof of concept study to develop

friction coating manufacturing techniques. Friction coating and friction welding are methods to manufacture metallic components that use friction to heat the metals and cause them to bond together.

The friction produced when two metal surfaces are rubbed together can cause the metals to flow into each other, creating a void-free joint which is mechanically stronger than a typical weld. In addition, by adding multiple metals into the friction zone, new mixtures or alloys can be created along the joining area, further increasing strength and imparting special properties, such as corrosion resistance, to the manufactured component. It's easy to see why the Navy was interested in the technology.

Jeff and Kevin used their success with the project to spin out their new company. Although they were singularly focused on the friction manufacturing technology, they were limited in funding to the Navy-sponsored project. Business 101 principles (and potential investors) say you should focus on one strength and concentrate all your efforts to develop one commercially-viable product. But companies that follow this advice often find themselves with limited

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revenue in spite of achieving important technical development milestones because their seed grant funding runs out. This is where many tech startups fail. Schultz-Creehan was headed in this direction.

Then, at a rec-league softball game, Jeff and Matt Zeiger, CEO of Aeroprobe Corporation, began to discuss manufacturing problems Aeroprobe was having with its products. Realizing that between them, Jeff and Kevin had the expertise to solve Aeroprobe's problems, Schultz-Creehan took a giant leap toward sustainability by applying its combined skills and experience to solve a customer's problem. In the process, the owners discovered the market niche that has allowed them to grow the company where others might fail.

Friction coating technology is still the sharp tip of Schultz-Creehan's business spear, but after signing an exclusive manufacturing agreement to fabricate all of Aeroprobe's air data probe hardware, Jeff and Kevin realized their product was really outsourced problem solving. Luckily, local entrepreneur Nanci Hardwick was available and they quickly installed her as the new CEO of Schultz-Creehan, asking her to focus on building the company through effectively communicating their corporate expertise.

Since bringing Nanci on board, Schultz-Creehan has tripled its working space in the VT KnowledgeWorks building and added additional manufacturing space in Christiansburg. The exclusive manufacturing

contract with Aeroprobe provided the manufacturing base to complement their government sponsored research programs, and gave them a springboard to serve other local companies. Schultz-Creehan now provides mission-critical materials science and analytical expertise, prototyping, and manufacturing process design and implementation services to Moog, Danaher, Optical Cable Corp., Corning, Nuvotronics, Dominion Metallurgical, Xaloy, Pixel Optics, and even Montgomery Regional Hospital.

From their initial role of outsourced problem solvers, Schultz-Creehan is now evolving to become a strategic partner with its customers with a goal of contributing to the front-end design stage. "The key to our growth and success has been the multidisciplinary team and skill set. They are both critical," says Hardwick.

Schultz-Creehan accomplished what is difficult for most tech startups to do recognizing how to apply its resources to solve a problem, rather than to trying to force a technology into the market. It was able to recognize that its role, based on its strengths, was to enable other companies to be competitive. In so doing, S-C has not only established itself as an invaluable resource for local companies, but executives are having a lot of fun in the process.

"Northrop Grumman and the Navy come to us to solve problems," says Hardwick. "The Navy needs us ... neat!" 

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How much does a Web site cost? >

Executive Summary:

Like just about everything else, the cost depends on what you want, when you want it and how much work follows that.

By Janeson Keeley

When a Web site developer gets a call from a prospective client, the conversation often goes something like this:

Prospective Client: "I would like to get a Web site. How much does it cost?"

Developer: "It depends. What sort of site do you want?"

As a prospective client, you need to understand that the Web developer isn't being obtuse. In order to give a quote for building a site that will best meet your needs, the conscientious developer needs to understand the purpose, requirements, and budget you have defined for your project.

Purpose. Do you want to drive customers to your brick-and-mortar business? Provide resources to your existing customers? Sell items online? Improve your visibility as an expert? Create an online community?

Requirements. Are search engine rankings important? Do you want to be able to update your site yourself? If you want an e-commerce site, how many products will you be selling?

Your budget. You may be reluctant to disclose your budget to a Web site developer for fear that the developer will pad the estimate to "use up" the budget. While understandable, this attitude is ultimately counterproductive. A knowledgeable developer will be familiar with many different Web site construction techniques. It is only by knowing the budgetary constraints under which you are operating that the developer can balance your desires and requirements with the most cost-effective methods for achieving them.

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

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For example:

- Custom sites are usually more expensive than those developed from a template. While using a template is an easy way to save money, Salem graphic designer Sue England cautions, "The pitfall in using a template without customizing substantially is that there's no guarantee that a competitor won't use the same one. Which bears the concern, how do you differentiate your business from the competition?" Customizing a template may be an option.
- Being able to update a site yourself doesn't always save you money. Some content management systems have expensive monthly fees, restrict what you can do, take a great deal of time to learn, and make it more difficult for search engines to index your site. It

may, in the long run, be more effective and less expensive for your Web site developer to update your site than for you to do it yourself.

- E-commerce sites and sites with interactive features are likely to cost more than sites without these elements. However, there are many different tools for implementing these features. "A package purchased from a vendor may be more expensive than having someone customize an existing freeware package," notes Bob Flack of Roanoke-based Flack Software Services, Inc.

Having trouble finding a Web site developer with whom you are comfortable? Call the Better Business Bureau. Ask your acquaintances. Check references. And, when you make that call, talk about your purpose and requirement first; then ask about price. 

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Exterior

all photos: David Perry



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Work Spaces

A simple matter of inspiration >

Executive Summary:

The Carilion Research Institute looks past the scientist to the person under the lab coat in an effort to create a comfortable work space.

By David Perry

Let's get one thing straight: scientists are people, too.

So says Dr. Michael Friedlander, executive director of the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, which is housed in a shiny new facility it shares with the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine in south Roanoke.

"People tend to think scientists are like lab rats, sitting in little dark spaces, but they're people and they work long hours," he says. Friedlander says the building's picturesque setting beneath Mill Mountain and its ample natural lighting are a plus.

"It's great to be able to get light and see out

and see inspiring things," he says. "The views are inspiring, and scientists are the kind of people that get inspired."

Opened this fall for its first class of students and first wave of research faculty, the building, located at 2 Riverside Circle just off Jefferson Street, was built for \$62.5 million (a little less than the Taubman Museum of Art, for comparison), all funded by the state. AECOMM's Roanoke office designed the facility, while Skanska was the construction manager. The facility has 150,000 square feet of space (the Taubman is 81,000), including 50,000 square feet on the school side of the building and 100,000 on the research side. The three-story compound houses about 100 students, faculty, and staff. That number is expected to swell to 400-500 as operations reach their peak in coming years.

Unlike traditional research facilities, VTC features an open laboratory format in which researchers work side by side on their projects in labs that were designed to accommodate everyone's needs. Work benches are movable and fully adjustable, while conduits in the ceiling provide access to gases, electricity, lighting and the Internet.

The open lab format "creates intellectual interaction and opportunities for physical sharing of reagents and resources, and cross education and fertilization of ideas," says Friedlander. "It's a theme that permeates the whole building."



Open lab



Exercise room

"Most older, established, research-intensive universities—they're not like that," he adds. "They tend to be more isolated."

Something else you won't find in the building is heavy tanks of gases, which Friedlander calls "the bane of scientists' existence." Instead of researchers hauling the tanks through hallways, banging them into things and strapping them to walls, they simply tap into one of the many gas lines that run throughout the building. Other common equipment such as refrigerators, freezers and centrifuges are stored along hallways dubbed "linear equipment rooms" to save space and provide more open access.

But not everything was built to be completely open-ended and flexible. There are still specialized rooms that allow researchers to precisely control temperature, humidity, lighting and other factors. One room has electrical shielding and another soundproofing; yet another contains a table floating on air cushions to dampen vibrations from the nearby Norfolk Southern rail line and U.S. 220. And as new scientists come on board, VTC staff adjusts lab space to meet their differing needs.

"The building was designed knowing that was going to happen," says Friedlander. However, any changes made to the labs are "within the bounds of what was designed."

"The nature of today's research is such that projects are changing and funding is changing,"

he says. "Instead of sitting down with architects and engineers and saying we have to knock down walls again, you really can expand, contract and adapt on the fly. That's very powerful and makes us nimble."

According to Gary Mason, associate director and the project manager for the building's construction, the facility was built to be environmentally-friendly. In addition to being LEED-certifiable, the building features motion-sensitive lighting and uses ample glass to provide natural lighting, especially in the library. A small green roof lies over the parking deck.

In addition to being hemmed in by the railroad and a freeway, the building's designers faced another challenge—the Roanoke River. They designed the first floor to be parking, and built the rest of the facility above the 100-year flood plain.

The site "creates some interesting geometries," says Friedlander. "The environment is known. The history is known. The experts tell us that we shouldn't have a problem."

That same river, however, is a fantastic amenity for faculty and staff, he adds, as is the building's proximity to the south Roanoke neighborhood and downtown. At most urban research centers, "you're surrounded by concrete," Friedlander says. "To be able to go out for 20 minutes, clear your head, and take a walk on the greenway, that's really something special." 



David Perry

Andrew Skelton of Capt'n Paul's Seafood: "That's the kind of game I'm in. It's like poker."

Gulf Spill: A continuing problem here >

Executive Summary:

Capt'n Paul's in Salem is still feeling the effects of the Gulf oil spill, but the fish is fine says its owner. It comes from Virginia.

By David Perry

The bad economy, the Gulf oil spill and the closing of the West Salem Plaza have all contributed to a downturn in business at popular Capt'n Paul's Seafood in Salem, says owner Andrew Skelton.

"I've definitely seen a drop-off since (the Gulf spill) happened," says Skelton. "I was getting 5 or 10 phone calls a day from people asking where stuff comes from. They were acting like it was coming from China or something."

He says compared to 2009, sales are off 10-15 percent, while prices have gone up.

"You close down one big supplier and demand goes up," he says of the impact of the oil spill on the seafood industry.

"Stuff has gotten more expensive." Oysters went up by \$1 a dozen, while shrimp went up \$1 per pound.

Skelton says his gross annual sales only total \$70,000-\$80,000, with a 10-15 percent profit margin, making the dip in sales all the more painful.

He cites the closing of his former store in the West Salem Plaza, which was demolished and forced a move across

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Jimmie Blanchard, owner

the street, as another reason for the dip in sales. Skelton's current location is in a small white building set off the road between a Radio Shack and a Burger King on West Main Street.

"A lot of people just assumed I packed up and left town," he says.

Skelton says all of his seafood is delivered to his store fresh whenever possible, and most of it comes from Virginia fishermen. He says most of his fish are only two to three days out of the water when they arrive. However, there is a price premium for fresh fish compared to frozen offerings at other stores.

Customers "see \$12.99 or \$13.99 a pound, but they don't realize that I'm bringing it in at \$10 or \$11," he says. "I'm tacking on two

or three dollars, and if you throw one piece away you've lost all your profit. That's the kind of game I'm in. It's like poker."

Despite the difficult business climate and seemingly never ending bad news, Skelton is determined to keep at his business, which he has owned in Salem for six years.

"Luckily for me, I have a wife who has a good job that allows me to do this," he says. "I think most people would have given it up a long time ago."

Adds Skelton, "I'm starting a family now, and to be honest I could probably go over to Burger King and make more money working full-time. I have regular customers and I can almost narrow it down to the hour of the day they're going to be in. Those people make it so worthwhile." 

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Emily Stuart (left), YMCA's Gail Billingsly and Emily's husband Bob.

Building an institution in Blacksburg >

Executive Summary:

Emily Stuart's contributions to the YMCA are incalculable and continuing.

By Rachael Garrity

Maybe it's the quiet smile. Or the clear blue eyes, with their mischievous twinkle. Or the demure demeanor. Or the ever-present gentility. Or the soft, Southern accent.

All of these are true, of course, but not sufficient, singly or even together. They fail to account for the powers of persuasion of one Emily Stuart, who became director of the YMCA at Virginia Tech at a time when a lesser person might well have quavered at the prospect.

For nearly a century, beginning with the opening of Virginia Tech in 1872, the YMCA performed most of the functions that

enhanced student life. It published the first student handbook in 1893 and opened the first student center in 1902. By 1969, when Emily and Bob Stuart moved to Blacksburg, the university had taken over those services and could no longer justify providing the same level of financial support for the Y.

With a history of enthusiastic activity in YMCA, as well as YWCA, programs in other cities, Emily agreed to an annual salary of only \$3,000—and set about raising the money for it. Having been involved in craft fairs in Chapel Hill, N.C., and Evanston, Ill., she knew the potential for both revenue and community involvement, and began organizing one for what was originally a small part of one ballroom in Squires Hall.

"We just moved materials in our old red station wagon," the octogenarian recalls, "and made it happen. Truth be told, I thought Blacksburg then was a pretty dull place, so my goal had three parts: to provide a market for local craftspeople, to offer lovely things to buy, and to put on a real party."

The proof in this particular pudding led to not only the full ballroom for the next

iteration, then two ballrooms, and more and more, becoming over the years a bustling enterprise that today fills the full interior public space of University Mall.

Too wise to see one source of revenue as enough, no matter how successful, it might be, Emily gathered a bevy of volunteers to sell hot dogs and mums at football games, and put the Plymouth wagon to use again delivering the Collegiate Times in exchange for advertising space.

Then came the Thrift Store, started in the basement at the Wesley Foundation, moved to the basement of Heavener's Hardware, then to two different locations on South Main and finally to its current home on North Main.

Despite the fervor of these activities, Emily's

primary focus was never on raising money. To her, the Y was a purveyor of support for students. The Open University (originally called the "Free University," not because there was no charge, but because it espoused a free exchange of ideas) was her answer to a student who bemoaned the fact that the large size of the Tech campus made it difficult to connect with small groups of students who shared a similar passion or idea. Then there were the Sunday hikes, and programs specifically for international students, like Mornings About Town.

As Barbara Michelsen, who took over as director when Emily retired in 1987, explains: "Nobody, I mean nobody, could say no to Emily."

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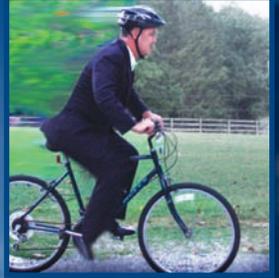


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Richard Wokutch and Joe Sirgy: Tops in their specialized field.

Kelsey Kradel

Turning a serious ear to ethics at VT >

Executive Summary:

Two Virginia Tech professors are among the nation's elite in writing about and studying a concept that some consider outdated if you're judging by their actions.

By Rachael Garrity

For the many Americans who have recently lost jobs or seen their investments dwindle and all but disappear, the term "business ethics" has become an oxymoron. Graduate business schools across the nation are taking steps to stem that tide, not the least among them the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech, which was named 15th among the 25 top academic schools in the field in a recent article published by the *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Basing its ranking on the total number of research articles published in major business ethics journals over the 10 years from 1999 to 2008, the *Journal* study examined more than 1,400 contributing institutions and 4,000 scholars worldwide, naming at each institution the two most productive scholars. Professors Joseph Sirgy and Richard

Wokutch received the accolades at VT.

The author or editor of a number of books on issues such as occupational safety and health and child labor, as well as articles on whistleblowing and truth or deception in advertising, Professor Wokutch has been at Tech since 1977. For five years he headed the Department of Management, and now he coordinates the annual Business Ethics Symposium. He is keenly aware of the controversy on a number of campuses regarding whether ethics should be taught as a stand-alone subject, or is better taught as an element of other parts of the curriculum.

"After the Enron meltdown," he remembers, "there was much discussion on this topic. To me, there is value in a combined approach, and that's exactly what we are doing this year at Pamplin. The three-credit course is taught not in one semester, but in two, with most of the conceptual material covered in the first term, but team teaching throughout. That way we can deal with the Enron case as part of accounting, Goldman Sachs as part of finance, and so forth."

He remains skeptical, however, that ethics can be ably taught as part of all courses, insisting that there are certain necessary techniques for analysis and the subject extends beyond "just being a good person."

Sirgy, who received his PhD in industrial and

organizational psychology from the University of Massachusetts and has been at VT for 31 years, takes that theory even further. The recipient of the highest award given by the International Society for Quality of Life Studies, he notes that, like ethics, quality of life research is not a stand-alone field, but finds application in a variety of arenas.

"In the context of management," he explains, "we talk not about just job satisfaction, but life satisfaction—enhancing an employee's sense of well-being. In marketing, we move from customer satisfaction to customer well-being. In other words, while ethics says "do no harm," the quality of life directive is "do good."

For an upcoming article to be published in the same *Journal of Business Ethics*, Sirgy takes on the thorny issue of health care, arguing that the traditional idea of consumer sovereignty—i.e., consumers well-informed

about the quality and price of alternatives will choose the highest quality and lowest price, thereby rewarding business creativity and efficiency—does not work.

"Essentially, consumers' hands are tied. It is physicians, pharmaceutical companies and others like them who make the decisions," he elaborates. "A small company producing a great new drug has no real chance to compete. By working from the perspective of well-being, we can spotlight science and corporate responsibility, and move from arguing over whether or not government should be involved to addressing its legitimate role."

Obviously, these are two men who give the lie to the charge that "those who can't do, teach." In fact, they most probably would rewrite that other old saying — "Anything worth doing is worth doing well – to read, instead, "Anything worthy is done well—and right." 

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David Tenzer greets Congressman Bob Goodlatte at the West End Market.

Fresh food for the poorest Roanokers >

Executive Summary:

A group of Roanokers is working to help soothe the ills of some of the city's poorest people, starting with their diets which are almost devoid of the fresh.

By Rob Johnson

Roanoke lawyer David Tenzer sees a very real remedy to helping cure some of the ills of one of the city's poorest neighborhoods: fresh food and plenty of it.

In Roanoke's blighted west end there was a concentrated effort during this past summer and fall to introduce those fresh foods to neighborhood residents whose diets are often devoid of the kinds of foods that help avoid obesity and promote health. There are no supermarkets within walking distance to furnish those alternatives.

Tenzer's is working with a group trying to connect local farmers with these low-income city dwellers. This group was hoping residents would eat such healthy goods if they could get them without traveling too far to get them. Some will need educating, as was learned during the first growing season, but

optimism reigns with the effort.

"They might eat more healthy food if they had access to it," says Tenzer, a partner at Glenn, Feldman, Darby and Goodlatte. The 12-lawyer firm has a long track record of involvement with community causes, including co-sponsorship of the fledgling Local Environmental Agriculture Project—whose highest profile success so far is starting the nonprofit Grandin Market. Partner Maryellen Goodlatte fairly gushes about the program's importance and about the firm's commitment in making it work. She talks of the value of fresh food in the lives of the poor and their difficulties in securing it.

The firm is one of the sponsors of Field to Fork, a regional food networking event for local food producers and an array of buyers from consumers to institutions. The idea is to introduce retail, commercial and institutional buyers to the region's fresh food resources.

The popular Grandin Market, owing partly to its trendy location, is a far cry from LEAP's venture: the West End Market, a relatively modest farmers' vending satellite, open one day a week (Wednesday) during the growing season. It's in an unlikely spot in an abandoned restaurant at the corner of 13th Street and Patterson Avenue, a neighborhood marked by dilapidated houses with rusty cars parked in front.

The West End Market opened in June and gained some attention from its target clientele in "the poorest neighborhood in town," says LEAP Director Brent Cochran. That's precisely the customer base Cochran and Tenzer—whose law firm bought the booths and other equipment needed to open West End Market—hoped for.

LEAP's application to accept payment in the currency formerly known as federal food stamps (now called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program cards) stalled and those heading the West End Market had counted on food stamps to encourage low-income customers to try West End Market.



The outside market featured colorful displays.



Community market moved indoors in November for the colder months, but the enthusiasm didn't wane, nor did the amount and quality of vegetables and fruits, as exemplified here.

This past fall, West End recorded about \$200 in sales on typical Wednesdays. The number of vendors dropped to four or five at the end of the season as cooler weather set in. "We certainly don't want to turn away people who want to give us money," says Cochran, noting that tax exempt status had not been achieved as of FRONT deadline.

As the season ended, Cochran summarized the goal: "We need people to come and spend \$5 or \$10 to keep the farmers participating. You don't have to change your shopping habits; you can still buy toothpaste at Kroger's."

Steady cash flow from relatively affluent customers was the key to keeping West End Market open during its first season with hopes it will catch on with the low-income base where its focus lies.

Meanwhile, Tenzer, individually, and his law firm vow to stay committed to promoting

interest in fresh food in urban areas, including support for another group working in that area, called Field to Fork. One example: Tenzer and another group, Food for Thought, are cooperating in the development of a garden at James Madison Middle School in which students can learn about growing fruits and vegetables.

"A gardening curriculum is being hammered out," says Tenzer. He hopes classes using the garden can spread enthusiasm for healthy eating beyond the school yard. "If their class is digging in the dirt, and they're learning and taking pride in creating these foods, maybe they'll take some of that knowledge home to their parents."

Of course all such projects in Roanoke involving the various organizations and individual backers need more support if one of Tenzer's goals is to be realized. "I'd like to see fresh-food markets like Grandin and West End start in several communities," says Tenzer. 

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RSO

RSO bucks economic trend >

Executive Summary:

The sluggish economy has not had the strong impact on Roanoke's top music act that other arts organizations have experienced.

By Gene Marrano

Not to say it still isn't a struggle, but over the past few years the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra has bucked some national trends to maintain a relatively healthy business position. Participation in the arts tends to decline as economic conditions worsen while many see attending a concert or buying a piece of art as a luxury.

RSO Executive Director Beth Pline says arts and culture is a vital component in the quality of life equation, well worth preserving. "We need music, we need beauty and we need art to help us through the hard times."

The RSO, with musical director and conductor David Stewart Wiley as its public face, has been in a growth mode for years. Between 2004 and 2008 for instance its Picnic at the Pops series saw subscriptions rise by more than 300 percent.

During the same time frame the number of people subscribed to all of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra's concerts, including its Masterworks Series, jumped by almost

40 percent. The last two seasons have also been good ones at the box office for the RSO. "Certainly the quality of programming [has been a factor]," says Pline, "I think David has a talent for ... bringing the best quality musicians in to this community."

Pline says Wiley is tuned in to what music choices will resonate in this region. The symphony plays in the New River Valley several times a year and Pline is talking to Virginia Tech about concerts at the new arts center, once it opens in 2013. The RSO performs at Radford University now.

Outreach programs in the community, events geared towards school children and



Director Beth Pline: "Music is a component of what makes that survival tolerable."



operation with a current budget of \$1.7 million. Foundation support and some public money are part of the equation, with a \$70,000 grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts this year. That's a 42 percent cut from two years ago. Local governments also approve some funding with their budgets.

Corporate sponsorships are tougher to come by these days admits Pline. She says the RSO has been able to maintain its corporate support because it can demonstrate that it is well run and healthy, with a consistent audience of 1,500 or more showing up for its concerts—for the past 57 years.

an online package called "RSO 2.0", which includes the availability of podcasts with Wiley, are geared towards attracting younger patrons.

Pline had a background in management with the Girl Scouts and with United Way in several cities before she took the RSO post three years ago. There are similarities to what she is doing now: "Part of my job ... was to look at how those organizations were running, so that donor's money was invested wisely. The difference was in learning how orchestras work." She was made program and personnel cuts in order to keep the RSO running lean and mean.

Corporate sponsorships account for about 12 percent of the total annual support received by the RSO annually, with ticket sales (subscription and single concert) supplying a quarter of the revenue needed to run an

The donor base totals about 600 and donors want to ensure donations are "well taken care of and not squandered." The RSO has never run a capital campaign she notes, and has "never gone out and begged the community to save us. We just keep doing what we do well."

Pline offers this advice for other arts organizations that may be struggling: "Be responsive, tune in to this community. This is where we live ... Look at what the community can really sustain. We can't anticipate this large influx of money [in Roanoke]."

The executive director has no doubt that the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra remains relevant, even as some worry about their jobs and their future. "Music is a component of what makes that survival tolerable, as we're going through these rough economic times," she insists. 

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Hope and little else >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

If the recent elections showed us nothing else, they demonstrated—in their immediate aftermath, especially—that our system is not working and has possibly reached the point where it can't work without a complete overhaul, perhaps a constitutional convention.

When Sen. Mitch McConnell, the powerful Republican, said the primary goal of the next two Congresses was to defeat the president, Americans of every political belief should have been outraged. The purpose of Congress is to advance peace and prosperity for the United States, not to accumulate power for a single party. But that is what it has become and that is not exclusive to a single party. Democrats, Tea Partiers, Green Partiers and Libertarians would hang on to that power if given the opportunity.

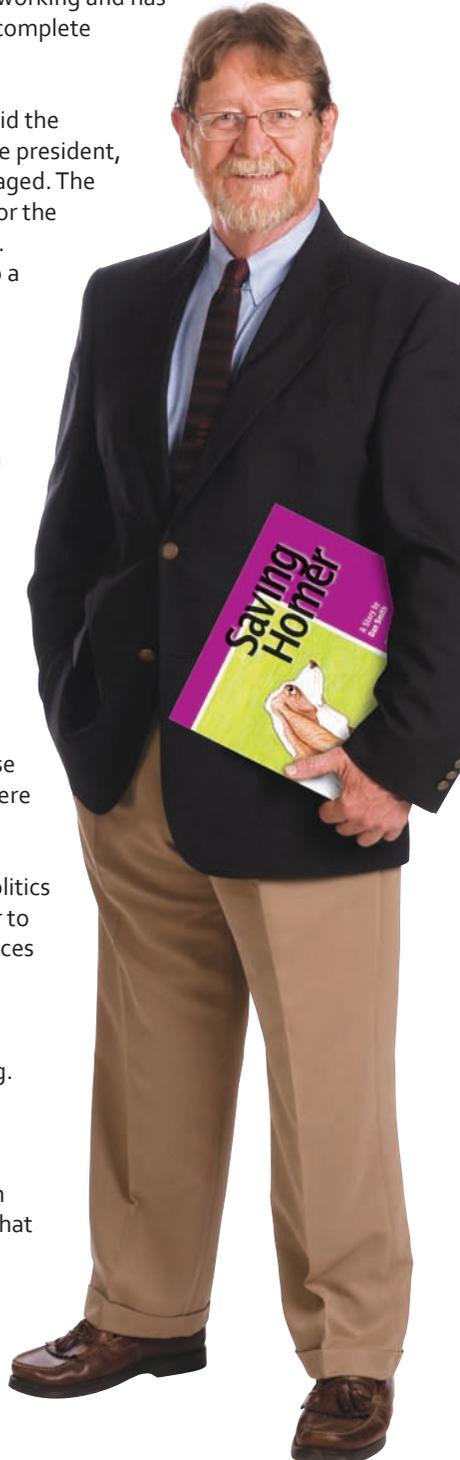
The reasoning is that “we know best” and that is simply bullfeathers. There is no patent on wisdom wrapped up in a political party's banner or any political philosophy. The more we share and try to understand, the more we talk to each other and listen to each other, the wiser we become. But none of that is happening these days. We have segmented into impenetrable camps of single-minded thinking that will not evolve with the circumstances.

In his book *Change or Die*, author Alan Deutchman noted that studies by physicians of patients facing death because of the way they lived showed just nine percent of them were willing to make changes that would save their lives.

You get the distinct impression that the same is true in politics and, frankly, in some business segments where it is easier to wait for the bottom to fall out than to make the hard choices that will result in a better industry.

We can't afford to wait for politics to change, though, because the problems are big, urgent and life-threatening. We're looking at nuclear-armed rogue states; a powerful, corrupt, dishonest and growing China that is dominating world money; climate change that will soon threaten to physically destroy whole countries; an economic situation in this country that has bordered on total collapse. And what are we arguing about? Gay marriage. Gays in the military. Abortion. Prayer in school. The number of guns we get to have on our person when we go to church. Whether to tax the wealthy. And a whole host of distractions

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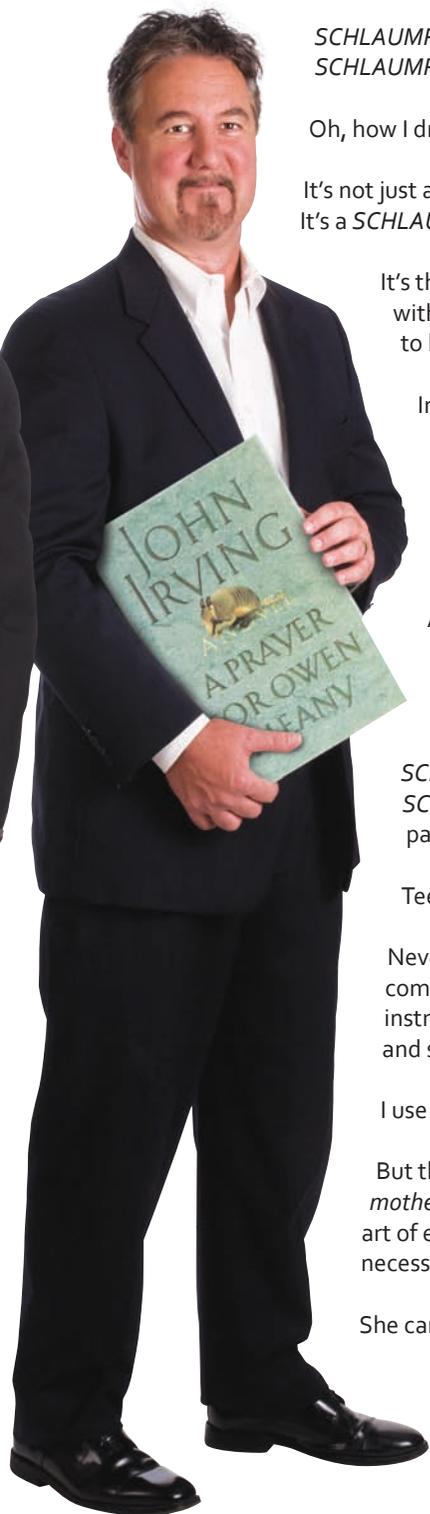


Distressing sounds of nature >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

BLOG: [ontapfrompub.blogspot.com]



*SCHLAUMP! SCHLAUMP! SCHLAUMP! SCHLAUMP! SCHLAUMP!
SCHLAUMP! SCHLAUMP!*

Oh, how I dread that sound.

It's not just a stomp. It's between a stomp. And a clunk. And a clomp. It's a *SCHLAUMP*.

It's the sound of an angry bare- or sock-footed female in a house with hardwood floors. A common sound in nature, I'm inclined to believe. Too common, sometimes.

In their natural habitats, when they feel threatened or the need to be defensive, dogs hunch down, growl, and bristle up the hairs on the back of their necks. Possums play dead. Octopi squirt ink.

I get *SCHLAUMPS*.

And like fingerprints, dental records, and DNA, each *SCHLAUMPER* is easy to identify. The younger, teen *SCHLAUMPERS* usually *SCHLAUMP* off and out. Off in another direction. Out of the room. Accompanied by mutterings of "I can't stand you," against sibling *SCHLAUMPERS*. Or no mutterings, but just louder *SCHLAUMPS*—un-admittedly, but clearly directed at parentals.

Teen *SCHLAUMPING* is mostly annoying.

Nevertheless, as a responsible parent, a nurturing, leading, compassionate and empathetic soul—a father concerned about instructing wisely and maintaining proper harmony, balance and security in our natural habitat—I do what I know best.

I use the TV remote to turn the volume up.

But the momma *SCHLAUMPER*... or, dare I say, the *motherSCHLAUMPER*—the very one who taught this fine art of expression to her progeny, I might add—she doesn't necessarily *SCHLAUMP* off and out.

She can *SCHLAUMP* toward you. That's right... in your direction.

There is no TV remote on the planet that can overcome that.

continued to Page 50

Smith / My View

from Page 48

that are hardly worth the breath to express them.

I don't know what the solution is or even if there is one. The camps have steel defenses and they want to approach the challenges their way and only their way—which often involves denial that a problem exists.

It's exasperating and the temptation is to despair. But we can hope. That's about all we have at this point. 🐾

Field / On Tap

from Page 49

Again, I do what I know best. In these situations—like any situation in nature—your first reaction is a natural one.

You toss the remote. And run.

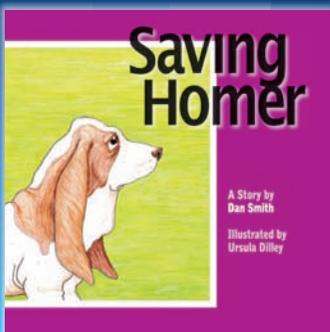
Anywhere. As fast as you can. Even if it means you now have to mow the grass that's already short. Rake the leaves that have long since blown away. Give the clean dog a bath. (No, that's not true... the dog is never clean... but that's some serious *SCHLAUMPING*.)

We all handle our dissatisfactions in our own way. *SCHLAUMPING* off to voting polls. *SCHLAUMPING* off our complaints to customer service. *SCHLAUMPING* off our flaming emails and letters to the editor.

It's all part of nature. An evolutionary process we learn to deal with, just like a threatened dog that no longer hunches down and growls when you give him a bath.

After a thousand scrubblings, I think he understands. 🐾

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Letters

Misunderstood

I read your NOT So Business Friendly Town Council piece (Royal Court FRONTList 2010, November) and have some questions. Who has resorted to cardboard signs? It would be good to know so we can meet with him to answer questions or misunderstandings that might lead someone to say "excessive fees and regulations."

And, perhaps you could let me know the other complaints that go on and on. Please explain to me where you came up with the idea that I avoid ribbon-cuttings. I was just at one yesterday and, as I say at the many ribbon cuttings that I attend, it is one of the more enjoyable parts of my job as mayor. Please, be a little more careful next time.

Ron Rordam,
Mayor, Town of Blacksburg

Cover the successes

I've been enjoying reading all of your recent [blog posts] about the issues confronting the Taubman Museum and some of the other arts organizations in the community. Two things keep niggling at me though. I think using only the term "arts," as opposed to "arts and culture," leaves out a big part of the cultural community and I can't help get miffed every time I read that RSO is the only arts organization that isn't in dire straits.

I would love to see some positive press about organizations like the Historical Society which has actually expanded over the past few years and is successful, sustainable, and debt free. And did I mention that we pay full benefits for our staff and have not laid anyone off?

There are some success stories around town and I think our community should hear about these stories so that we can restore their confidence in our ability to provide quality education, contribute to economic development and generally improve the quality of life in the Roanoke Valley.

Jeanne M. Bollendorf
Executive Director,
Historical Society of Western Virginia
Roanoke

Corrections

Jerry Falwell Jr., chancellor of Liberty University, is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law. His alma mater was incorrectly identified in the November issue of FRONT.

Ray Smoot is chairman of the board of StellarOne, formerly FNB Corporation. In November's issue (FRONTList) that distinction was not made.

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

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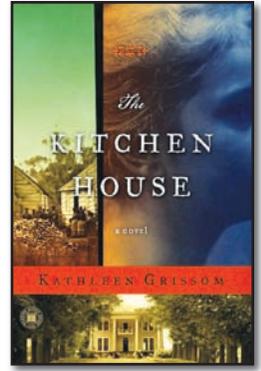
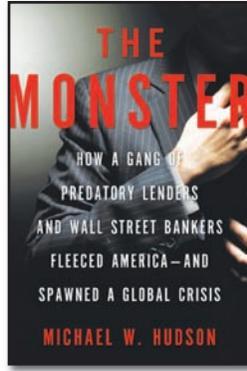
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Jane Dalier: 540-239-2610
Jo Lynn Seifert: 540-589-1439

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Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our publishers and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Readers are invited to submit 125-word reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to Editor Dan Smith at dsmith@vbfrent.com



Crime and profit

The Monster: How a Gang of Predatory Lenders and Wall Street Bankers Fleeced America—and Spawned a Global Crisis (Times Books, \$26) is an excellent title by Mike Hudson, a former Roanoke Times reporter who looks at the global mortgage crisis as criminal enterprise. It's a story that Hudson has been pursuing for years, first as a monograph for the Southern Poverty Law Center, and later for the Los Angeles Times and numerous other publications. Hudson, who also worked for a time for the Wall Street Journal, now covers business and finance for the nonprofit Center for Public Integrity.

There are a few books on the subprime-loan scandal that spawned the global economic meltdown of 2008, but no one has covered this story with Hudson's depth of understanding. He isn't just a great, dedicated reporter. He's a fine writer. It's a fantastic read. And a hugely important one. Hudson hails from Franklin County, where his father coached basketball at Ferrum. Hudson played ball there himself before graduating from Washington and Lee.

—Roland Lazenby

An inside look

When Lavinia, a seven-year-old Irish orphan in Lynchburg author Kathleen Grissom's *The Kitchen House* (Touchstone, \$16), arrives at a Virginia tobacco plantation in 1781, she thinks she has been rescued by the master. She finds she is an indentured servant. The master sends her to work in the kitchen house with a family of slaves.

Lavinia bonds with her new family. As she

grows up, Lavinia moves up to work in the big house, belonging neither to its white world or the black world of the kitchen house where her heart is.

Lavinia's tale spans more than two decades and gives the reader a fresh look at plantation life. Her empathy with the slaves causes conflict, and she is becomes a target for the plantation manager. Grissom's novel is rich in historical accuracy and shows the reader a different side of life in the Old South. Her language invites the reader to sip it slowly, like fine wine.

—Betsy Ashton

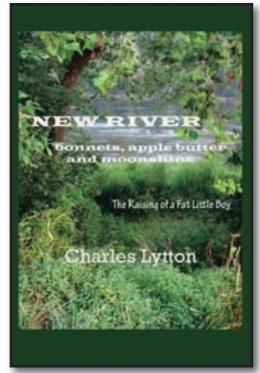
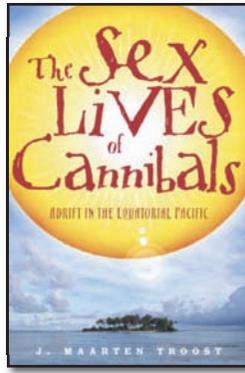
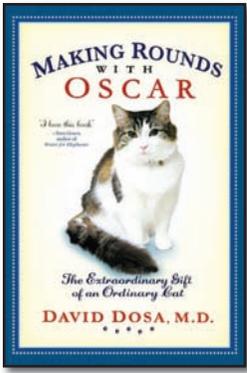
The cat of death

Making Rounds with Oscar: the Extraordinary Gift of an Ordinary Cat by Dr. David Dosa is a feel-good, engaging book. It tells the true tale of a physician who researches rumors and hear-say at the Steere House Nursing and Rehabilitation Center that one particular cat, Oscar, can predict which of the residents is nearing the end.

By trying to effectively disprove this theory, he learns how truly comforting Oscar has been not only to residents about to die, but also their families. Whether science, sense of smell, or something else, Oscar consistently and unwittingly seeks out these individuals and stays until he's no longer needed.

Funny, intelligent, and at times a bit sad. We learn some interesting facts about Alzheimer's and lessons about one extraordinary cat.

—Joyce Waugh



Simpsons forever

OK, you're gonna have to really like the person who gets Matt Groening's *Simpsons World The Ultimate Episode Guide: Seasons 1-20* (It Books) for Christmas because it costs \$88. But if you like the person you're giving it to and he's a Simpson's fiend, then your generosity will be rewarded with a lifetime friend. This is the 20th anniversary celebration and it is so packed, the 40th may be here before your pal finishes reading this one.

Like just every Simpsons book so far, this one's lavishly illustrated, full of the kind of detail that only a real fan would care about, but can't live without ("Itchy & Scratchy" filmography, First Church of Springfield marquee messages, a list of couch gags ...). It is a funny, valuable book that reflects everything you want to know about one of the funniest and most topical (and most irreverent) television shows ever.

—Dan Smith

Off by himself

The Sex Lives of Cannibals (Broadway, \$14) is J. Maarten Troost's humorous and playful story of two years on a tiny, remote island. Left aimless and ambitionless by too many graduate courses and a Washington, D.C., lifestyle, Troost journeys to the small island of Tarawa in the Pacific Ocean when his girlfriend takes a job working for a foreign aid foundation.

Hoping for a tropical paradise, he instead finds natives defecating in the ocean, mountains of trash, sweltering heat,

insects, parasites and a local culture thoroughly poisoned by the worst of Western influences.

Rather than hopping the first plane back to civilization, he adapts with humor, patience and understanding, and emerges with a newfound respect for those who seek to sustain a meager existence at the end of the world.

—David Perry

Down home

Charles Lytton's *New River: bonnets, apple butter and moonshine* (*The Raising of a Fat Little Boy*) (self-published, \$14.95) is long on title, on Appalachian lore and recipes. It is a fine little book meant for sales to tourists and to the nostalgic. Lytton is a solid writer and a better teller of tales.

The book is nicely illustrated with line drawings by Patsy Fairies. Lytton is with the Giles County Extension Service.

—Dan Smith

(The reviewers: Roland Lazenby is a Roanoke-based author of more than two dozen books, including the recent *Jerry West*. Betsy Ashton is a Smith Mountain Lake-based author. Joyce Waugh is president of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce. David Perry is with the Western Virginia Land Trust and is a freelance writer. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT.)



photos: Tom Field

LewisGale drops the hyphen >

HCA Virginia Health System announced its new branding strategy for **LewisGale Regional Health System** at an Oct. 27 press conference. Joined by the CEOs of regional hospitals, **Greg Madsen** (Alleghany), **Scott Hill** (Montgomery), **Mark Nichols** (Pulaski), President **Victor Giovanetti** said the announcement was “one that will certainly be included in the hospital’s history books,” and the public needed to be more aware of the growth, size and scope of LewisGale. Members of the press were invited by **Nancy May**, VP marketing and **Joy Sutton**, marketing manager, to report the campaign launch. The system is comprised of 4 hospitals, 8 outpatient centers, 135 employed physicians and mid-levels, and over 550 affiliated independent physicians.



photo: Dan Smith

Health care for bankers, lawyers >

Carilion CEO **Dr. Ed Murphy** was the first speaker at the **Bankers Forum**, sponsored by Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore Oct. 27 at the Shenandoah Club in Roanoke. Murphy gave

the talk to some of the region's notable bankers and lawyers in what GLRM's Bill Rakes says will be an on-going series of talks by important business people in the region.

Christian ed initiative >

Renewanation—a Roanoke-based organization seeking to establish tuition free Christian school systems across America—held its third annual benefit banquet Nov. 8 at Hotel Roanoke. Founder **Jeff Keaton** spoke of the mission challenge, while **Melvin Adams**, president (pictured) presented the growth in affiliate schools.



photo: Tom Field

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



photos: Tom Field

Beer drafts crowd >

The second annual **Brew Do**—a craft beer festival by **The Blacksburg Partnership**, featuring a regional brew master competition and tastings—was held October 30 at Blacksburg's First & Main. Amongst the crowd, were characters also celebrating the Halloween weekend.



photo: Susan Ayers

Lit lounge >

FRONT contributor **Keith Ferrell** and FRONT Editor **Dan Smith** teamed with Hollins professor, poet and novelist **Jeanne Larsen** to pack the house at the November **Literary Lounge** at Studio Roanoke Nov. 7. The three writers read from recent or developing works (Smith from his novel *CLOG!*, Ferrell from an untitled novel and Larsen from a new book of poetry). Matt Williams, who runs LL, says it was the largest crowd for the event.

Health care shopping >

Carilion's one year old **Riverside Center** on South Jefferson offers "one stop shopping" for medical care and testing. So says Beth Linville, senior director of operations, during the **Cup of Jazz** anniversary event on November 6. Visitors received free health screenings, could check out state of the art equipment (such as the daVinci Robotic Surgical System, pictured above), sit in on physician forums - or just enjoy the free food and live jazz music.



photo: Gene Marrano



photo: TJ Wells

Bridging creative and marketing >

Steve Lance, creative director, multiple Emmy Award winner, author of *The Little Blue Book of Advertising*, and agency principal of PS Insights in New York, spoke at the **AAF/Roanoke** luncheon at Hotel Roanoke on Nov. 17. His topic was

"Marketers are from Mars, Creatives are from Venus," and he illustrated the necessity of establishing a process to bridge the disconnect in order to better serve the client.

CONTRIBUTORS

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

Anne Giles Clelland is the founder of business news site Handshake 2.0 (handshake20.com) and the president and CEO of Handshake Media, Inc., a new media PR firm and member company of VT Knowledge-Works in Blacksburg. She has master's degrees in education and in counseling and is part of a team organizing the inaugural New River Valley Triathlon. [anne@handshake20.com]

Jane Dalier is an Account Executive for FRONT, with extensive experience in publication sales and small business ownership. [jdalierFRONT1@verizon.net]

Donna Dilley is the founding director of the National League of Junior Cotillions in Roanoke Valley, speaker and workshop leader on civility, business etiquette, international protocol and customer service. Her office is in the Jefferson Center. [Donna.dilley@gmail.com]

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

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

Rob Johnson's journalism career began in 1972 and has included a two-decade stint at The Wall Street Journal, reporting on such industries as energy, manufacturing and tourism. He was later business editor of The Roanoke Times, where his reporters garnered national and state awards in 2007. These days he contributes articles to The Wall Street Journal's periodic special reports on small business and retirement. [bobbyj7676@gmail.com]

Janeson Keeley is the owner of JTKWeb in Roanoke, where she specializes in Web site development and search engine optimization. She is also founder of TweetVA (www.tweetva.com, @TweetVA), "Virginia's Twitter Directory". [janesonkeeley@verizon.net]

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

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

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

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

Jo Lynn Seifert is an Account Executive for FRONT. Her experience in regional market media sales is diverse and strategically applicable. [JoLynnFRONT@verizon.net]

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

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

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

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

Alison Weaver is a freelance writer based in Roanoke. She contributed to and was a staff writer at the Blue Ridge Business Journal throughout the 1990s before working as a copy editor at The Roanoke Times for eight years. Her recent freelance credits include Redbook magazine. Her story on niche publications won the FRONT Story of the Year for 2009. [alison.weaver03@gmail.com]



Anne Piedmont

NOVEMBER 2010 > Contributor of the Month

Our newest contributor, Anne Piedmont, has hit the ground running, winning the Contributor of the Month citation for her first contribution to Valley Business FRONT. Anne is responsible for Economic Indicators, the quick, statistical look at this region that was an instant hit in the November issue. She is the former numbers guru for the Roanoke Valley Economic Development Partnership and now has her own shop, Piedmont Research Associates in Roanoke. Anne's understanding of both the numbers and which ones are the most significant to our readership is a distinct advantage for the FRONT. We congratulate her.

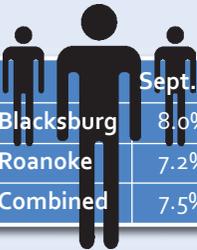
“I'll go to prison if I have to

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Is that a glimmer of economic brightening on the horizon? Unemployment is down in the Roanoke and Blacksburg MSAs from a year ago and a month ago. Employment is up – as maybe a hint of things to come – initial unemployment claims are down from a year ago.

Unemployment/Employment

Both the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas showed improvement in the **unemployment rate** from September 2009 to September 2010 and from August to September. Blacksburg's rate dropped 10 percent over the year, while the combined region dropped 5.3 percent.



	UNEMPLOYMENT		
	Sept. 09	Aug. 10	Sept. 10
Blacksburg	8.0%	8.1%	7.2%
Roanoke	7.2%	7.5%	7.0%
Combined	7.5%	8.3%	7.1%

The number of people **employed** in the two MSAs is up very slightly from 2009 and almost 2 percent from August to September.

EMPLOYED		
Sept. 2009	Aug. 2010	Sept. 2010
221,650	219,366	221,764

One of the area's strongest areas of employment growth is in the health care sector, thanks to the Roanoke Valley's role as a regional medical center. **Employment in hospitals** there rose 2.3 percent from the first quarter of 2009 to the first quarter of 2010. Hospital employment rose 0.4 percent statewide during the same period. The combined region saw a rise of 6.9 percent.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYMENT		
	Q1 2009	Q1 2010
Blacksburg	2,100	1,966
Roanoke	9,550	9,765
Combined	11,650	11,731

More people are back to work and fewer are filing **initial unemployment claims** compared to a year ago, according to the Virginia

Employment Commissions. For the week of October 22-28 (week 43), initial claims in the Roanoke and Blacksburg MSAs fell at a faster pace than Virginia as a whole: -21.1 percent compared to -10.9 percent.

INITIAL EMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Week 43 2009	Week 43 2010
644	508

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Retail Sales

Is that the sound of cash registers ringing? Local sales tax revenue in the Roanoke and Blacksburg MSAs rose from August 2009 to August 2010, with the New River Valley leading the way, thanks to a healthy jump of 6.4 percent – well above the statewide increase of 3.1 percent. The combined regions slightly bested the state (3.2%)



	SALES TAX REVENUE	
	Aug. 2009	Aug. 2010
Blacksburg	\$1,292,798	\$1,375,572
Roanoke	\$3,081,080	\$3,138,072
Combined	\$4,373,878	\$4,513,644

Source: Virginia Department of Taxation

Air Cargo

Another sign of improving economy is the increase of cargo leaving the Roanoke Regional Airport (Also a sign of good news for area catalog operations.) Year-to-date emplaned cargo is up 2.6 percent.



AIR CARGO	
Year To Date 2009	Year To Date 2010
7,403,737 pounds	7,596,444 pounds
Sept. 2009	Sept. 2010
889,814	894,644

Source: Roanoke Regional Airport

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates



Dawn Dowdle: "There are no advances from small publishers."

Dan Smith

Literary agent looking for a break >

Executive Summary:

It's not just new authors who are seeking notice from publishers. Their agents have to build their careers from the bottom, too, and when the clients are rookies, it's harder.

By Rob Johnson

Dawn Dowdle likes long shots.

The 51-year-old former legal secretary is taking aim at one of those long shots herself by starting up a literary agency in Lynchburg.

Her client list is hardly a Who's Who of the book-writing world. No glamour names in the vein of Nora Roberts or John Grisham. Instead, she's hawking the fictional wares of mostly first-time authors hoping to get noticed and eventually break through to the ranks of best-sellers, or at least small successes.

"I'm always hoping that a Random House or Harlequin will buy one of my books. But I have to start somewhere and so do most authors," says Dowdle.

Thus she opened Blue Ridge Literary Agency in January 2009; she operates the one-person business out of her home in Lynchburg. At first glance, Dowdle seems an unlikely candidate for her field: She didn't attend college and doesn't have formal experience in the publishing industry. But in an interview, Dowdle displayed a passion for good storytelling. She referred to her office administrative background as evidence of sharpening the eye for detail in written communication so essential in her newly chosen field. Furthermore, before opening her agency, Dowdle edited some book manuscripts. They were largely for little-known authors of the sort she's representing to publishers now.

Nor does Dowdle claim big-time publishing connections. She tugs at the sleeves of New York publishing executives from afar. "I do it all by e-mail," she says, "querying and asking if they'll accept e-mails from agents, and then suggesting they read my clients' manuscripts."

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Up to now, her contracts have come through relatively small book buyers such as Second Wind Publishing in Kernersville, N.C. Dowdle says Second Wind recently agreed to publish *The Phantom Lady of Paris*, a novel set in 1968 by Lynchburg writer Calvin Davis.

But the deal isn't dripping dollar signs for either the agent or author—at least not yet. "There are no advances from small publishers," Dowdle explains. And although Second Wind, a fledgling publishing house that opened in 2008, has agreed to print Davis' book in trade paperback and to offer an E-book electronic version, it's uncertain how many copies will be marketed.

In fact, generating demand will largely depend on Dowdle and Davis—only a short step up from self publishing. "It won't be in Barnes and Noble. (Davis) has a Web site and he's blogging and chatting it up on social networks. He's also sending out cards to locally owned bookstores that might order some copies," she says.

In Brief

Name: Dawn Dowdle
Age: 51
Hometown: Wenatchee, Wa.
Business: Blue Ridge Literary Agency
Nature of Business: Marketing book manuscripts to publishers
Location: Lynchburg
Background: A former legal secretary who didn't attend college. Married; one child, a daughter at Randolph College in Lynchburg. Favorite pastime is reading and hobnobbing with writers. She runs a writers group in Lynchburg that meets weekly.

"You have to be creative," she says. And be scrappy too—true for aspiring authors and literary agents. 



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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Banks

Member One Federal Credit Union in Roanoke has named **Cathy Johnson** senior VP of retail operations for the Southeast Region. **Paul Economy** is the new senior VP of retail operations for the Southwest Region. **Kimberley Braswell** has been named chief administrative officer. **Shannon Pendergrass** is the new VP and branch manager of the Southwest Roanoke County branch. **Mark Hudzik** has been promoted to Chief Marketing Officer.

First Bank of Virginia has named **Bev Davis** of Davis, Davis & Davis law firm in Radford and Radford City Manager **David Ridpath** to its Radford Local Advisory Board.



Salisbury

Caroline Salisbury was promoted to assistant VP and credit analyst at

First Bank & Trust in Christiansburg.

Insurance

Kent E. Bond has joined Allstate Financial as an exclusive financial specialist for southwest Virginia. His office is in Christiansburg.

LEGAL FRONT



Wood

Law Firms

Blair N. C. Wood has joined The Creekmore Law Firm in Blacksburg as an attorney.

WELLNESS FRONT

Chiropractic

Suzanne Barnette has joined Tuck Chiropractic Clinic in Blacksburg as VP of marketing and public relations. **Dr. Lee Matthis** of the Christiansburg office has been elected the District Three West

Representative for the Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Lauman



Sledd



Wright

Architects/Engineers

AECOM Technology Corporation in Roanoke has named **Michael P. Lauman, James E. Sledd, and Michael A. Wright** senior associates. **Gwyn C. Gilliam, Daniel N. Lieber, Parul J. Patel, and Mark A. Stevens**

have been named associates.

SFCS Inc. in Roanoke has added the following staff to its Roanoke office: **Patrick Williams**, structural engineer in training; **Terri Kendrick**, architectural intern; **Gail Ponce**, administrative assistant; and **Michael Lawson** office services assistant.

EDUCATION FRONT



Taylor

Colleges

Roanoke College has named **Leslie Taylor** as its new College Editor. Taylor will be responsible for planning, writing and producing the Roanoke College Magazine and helping to develop content for other key college publications and the college's Web site.

Susan E. Short, formerly director of the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center, has been

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Have a career announcement?

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

named to lead Outreach Program Development at Virginia Tech, a key area of Outreach and International Affairs that includes Continuing and Professional Education.



Bailey

Julie Bailey has been promoted to assistant director of Medical education at the Via College of Osteopathic Medicine: Virginia Campus.

OTHER FRONTS

Auto Parts

Roanoke-based Advance Auto Parts has named **Carl Hauch** senior VP for team member



Hauch



Hull

excellence. **Mike Pack** has been named senior VP for store operations.

Economic Development

John Hull has joined the Roanoke Regional Partnership as director of research. He had been with the Roanoke

Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission.

Organizations

YMCA of Roanoke Valley has elected new officers and a new member to its board of directors. The new officers are **Dan Joiner**, F&W Management, president; **John Carlin**, Ferrum College, vice president; **Donald G. Smith**, retired from Steel Dynamics, vice president; **W. Lee Wilhelm III**, McNeil Roofing, vice president;

William Sparrow, retired from Verizon, secretary/ and **Rob Cassell Jr.**, Graham White Manufacturing, treasurer. **Robert M. Smith** of Quantum Medical Business Service has been appointed as a new board member.

Boyd Johnson of Hall Associates has been appointed to the board of directors of the Roanoke Economic Development Authority.

Transportation

Premier Transfer and Storage in Salem has hired **John Zeile** as general manager. He will work with clients throughout Southwest and Central Virginia.

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FRONT Notes

Companies get federal money

OcuCure Therapeutics in Roanoke, **Synthonics** in Blacksburg, and **Revivacor** in Blacksburg are among companies granted federal funds through the Qualifying Therapeutic Discovery Project (QTDP). The money is intended to accelerate and support the development of novel drugs and therapies.

These grant awards are made through the QTDP, a tax credit program which is part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. The goals of the QTDP Program are to spur small biotech and pharmaceutical companies to develop novel drugs and therapeutics, create high-paying U.S. jobs, and advance U.S. competitiveness in life, biomedical and medical sciences.

"This program makes a difference for a small firm like ours. It creates good jobs in the region and

helps to develop our novel product and get it to market" says Sunder Malkani, CEO of OcuCure Therapeutics. OcuCure is developing a therapeutic eye drop for treatment of age-related macular degeneration and proliferative diabetic retinopathy, the leading causes of blindness in the developed world.

The Therapeutic Discovery Project Program is a \$1 billion fund established to provide tax credits to companies with 250 employees or fewer. It covers up to 50 percent of qualified investments in projects aimed at creating new therapies, reducing long-term health care costs, or significantly advancing the goal of curing cancer within the next 30 years. To provide an immediate boost to U.S. biomedical research, the credit is available for qualified investments made or to be made in 2009 and 2010.

VWCC out front digitally

Virginia Western

Community College in Roanoke has been recognized by e.Republic's Center for Digital Education and Converge Online as a top-rated community college in the sixth annual Digital Community Colleges Survey receiving a grade of A. Virginia Western joins 18 other community colleges described by the Center for Digital Education as "national leaders in utilizing technology to provide exceptional services to students, educators and administrators."

The survey examined community colleges' use of technology to enhance the student experience and increase educator effectiveness. The survey also looked at the technological tools schools had in place to increase convenience and provide alternative learning options. Specifically, the survey noted schools' use of online registration, distance learning, tutoring and advisory services. Technology training for students and faculty and

Web 2.0 social and collaborative capabilities were also key indicators of success.

Liberty ranked

Liberty University in Lynchburg recently ranked No. 9 in the "Best for Vets 2010" survey conducted by Military Times EDGE magazine. chose its top 100 schools after considering more than 4,000 colleges and universities. Liberty is the only Virginia university ranked in the Top 100.

Hospital recognized

Montgomery Regional Hospital has been recognized as a Certified Quality Breast Center of Excellence by the National Consortium of Breast Centers.

Tech partnership

Virginia Tech and L-3 STRATIS, an IT company, will work together with ERIS Technologies to

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- > Paychecks Plus Rises from the Ashes
- > Local Biotech-Pharma Companies Get Cash Infusion

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

develop an integrated security and incident management center on the Blacksburg campus. The center will feature an advanced platform that integrates applications for campus security, incident management and response, facility management, energy monitoring, and cyber security.

The companies and Tech will provide an integrated management, command and control platform—a common operating picture, or “dashboard”—for facility managers, emergency personnel, and information technology security professionals.

Commission gets grant

The **Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission** is one of 45 out of 225 organizations that will receive a portion of a \$100 million HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. The Commission will receive \$625,000 from HUD to fund a three-year

comprehensive economic, environmental, and housing plan for the region.

The planning process will be led by the Roanoke Area Sustainability Consortium made up of representatives from the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, Council of Community Services, Roanoke Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the cities of Roanoke and Salem; the counties of Roanoke, Craig, and Franklin; and Virginia Western Community College.

In another development, the Commission has been awarded a 2010 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for Ciclovía, part of the slate of 2010 Bike Month events organized by its **RIDE Solutions** program and other partners.

Hollins grant

Hollins University is one of only three private

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A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

colleges in Virginia—and the only women's college—to receive a grant from a new initiative established by The Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion Resources. Hollins was awarded \$30,000 by the Dominion Higher Educational Partnership, which presented \$500,000 in grants to colleges and community colleges in Virginia to support programs in business, skilled craft, engineering, environmental and technical studies, and for student-led conservation programs.

Goodman ranked

Goodman & Company, which has an office in Roanoke and is one of the

region's largest certified public accounting firms, has been ranked second in the nation among accounting firms in the category of “Best To Work For,” by Vault Career Intelligence. The firm also ranked third nationally in the “Diversity,” category and 15th overall in the general ranking of top accounting firms in the industry.

Tba wins awards

tba (the becher agency) in Roanoke has had four projects produced for the New River Valley Economic Development Alliance honored with 2010 Communications Awards presented by the Southern Economic Development Council.

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Locates in Roanoke

Maxx Performance will open a research and development and manufacturing facility in Roanoke, creating a projected 12-15 jobs over the next three years and investing up to \$700,000 in equipment.

The company will be located in the former Valley Rich Dairy building on Aerial Way Drive. Maxx Performance is a provider of microencapsulation/encapsulation technologies used by manufacturers of baked products, confection goods, dairy or meat products, nutritional

supplements, and animal feed.

The company's products mask taste and off-odors, extend shelf life, and enhance flavor and texture to help manufacturers overcome application and processing challenges, optimize product delivery, and improve time to market.

Yokohama expands

Yokohama Tire Corporation is expanding operations at its Salem manufacturing plant because of increasing demand for its consumer and light truck tires,



Yokohama Tire Corporation

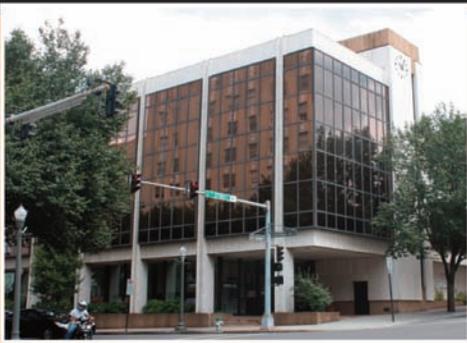
creating as many as 55 jobs.

The \$13 million project will include new tire-making machinery, upgrading and modifying existing machines and an increase in high-performance and light truck tire manufacturing flexibility. The expansion is to be

completed by August 2011.

Brandon Oaks award

Brandon Oaks Retirement Community in Roanoke has been recognized as a 2010 recipient of the Bronze-Commitment to Quality



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National Quality Award presented by the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living, a trade organization with approximately 11,000 members. The award was presented during AHCA/NCAL's Annual Convention in Long Beach, California.

Award for its work for Friendship Retirement Community. The Generations Award is an international competition for excellence in senior marketing. tba won gold for its "Mrs. Johnson" print advertisement. The firm also received special recognition for Friendship's overall advertising campaign.

has received a \$40,000 gift from the Dominion Foundation to help Pamplin students with their career search. The gift will be used to create a Web application to match students with their ideal employer and employers with their ideal recruits.

Chamber of Commerce to develop a branding, advertising and marketing campaign to promote tourism in the Alleghany Highlands of Virginia. In addition to strategic consultation, the campaign will include a website, visitors guide and advertising campaign.

Senior award

tba (the becher agency) in Roanoke has received a 2010 Generations

Pamplin gift

The **Pamplin College of Business** at Virginia Tech

Alleghany hires Inprint

Inprint, a Roanoke Valley branding and advertising agency, has been selected by the Alleghany Highlands

Compiled by Dan Smith

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

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

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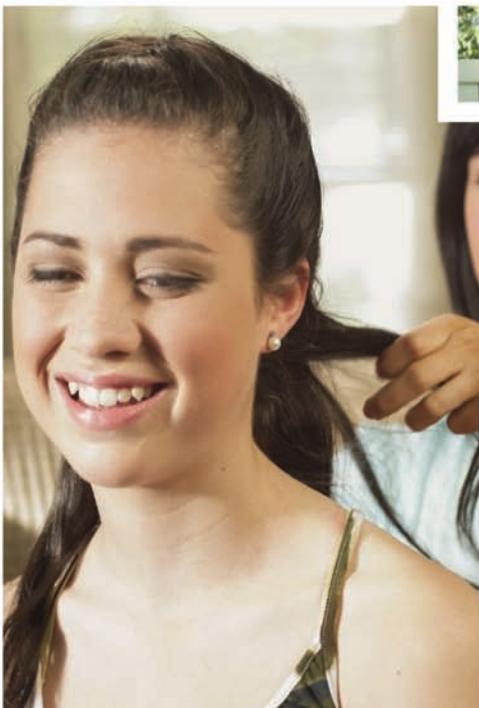
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