

Valley Business

# FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING  
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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[vbFRONT.com](http://vbFRONT.com)

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**TAX MAN**

Virginia Vets

Music Lab

**Hoops  
Book**

Dentists,  
Oddfellows,  
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Please help  
Need a job  
God bless

The **JOBS**  
Issue

Dan Cagle,  
TEKsystems

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

Most of us have worried about our job security at one time or another and many of us have actually lost jobs unexpectedly. It's not pleasant under the best of circumstances, but with the economy in disarray, finding work of any kind is the challenge many are facing today. But workers of every collar color—blue, white, pink and green—are adjusting and discovering that a positive attitude and a view toward the possible are their most reliable allies.

One of the special peculiarities of our worst economy in decades is the number of people who have lost what they thought were relatively secure—but depressingly unfulfilling—careers and have taken the step they thought they never would: pursuing the dream.

We've talked to techies who went back to the music of their youth; industrialists who've moved into food service; corporate titans who've opened corner grocery stores; a fantasy auto racing business owner who opened his own live theater—all because they lost the former career for one reason or another and sought the latter because it filled a space in their hearts.

The lesson here is not one for everybody, but it certainly is vital for some: follow the dream. It's always there and it's waiting for you. It might not promise the riches of your more traditional calling, but what is the price of your contentment?



**Tom Field**



**Dan Smith**



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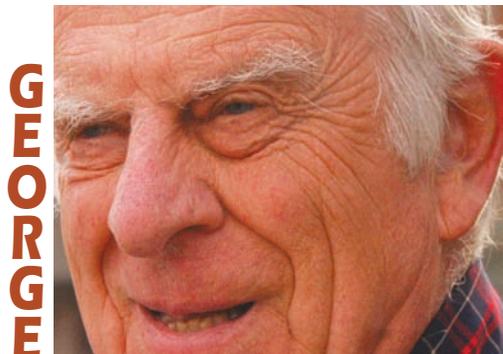
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Dan Smith

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 62.

## Editorial Advisory Board

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

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

# CONTRIBUTORS



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**Ed Murphy** Carilion (Wellness)  
**Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)  
**John Williamson** RGC (Tech/Industry)

You will note that the Board is comprised of experts in many different business / industry "fronts." This is intentional, as we are reporting on all the areas that affect our regional economy and are important to you. In keeping with our policy of being "the voice of business in the valleys" we ask each reader to join us as an editorial partner by calling or e-mailing us your ideas. You know more than we know about your business—or you certainly should—and that inside knowledge shared with our readers will make us all better at what we do.

“ He enjoys painting a VT logo on the tooth

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Greg Vaughn Photography

# The JOBS Issue

**Dan Cagle is *not* looking for a job. Quite the contrary, as an account manager for TEKsystems in Roanoke, he's in the very business of placing people in jobs, specifically in the IT field. Of course you may not have recognized him anyway, in the depressing role as the unemployed desperate "suit" for our FRONTcover model. To Dan, we say "Good Sport!" and by all means, just keep the cardboard sign... we really don't want it.**

## Looking for work >

### Executive Summary:

*It's tough out there for those trying to find a job, but the professionals say there are some steps you can take to improve your chances.*

**By Alison Weaver  
and Dan Smith**

With the region's unemployment rate hovering around 7 percent, no one is saying finding a job is easy. It's been especially difficult for the 6.3 million Americans who have been unemployed for six months or longer. That represents the most long-term unemployed since 1948 when the numbers were first tracked and it's double a period in the 1980s, which was second, according to the New York Times.

The unemployment rate has hovered around 10 percent for months with an additional 17 percent estimated by the U.S. Department of Labor to be underemployed. That's more than a fourth of the population with a serious job problem.

Headhunters, employment agencies and those in charge of hiring can be as picky as they want as they sift through dozens of resumes. But their living is made placing people, not by rejecting them. So, many have gone into the advice business and some of that advice is pretty good.

It is obvious, too, from their stories and the stories of employers, that many of those out of work need all the help they can get.

Tamea Franco, who owns East-West Dyecom in Roanoke, says she's been trying to fill two positions. "We advertised one time on a Sunday and 30 days online for one position and received 60 applicants. About 25 percent were over-qualified, 50 percent under-qualified and 25 percent had the wrong experience," she says.

"The few that we have interviewed either have lost their desire to work or seem downtrodden. The one candidate that we are seriously looking at has the experience, energy and was quick to say he didn't have a college degree. We are looking for applied smarts, not paper smarts."

Dan Cagle of TEKsystems in Roanoke, who has handled a lot of the discouraged and defeated over the past few months, gives an example of an economy he thinks is turning: "There was a small group of qualified IT professionals that were not entirely happy with their job or employer during the downturn. Because of a lack of confidence in the market many chose to simply sit tight and be thankful to have a job



Tamea Franco

Johna Campbell

until the market stabilized or began to open up. Now, most of these IT professionals are more actively seeking new opportunities and tend to have more options in front of them. I think this is a sign of confidence.”

Despite the tremendous competition for professional positions, those doing the hiring say they continue to see the same common mistakes. “People forget that getting a job is a job and don’t fully prepare,” says Johna Campbell of Cogent Management Resources. “Some resumes are simply poor quality. Candidates sometimes don’t take the time to create a resume directed toward the job they are applying for. Unbelievably, some people can’t articulate why they left a job.”

Manisha Hall, a recruiter with Adecco, says she routinely sees a similar lack of planning. “Applicants specific to our industry often attend our application appointments without being prepared; for instance, not having the details needed to complete the application (work history details, reference information, etc.)”

Donna Tatum of the Renick Group in Roanoke likes a lot of what she’s seeing: “We’re finding ... candidates with skills, work ethic, passion and motivation to work. Workers in transition, recent college and high school graduates alike,

## They said it ... >

**Jennifer Mundorff:** The people at the VEC were very nice, but they’re not geared toward helping professionals with years of experience. You’re sitting there with a doctorate and they’re asking you if you can lift 50-pound boxes.

**Jessica Surace Nelson, Rackspace:** I have called many candidates for a phone interview appointment set at a specific time and they have asked me who I am and what company I am with. The fact that they aren’t keeping track of the recruiters and companies that they are interviewing with makes me aware that they aren’t truly interested in working at Rackspace but more interested in just finding a job.

**Johna Campbell, Cogent:** Candidates should take the time to plan a job search. They need to understand that is heavy and recruiters are seeing a vast number of applicants today.

**Wilma Miller, Manpower:** We advise our applicants to be objective to all the advantages of accepting a temporary position and not just base it on pay.

**Donna Tatum, The Renick Group:** The weaknesses are that job seekers do not know how to market themselves. For some it is the first time in the job market in decades. For others it’s the first time, period. Times of the “old” resume and cover letter are gone with the last decade. Job seekers have to be creative, interesting, honest and willing to network.

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## Last 4 recessions and their duration >

July 1981 to Oct. 1982	16 months
July 1990 to March 1991	8 months
March 2001 to Nov. 2001	8 months
Dec. 2007 to present	28 months and counting (thru April)*

\*Many economists are saying the recession ended in the third quarter of 2009.

Source: National Bureau of Economic Indicators



Dan Smith

**Manisha Hall**



Dan Smith

**Donna Tatum**



Dan Smith

**Garry Norris**

## They said it ... >

continued from Page 9

### **Daniel Burdi, Debut Designs:**

The problem I see most often with entrepreneurial attempts is someone simply not having the motivation to be their own boss. Motivation, passion to succeed and the ability to handle and learn from failure are some of the most important characteristics; the last being the most important.

### **Jessica Surace Nelson, Rackspace:**

Employers are seeking individuals who have researched the company and want a career with their company, not someone who is seeking a short term job.

### **Tamea Franco, East-West Dyecom, Roanoke:**

The extension of unemployment has simply lengthened the pain.

### **Stuart Mease, Pamplin College of Business:**

It takes approximately 40 hours a week for 3 months or 500 hours of searching in order to be successful. If 80 percent of jobs occur through networking then you should spend 200 hours networking and 300 hours online.

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know it's tough out there; we're seeing the attitude change toward appreciation for opportunities. There are certain job seekers with excellent qualifications and specialized skill sets willing and financially able to take less pay and be perfectly content in order to be employed until retirement. College graduates are more apt to take entry level positions in order to get their foot in the door than they were three even four years ago.

"A weakness that I see often is that job seekers don't know how to market themselves. For some it is their first time in the job market in decades. For others it's the first time, period. Job seekers must be honest, creative, open-minded, and willing to network."

Showing up unprepared can doom a candidate from the start. In this economy, there are no do-overs. "In comparison to the job market several years ago, we, along with other employers ... are being much more selective in making hiring decisions," Manisha Hall notes.

Stuart Meese, director of undergraduate career services for Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business, says job seekers must establish and build relationships. "Only six percent of jobs are received online, yet this is where young people spend their time. They must meet people face to face."

Garry Norris of Express Employment Professionals agrees. "Nothing can take the place of in-person or social media networking. I've found more good candidates and placed them with clients through Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter than I have found at some traditional candidate locations," he says. "I encourage job seekers to increase their networking activities professionally, personally, and socially. I tell them to look at non-traditional Web sites, like Craig's list, for job opportunities."

At Rackspace E-mail and Apps, Jessica Surace Nelson says the company is constantly looking for a "very specific talent group to fill out our teams. We find most of our employees through a mix of new sources (local electronic job boards for nontechnical positions) and unique sources (Dice.com, LinkedIn.com and other Internet sourcing for technical positions)."



Jessica Surace Nelson



Dan Smith

James Gregory



Dan Smith

Wilma Miller

Reality is sinking in for many seeking employment. Randstad's James Gregory reports seeing "more flexibility in the expectations of our applicants in areas such as salaries, work schedules and levels of positions. [Employing] a staffing service can benefit the employee by helping get a 'foot in the door' and the opportunity to try their hand at a variety of jobs or learn new skills."

Wilma Miller with Manpower also tries to keep jobseekers grounded. "I would advise the applicants to look at the whole

## They said it ... >

continued from Page 10

**James Gregory, Randstad:** There are a lot of qualified candidates out there, which, in some cases, ends up being the biggest weakness. Some employers consider candidates to be over-qualified for positions and will dismiss the resume missing out on the unique opportunity to upgrade the position.

**Manisha Hall, Adecco:** The most valuable advice that we provide to job seekers is to prepare in advance for an interview or application process. This includes having work history information, as well as physical appearance, positive attitude, and professional demeanor.

**Garry Norris, Express Pros:** Nearly 80 percent of jobseekers who land new positions secure them through networking in person and through social networks.

**Dan Cagle, TEKsystems:** The majority of job seekers are falsifying their resumes or experience.

## Stuck in the Middle >

First, those looking for jobs need to understand the "unserved" workforce (unservedworkforce.com). There are three types of people in the workforce. One, those who the private headhunters will help find jobs (people with billable skills). Second, the lower level wage jobs who are being assisted by public agencies and groups. The unserved workforce is in the middle. It is not being helped by either the public or private sector. These people are looking for professional jobs with a salary between \$30,000 and \$60,000; they have some form of higher education, good skills, though not billable skills; they have potential and are typically younger.

There are seven things that will happen to these people:

1. They will acquire new skills and the private sector will [absorb] them.
2. They will humble themselves and take a position beneath them.
3. They will start a business.
4. They will leave the area.
5. They will remain unemployed.
6. They will retire if of age.
7. They will continue searching for jobs in a market where there are more looking than jobs available.

—Stuart Meese, Director of Undergraduate Career Services for the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech

## A Decade of Unemployment Rates in Virginia >

Jan. 1999	2.6
Jan. 2000	2.5
Jan. 2001	2.3
Jan. 2002	4.1
Jan. 2003	4.1
Jan. 2004	3.8
Jan. 2005	3.6
Jan. 2006	3.1
Jan. 2007	2.9
Jan. 2008	3.3
Jan. 2009	6.8 (Dec.)

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

**FACTOID:** Virginia's highest unemployment rate, going back to 1976, was 7.8 percent in January 1983.



Daniel Burdi



Stuart Meese

Dan Smith

### Looking for work: The proper approach >

Stuart Mease, Director of Undergraduate Career Services for the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech, has a background in finding good employees, far more extensive than you would imagine one of his age (30-something). He has studied the problem and has the following advice for those looking for work:

The remedy is becoming a Perfect Job Seeker ([perfectjobseeker.com](http://perfectjobseeker.com)). This is a four-prong, diversified approach to managing your career. The first two are short term and the second two are longer term.

First, relationships. Eighty percent of all jobs are never advertised and are uncovered through networking.

Second, humility. People must be willing to take on any job temporarily and not come with a sense of entitlement.

Third, study. Folks must acquire new skills to become employable. An employer is not going to hire someone unless the employer can make money off [the candidate]. Companies are not in business to create jobs, but rather profits. If they can be more profitable with fewer people, then they will.

Fourth, faith. They need to surround themselves with advisors (I try to be this for as many people as I can), people to help them and perhaps take a leap of faith and start a business.

This diversified approach will not only help now, but also during the next recession. You do not invest all of your money in one stock, nor should you invest all of your time in one method of your job search.

picture. Many times a temporary position can get an applicant through the door and launch a new career much faster," she says. "It also gives the applicant the opportunity to see what the business is all about while giving them the advantage of showing their expertise ahead of other applicants."

Others suggest creating your own job. Young entrepreneur Daniel Burdi of Debut Designs says, "I have a lot of friends who are still struggling in the job market since graduating this past May. Anyone who recently graduated from college is young enough to take a big risk and 'just wing it.'" 

## Stories from the field >

By Alison Weaver  
and Dan Smith

Across the Roanoke and New River Valleys, job seekers' stories contain recurrent themes: fierce competition, little if any response to resumes and a feeling that education and experience are working against them in today's economy. Following are insights from 10 who've been looking. Some have been successful, some are underemployed and some are still searching. One found a job, virtually as she was being interviewed.

### Staying positive

Henny Brooks went into the meeting expecting a discussion on how she was going to do her job, in spite of a serious shoulder injury she had been dealing with for weeks. She came out of it without a job. Fifty-four years old and jobless in one of the worst markets in many years.



Henny Brooks

"I had nightmares about my job not being there," she says. "I'd been [at Entre Computer Center] since 1987 and was the top producer. I had a bad fall in 2008 and shattered my shoulder and was doing physical therapy three times a week."

She continues: "I got on the phone immediately [after losing her job] and started networking with former clients. I went to Business After Hours functions and did a lot of the kind of networking you'd expect. I found it discouraging, frankly. People were afraid of me because they said I was overqualified. I said I don't care if they paid as much as I was making; I just wanted a chance to perform."

It was, she recalls, "a depressing time. I got

used to being punched in the stomach."

But Henny Brooks is well known for her sunny outlook and that eventually won out. "Maintaining that was extremely important ... but very difficult," she says.

An entire year passed with no success. Ultimately, Brooks followed one more lead—she read about a company that sounded like a fit for her—and without much wheel spinning, Dynis, a telecom company with an office in Salem, recognized that she was a perfect match for a position it had open. "It was just luck," she says. "I saw an article, sent a resume, interviewed and was hired. I love the company and I love what I'm doing."

—DS

### Working your sources

Timing is everything. Veteran news reporter Jay Conley was growing increasingly dissatisfied with changes occurring at his employer of 11 years, The Roanoke Times. "I resigned at the end of '08 because of what I viewed as unacceptable working conditions," he says.



Jay Conley

"For years I had considered getting involved in real estate, so I took courses to get my Realtor license. My thinking at the time was that I would get my license and be poised for when

the economy bounced back by midyear. But the economy never really bounced back, and housing sales lagged. Even the longtime, prosperous agents I worked with at Long & Foster said last year was their worst year in 20 years."

Conley continued working on freelance writing projects, including stories for FRONT. "I never wanted to get away from writing completely. I was sending out dozens of resumes for a variety of part-time and full-time writing-related jobs in marketing, PR, magazines,

etc. to see what was available," he recalls. "I never heard back from 99 percent of the employers who advertised openings."

At the same time, Conley says, "I was contacting my sources, people who I had worked with before, asking them if they had any leads or knew of any openings. One of those contacts was Brenda Edson at Randolph College."

"Initially, we had talked about me doing some freelance work for the college. Then late last year, the college decided it needed a full-time writer in College Relations," he says. He landed the job in February.

"In the past, I never had a problem finding a job, but in today's market, so many qualified applicants are applying for a small percentage of available positions. What you know still matters, but who you know is more important than ever."

—AW

## Magical moment

Jennifer Mundorff has never shied away from a challenge. Even while in high school, she worked road construction jobs, operating heavy equipment because the pay was great and the work was demanding.



**Jennifer Mundorff**

After college, she took a job at Hollins Communications Research Institute, where she spent 17 years helping patients overcome stuttering. She switched paths five years ago and began

working in the institute's hearing center while pursuing a doctorate in audiology.

She had completed her course work and was making steady progress on her dissertation when abruptly in August 2009, after 22 years at the institute, Mundorff was let go. "They basically said they could no longer afford me."

Stunned, she began cleaning out her office. "I called Dr. [Gary] Pillow, who I'd been working for two days a week doing [graduate study] rotations and told him the news. I asked if he could use me more hours. He was shocked, too, but offered to help however he could."

A friend came by that afternoon to provide moral support and told Mundorff she should open her own office in Daleville, a booming section of Botetourt County. "I can't do that. I don't have the money," Mundorff recalls saying.

Moments later, the phone rang and it was Pillow, saying, "I've been doing some thinking. I can probably use you full time eventually. I'd like to open another office, maybe in Daleville."

"That's the magical part," Mundorff says. "What are the odds?"

By the beginning of October, Mundorff had secured a business license, negotiated a lease, contracted for utilities, purchased furniture, set up the office, and opened a branch of Dr. Gary Pillow Audiologist & Associates in Daleville.

—AW

## Careful planning

When State Farm began downsizing in 2006 and offered severance packages, Windle Watkins saw it as a positive. He had worked in the insurance business for two decades but had never used his degree in marketing or his MBA.



**Windle Watkins**

"I thought it'd be a good opportunity for me to make a career change," he says. "I wanted to get involved in marketing management, product development or strategic planning so I could apply my education."

Watkins carefully planned his departure. He calculated that with the severance package, he could easily afford to spend six or even nine months job-hunting. But he hadn't counted on the economy tanking.

From July 2006 to July 2007, Watkins watched in disbelief as the job market "dried up. I couldn't even find positions to apply for. People were getting laid off, downsized; everyone was trimming staff to save expenses."

His prized MBA seemed more of a liability than an asset. "Employers thought they couldn't afford me." After a year, Watkins says, "You get to a point where you switch from looking for your dream job to realizing you just need a job."

He took a four-month, contract position at an insurance agency and was then recruited by a headhunter to work at Brown Insurance in Blacksburg. Although selling and servicing policies still doesn't enable him to put his MBA skills to use, Watkins says, "I'm very fortunate, especially in this economy. It's a great agency and I enjoy the people I work with."

—AW

## Shockwaves

Erin Wommack's dream job as assistant curator at Roanoke's Taubman Museum of Art took on nightmarish overtones as the



Erin Wommack

emotions; you feel bad for the others because you still have a job, but you're also scared of losing your job."

Wommack's fears were realized that summer

when she was let go. "In this economic climate, they simply couldn't keep the staff," she says.

She knew that finding a curator position in the Roanoke area would be next to impossible, but she hoped her experience in public outreach and organizing exhibitions would make her attractive to other employers. "I've got a broad-based liberal arts background," she says. "I thought that would help in my search." However, in today's job market, employers are so flooded with resumes that they can often select an applicant who is a 100 percent match, rather than settling for an 85 or 90 percent match.

"The disheartening thing is that the market is so saturated," Wommack says. "I applied for a position ... and they said they had more than 400 applicants."

As her job search continues, Wommack stays focused on getting her name and face out there. "I've been widening my web" by volunteering, serving on committees and devoting more time to a crafts business that she and a friend started while students at Hollins. She also helped organize Roanoke's first indie craft show.

During the lead-up to the opening of the Taubman Museum, Wommack was routinely pulling 80-hour weeks. Now, she says, "I finally understand what people mean by 'free time.' I'm just trying to stay busy."

—AW

## Inside track

Joe Rollison was still employed as an insurance agent when he began job hunting in November 2009. "The economy didn't have me unemployed, but the economy had my job being very stressful," he says. "People weren't buying cars, building homes and buying life insurance, but the [sales] expectations and goals remained the same."

A 1989 Tech grad, Rollison says, "It was the first time I'd been through the whole online process. I was just amazed at how little response I got from anyone."

His wife was meeting with the owner of B&H Computers, a franchise owner for U.S. Cellular, when he happened to mention they had a position open. Rollison sent in his resume and was called for the first of five interviews.

"They were straight upfront. They told me, 'We have multiple people qualified for this position. We are going to talk to as many people as necessary to get the right person.'"

Rollison landed the job as district manager for a territory covering Pearisburg to Lynchburg, a position that enables him and his family to continue living in Christiansburg. "I consider myself about as lucky as you can get."

—AW

## Networking, waiting

After spending nearly two decades primarily raising four children, Elise Greene was ready for some "me" time.



Elise Greene

Her husband was retiring from the Navy and no longer would be away at sea for months, so she headed back to school in 2006 to earn a Master of Social Work degree to complement the

master's in applied sociology she had earned in 1982.

Greene finished her degree in May 2009. "I had lots of contacts in Tidewater and thought I was going to float right into a position," she relates. "And then we moved."

Her family landed in Blacksburg when her husband took a job at Virginia Tech. Armed with two master's degrees, she confidently began her job search. But she quickly realized that she is an anomaly as "an older, new worker," as she terms it. "I'm

trying to start a career at age 51. All those years of supporting a Navy family doesn't count for much."

Greene says she has been "networking, networking, networking." She "stalks" the online job postings of potential employers. She carries copies of her resume with her and is an eager volunteer at organizations such as Free Clinic of the New River Valley. And she relies on prayer.

"I've had some great interviews, but the competition is fierce. I feel my life experiences count and will add to whatever kind of work I do," she says.

Job hunting is grueling, she says, and she worries about others who are searching. "As a social worker, I'm big into self-care. After interview after interview, it very easily affects your self-esteem because you're constantly selling yourself. It's easy to start feeling down in the dumps.

"I remain positive. I'm waiting for the right match."

—AW

*(Note: After months with few prospects, Elise Greene received two job offers on the same day. She is now working at Council of Community Services in Roanoke.)*

## Don't stop the music

For the past two years, Adam Markham has cobbled together a living based more on his passions than the reality of the "permanent job" everybody expects of a 42-year-old professional. He's worked in



Adam Markham

wine retail and as a musician, his passion. But he's been looking to return to corporate America where he was with Xerox, U.S. Cellular (sales for both) and SynCom

Electronics (general manager) before hitting the economy's squeeze-out.

"I'm finding a lot of part-time work," he says, "but it's not really a good fit for me. People just aren't hiring full-time, permanent. I had a couple of good interviews recently and thought I might land a good job, but for one reason or another—a better resume, hiring from within—I didn't get hired."

Adam's wife has a good job at Advance Auto and he fills some time with music gigs, working both as a solo guitarist (with harmonica) and as a member of the band BeBop Hoedown. "I'll never make the mistake again of completely stopping the music," he says emphatically. "In November and December, I played more than 40 dates, but it's not as easy at 42 as it was at 21."

—DS

## For God's sake

Graham Tate is looking through the hopeful eyes of a May college graduate (Hampden-Sydney), but he's already worried enough to be thinking of the student's ultimate fallback: grad school. He is engaged to a rising senior at Virginia Tech and has already moved to this area. His expectations? "Nothing specific. In the long run, I may go to seminary, but I'd like to earn some of that education money back before beginning more education."



Graham Tate

His majors were religion and history and when asked What the Hell Do You Expect To Do With That, as he often is, he shrugs, smiles and gives the liberal

arts grad mantra of being "prepared for anything" because he can read, write

and think critically.

Still, that long-awaited college degree feels a little lighter than he imagined. "Even with the college degree," he says, "the state of the economy is worrisome."

—DS

## Master plan

Michele Shimchock knew she'd face a tough job search when she resigned her position as a bankruptcy paralegal in October 2009. Armed with a master's degree in English and Creative Writing, she was eager to get a writing-related career underway.



Michele Shimchock

"The master's degree has been detrimental to my job search. It's been suggested that I take it off my resume," she says. Employers see her as overqualified for many of

their openings. She says, "It's kind of frustrating. I wish they'd at least make an offer instead of assuming they can't afford me."

Shimchock tries to cover all the bases. She networks in person and online, volunteers and signed on with a temp agency. She freelances for FRONT. "I told [potential employers] I'm willing to work minimum wage, temporary, anything, but I haven't had even one call from them."

Six months and counting, Shimchock's search continues.

—AW

*(Michele Shimchock took a job as a full-time temporary worker—with benefits—shortly after her interview. She will continue to contribute to FRONT, as well.)* 



## Use your network in job search >

For today's job seeker, not networking means not working.

Networking must take place online and as well as offline. The top social networking site for job seekers is LinkedIn. This site has 35 million users in more than 140 industries, including recruiters and job seekers. Create your LinkedIn profile and connect with as many professional contacts as possible.

Ask co-workers and former supervisors for recommendations. For new college graduates, ask professors and internship connections for recommendations. Use a distinct URL with your full name and an avatar that is professional. Link with hiring managers, recruiters and others that may assist in providing job leads. Announcing to facebook friends and twitter followers is another, but less effective manner, to give more people in your network a head's up.

Offline, members of religious congregations, civic groups and active members in industry organizations can be a referral source for leads. Before these group members are able to assist, you must become engaged enough with the organizations to become known.

Volunteering can help you find employment. Here are some tips from CareerFinderUSA.com:

**Choose wisely:** Remember many companies can't legally hire volunteers. It's better to look for volunteer work opportunities in non-profit organizations or small businesses struggling in the downturn. Be sure to choose volunteer work that effectively uses the skills appropriate for your target industry.

**Treat volunteer work like a real job:** Be punctual and appropriately dressed.

**Work your network:** One can't expect all non-profit organizations to have openings for the best volunteers all the time. However, it still pays to impress them. They can be reliable contacts who could provide referrals to hiring companies.

**Volunteer part-time:** Finally, be sure to keep volunteer work part-time so there's enough time to look for job opportunities. Ideally, volunteer work shouldn't require more than 20 hours a week. In addition to helping with the job search, volunteer efforts create a better community for everyone. 

## Business Etiquette

By Donna Dilley

### Executive Summary:

*You will need to be aware of all the avenues available to you in your job search.*

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## Getting a job: Yes, it IS personal >

**Dear Getting a Grip:** *How did this happen to me? I blinked and here I am at 50 with a mortgage, a bald spot, a beer gut, and a pink slip. I look in the mirror and think, "Who in the world would hire that guy?" The interviews are proving this out. I can get my foot in the door, but once they see the rest of me...*

**Dear That Guy:** Very little challenges our core belief in our personal value than getting laid off or fired. Once we pair our personal value with our value to our companies, a business decision by our companies becomes very personal indeed.

Believe it or not, a worse case than yours is created by the person who refuses to look in the mirror and to take a realistic inventory of assets and liabilities. With the median employee tenure at four years in the U.S., the more each of us sees ourselves as independent corporations partnering with a series of other corporations about every four years, the more likely we are to keep our assets maximized in anticipation of meeting our next client's needs.

An unfortunately large number of people look in the mirror, eyes blinded by blaming the company, the economy, or the government, or their in-laws and can't, or won't, see personal liabilities that can present opportunities for transformation into assets. A frank look can be painful, but you're to be commended for your courage to look yourself right in the eye.

**Getting a Grip:** If you're getting interviews but no jobs, the job market wants something you don't have. In our technology-dependent economy, new skills are always required. It's time for you to acquire a new skill. If what you can do can produce R.O.I. for your employer, the wise employer sees dollar signs, not bald heads.

About the beer gut, you know what you have to do. You have to change. How auspicious that you'll have to do that every four years or so anyway. You can start your change training now. 

*Need to start "Getting a Grip" on a personal problem at work? E-mail your question to [grip@handshake2o.com](mailto:grip@handshake2o.com).*



## Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

### Executive Summary:

A long look in the mirror and some honest conclusions are the best things you can do to your resume and your chances of getting a job.

Read the FRONT online **vbFRONT.com**  
Also get more stories and pictures at [morefront.blogspot.com](http://morefront.blogspot.com)

## Interview Prep 101 >

# Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**

*The way you dress could be a determining factor in landing a job.*

If you are one of the thousands of Virginians seeking a job, you are probably already preparing for a competitive job market. You've updated your resume and applied for available jobs. You're networking and calling in favors owed to you. You may even be taking classes to update your skills in your quest to be an outstanding job candidate.

For Pete's sake, don't ruin your hard work preparing for the job search by neglecting to dress professionally for the interview. Contrary to popular opinion, appearance does matter. Most recruiters and HR directors—even in casual workplaces—expect candidates to dress up for the interview.

Job seekers fall into two groups: new graduates and experienced workers. No matter what category is appropriate, updating your appearance will help you compare favorably to the other candidates.

Recent graduates should keep in mind that they lack experience, so a polished appearance helps the interviewer see their potential as a professional. Leave your college wardrobe behind if you want to get that job.

To be competitive:

- Invest in a new suit in a neutral color with classic lines. Avoid clothing that is too tight, too short or too revealing. Avoid jeans and flip-flops for any interview.
- Get a good haircut; men should be clean-shaven.
- Wear dress shoes in good repair and newly polished.
- Use your clothing and accessories to focus attention on your face and, therefore, what you say about your qualifications, professional skills and business ideas.

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values youth and cutting edge know-how. Experience has always been king, but a youthful applicant having little experience, but groundbreaking ideas offers terrific potential. Experienced workers should look in the mirror and create the most youthful, but age-appropriate image possible.

- Make sure your personal hygiene is updated. Whiten your teeth a little, try a new aftershave, and use a skin moisturizer to appear your most youthful and fit. You'll need a haircut, too.
- Buy a new suit with a more current silhouette than the old standbys in your closet.
- Choose accessories that are young and fashion-forward without being trendy.
- Emphasize your experience, but adopt the attitude that you are open to learning new skills and techniques.

No matter what your experience level, use your appearance to impress upon the interviewer that you are professional, energetic, and ready to solve their problems—the perfect candidate. 



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## Steel Dynamics Corp. >

Compiled by Paulette Jayabalan

### Overview:

*Steel Dynamics Inc. (STLD) was incorporated in Indiana in 1993. Its Roanoke Bar Division sells billets and merchant steel products, including angles, plain rounds, flats and channels. Steel of West Virginia primarily sells merchant beams, channels and specialty structural steel sections.*

*The main sources of the company's revenues are from the manufacture and sale of steel products. The company operates in three segments: steel operations, metals recycling and ferrous resources operations, and steel fabrication operations.*

*Steel Dynamics is one of the largest steel producers and one of the largest metals recyclers in the United States. It produced 912 million pounds and 780 million pounds of nonferrous metallics, respectively for 2008 and 2009. It has 5,990 employees in operations throughout the eastern U.S.*

*Steel Dynamics shares trade on the NASDAQ Global Select Market under the ticker symbol STLD. Trading began on November 21, 1996 at an offering price of \$16 per share. Adjusted for stock splits, the offering price would be \$4 per share. Source: [ www.steeldynamics.com ], [ www.reuters.com ]*

### Market Commentary

March 26, 2010: "Steel Dynamics (STLD) was downgraded today by analysts at EVA Dimensions LLC and the stock is now at \$17.30, up \$0.10 (0.58 percent) on volume of 1,630,468 shares traded. EVA Dimensions LLC downgraded the stock today to Sell from Underweight. Over the last 52 weeks the stock has ranged from a low of \$8.01 in last March to a high of \$20.47 in January. Steel Dynamics' stock has been showing support around \$16.55 and resistance in the \$18.33 range. Technical indicators for the stock are bullish and S&P gives STLD a positive 4 STARS (out of 5) buy ranking. We will just watch this one for now. There are no hedged trades we like the look of for STLD. [ABR-Seven Summits Strategic Investments NewsBite]"  
Source: [ www.marketintelligencecenter.com ]

March 17, 2010: "Steel Dynamics Inc. announced today that it has consummated the sale of \$350 million aggregate principal amount of its 7 5/8 percent Senior Notes due 2020 (the "Notes"), in a private offering to qualified institutional buyers under Rule 144A of the Securities

Act of 1933 and to persons outside the United States pursuant to Regulation S." Source: [ www.prnewswire.com ]

March 9, 2010: "Steel Dynamics, Inc. announced that for first quarter of 2010, it expects earnings guidance of \$0.22-\$0.27 per diluted share (EPS)." Source: [ www.reuters.com ]

March 9, 2010: "Effective today Steel Dynamics Roanoke Bar Division is increasing prices \$25.00 per ton or \$1.25 per cwt on reinforcing bars. Source: [ www.steeldynamics.com ]

### Total Executive Compensation

Name	Title	Amount
Keith Busse	CEO	\$ 3,825,260
Theresa Wagler	CFO, EVP	\$ 1,397,790
Richard Teets	Pres., COO Steel Ops	\$ 2,071,200
Mark Millett	EVP, Metals Recycling and Ferrous Resources	\$ 2,049,180
Gary Heasley	EVP, Strategic Planning and Business Development	\$ 1,419,270

Source: [ www.reuters.com ]

### Board of Directors

Name	Primary Company	Age
Keith Busse	Steel Dynamics	66
Theresa Wagler	Steel Dynamics	38
Richard Teets	Steel Dynamics	54
Mark Millett	Steel Dynamics	49
Gary Heasley	Steel Dynamics, OmniSource	44
John Bates	Heidtman Steel Products	65
Paul Edgerley	2002 Independent Director	54
Jurgen Kolb	Steel Dynamics	66
Joseph Ruffolo	Tower Financial Corporation	67
Richard Freeland	Steel Dynamics, Pizza Hut	72
Frank Byrne	St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center	56
James Marcuccilli	STAR Financial Group	58
Gabriel Shaheen	GLS Capital Ventures	55

Steel Dynamics closed at \$17.33, up 13 cents on volume of 2.96 million shares on March 26, 2010. The company has a market capitalization of \$3,720.94 million.  
Source: [ www.reuters.com ]

### Sources

[ www.steeldynamics.com ] / [ www.reuters.com ]  
[ www.marketintelligencecenter.com ]  
[ www.prnewswire.com ]

### Note

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

## Rollover: Reality or myth? >

### Executive Summary:

*Sometimes you just have to play the game to get the benefits.*

By Joel S. Williams

One has to question the motive when the government is offering a break to higher income-tax payers, as demonstrated by the elimination of income limits for Roth IRA rollovers.

My first feeling was, "Right. What's the catch?" If there is one thing I learned from years of academic study in economics was TANSTAAFL: "There Ain't No Such Thing As a Free Lunch!"

Truth be told, this was a slight of hand by the government to get the stimulus package passed. Eliminating the income limits is estimated to bring in \$6.4 billion in current tax revenues, while costing \$14 billion in lost future tax revenues from distributions of traditional IRAs. This could be a great benefit to some but not so great for others.

Here's my take on the Roth rollover opportunity:

- Do not do the rollover to a Roth if you must use tax sheltered assets to pay the taxes.
- It makes sense for most investors in tax brackets under 30percent.

- Higher income bracket investors should consider the rollover but it's not wise for everyone. The biggest negative is rolling significant IRA/401k/403bs and paying taxes from available cash. If you're in this situation, strong strategies must be employed over the next 27 months to ensure a positive result. These need to include:

Monitoring alternative income strategies, if available; monitoring the stock market in relation to timing the rollover; a plan to re-characterize the rollover before deadlines, if needed; staging the rollover to minimize cash flow depletion and/or using short-term, low-cost financing; being careful about rollovers that include non-taxable assets, such as those often included in corporate pension plans.

- Some other advantages are:

A Roth may have advantages in net payments to heirs (if not properly managed a traditional IRA could pay up to 85 percent in combined taxes to heirs, not including possible estate taxes); the Roth makes a great tool to transfer wealth to generations beyond the next generation; the Roth can become a significant tax planning tool for mid- to high-income earners that plan to work well beyond age 70.

Most of the current advice is based on guessing future taxes. That is impossible, but we know they will likely be higher. The point is to make your decision on issues that are not related to guessing right. 



**Neil Birkhoff: “It’s probably the most dynamic area of the law—constantly changing.”**

Gene Marrano

## Neil Birkhoff: Keeping the Tax Man at bay >

### Executive Summary:

*The Woods Rogers attorney keeps a close watch on taxes paid by the wealthy and businesses.*

**By Gene Marrano**

One thing is certain says Neil Birkhoff, a tax attorney with Woods Rogers in Roanoke who knows these things: the tax code at the state and federal levels is becoming more complex every year.

What once was a slender volume of rules is now several larger books. It’s all he can do to

keep up. Steering corporate clients and high net worth individuals clear of any trouble, while minimizing their tax burden, has gained Birkhoff some celebrity at the state level.

“I guess it suits my personality,” says Birkhoff of his interest in tax law. “It’s probably the most dynamic area of the law—constantly changing. Congress can’t keep its hands off the Internal Revenue Code.”

Tax law has become “unduly complicated,” says Birkhoff, to the point that no one person can understand it all. He calls on colleagues when necessary; daily e-mail blasts and webinars help him keep up to date.

About a third of his work also involves “tax sensitive, high end” estate planning.

Birkhoff enjoyed his four years with the Justice Department, where he represented the United States in court on tax issues. “It was a great job. They throw a lot of responsibility at

you.” The drawback: “lousy pay.”

Several cases argued successfully before the Virginia Supreme Court helped cement his reputation. One involved the Shelor Motor Company v. the Commissioner of Revenue in Montgomery County. For several years the car dealer loaded a large part of its inventory on to flat bed trucks and removed it from Montgomery County, to avoid a merchants capital tax that applied to inventory tallied on or about January 1.

While several dozen localities have such a tax, about a decade ago Birkhoff says Montgomery County had the highest rate in the state. “Shelor [based in Christiansburg] was paying almost 40 percent of the tax for all of Montgomery County,” recalls Birkhoff.

After several unsuccessful constitutional challenges he was brought in when Shelor brought suit. Birkhoff suggested moving the inventory off site before the Jan. 1 inventory date. Most of the vehicles wound up at a Pulaski County racetrack. (Pulaski County had a lower tax rate.)

Montgomery County objected to the vehicles being moved and the matter wound up at the Virginia Supreme Court. Birkhoff didn't argue the case but helped construct the tax argument briefs.

The Court sided with Shelor, saying the law should be strictly interpreted – if the inventory isn't there on Jan. 1 it cannot be taxed. Montgomery County eventually

## In Brief

**Name:** Neil V. Birkhoff  
**Age:** 55  
**Company:** Woods Rogers (principal)  
**Location:** Roanoke  
**Position:** Chairman, tax and estate planning group  
**Background:** A Fellow of the American College of Tax Counsel and a Roanoke Valley native, Birkhoff earned an undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia before studying law at William & Mary. He later returned to school at George Washington University to focus on taxation, while clerking for a judge.

Birkhoff is still in school these days, as an adjunct professor of law at Washington & Lee University. Prior to joining Woods Rogers in 1987, he was a trial attorney with the tax division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Birkhoff's goal: “Just doing the best you can for your clients on a daily basis.” He's also on several nonprofit boards, including Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and Second Harvest Food Bank. He is a widower with two sons.

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lowered the merchants capital tax rate.

The other tax case involving Birkhoff that wound up in Supreme Court was *English Construction v. the City of Lynchburg*, wherein the city wanted to charge the general contractor business license taxes for projects built elsewhere.

That levy was based on gross receipts and if other localities didn't have such a tax, Lynchburg wanted a piece of the pie. The Supreme Court said that couldn't be done, if *English Construction* had established a "definite place of business," in those other jurisdictions—temporary offices, trailers, etc.

Although there had been a change in the law previously, "Lynchburg basically ignored it," says Birkhoff. Like in the *Shelor* case, the court took a "strict constructionist stand," in siding with his argument just last year.

"It has implications for the whole state."

As tax rates climb high, the rich are also taking more of an interest in aggressive estate planning, according to Birkhoff. Courtesy of 2001 Congressional tax cut legislation the federal estate tax does not actually exist this year but returns in 2011.

"[That] puts a whole different tax regime in place for estate planning purposes," says Birkhoff. Congress has made noise about passing a retroactive estate tax to cover 2010, making the drafting of client documents a bit trickier.

Sophisticated vehicles such as Qualified Personal Residence Trusts and family LLC's are "not run of the mill estate planning. They're fairly sophisticated techniques." Some might say Neil Birkhoff isn't your run of the mill tax attorney, either. 

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Authorized by Nicholas C. Conte, Chairman, on behalf of the firm.



**Semtner with the PerioLase MVP-7 Digital Laser that he uses to treat periodontal disease; his "voodoo" laser.**

photos: Huong Fralin

## Periodontal team, and a little more >

### Executive Summary:

*Semtner and Semtner is a company of dentists, fighting not only gum disease, but also taking a shot at your sleeping problems.*

### By Huong Fralin

Opening wide for the dentist can now be a lifesaver.

As technology continues to advance, so does the practice of dentistry, and on Starkey Road, there lies a husband and wife dental practice that can treat periodontal disease in a new and improved way, and will also screen for sleep apnea.

Rob and Mona Semtner, of Semtner and Semtner DDS, have had their private practice for five years and are on the front edge of fighting periodontal disease. As one of the few offices in the region using a new laser technology, Rob has been able to treat the disease by specifically targeting all of the bacteria that causes problems in gums unlike any other procedure has been able to do.

The protocol associated with this treatment has been able to regenerate lost bone that is a result of the disease, something that also has never been done before.

"I call it my voodoo laser," says Rob, "because one of the neat side effects about this laser is that it has a very positive healing effect on the body that specifically encourages the bodies' own healing." He uses the laser post-operatively or to treat sore joints associated with TMJ, which results in less discomfort. The Semtners use five different laser wavelengths and Rob is the most trained on them, locally, he says.

Gone are the days of biting into a gooey substance to make an impression in order to get a crown or veneer made. At Semtner and Semtner, the dentists can digitally photograph your tooth, look at it from all angles and send it wirelessly to what is essentially a 3D printer that sculpts the shape of the crown from a block of porcelain. If you want, Rob can even customize your new tooth with stains and glazes. He enjoys painting a Virginia Tech logo on the tooth, and he has painted a heart on the back of a patient's front tooth, as well as a lady bug on his wife's tooth because of the nickname her father gave her. "If a dentist isn't an artist, then I don't know who is," says Rob. He says teeth are essentially pottery, and crowns and veneers can be made and placed in one visit.

A new awareness that Rob is pushing the world of dentistry to screen for is sleep apnea, a not-so-silent killer that many people are unaware of. After gaining interest in learning about the science of sleep from a patient who runs a local sleep center, Rob took a few classes on the matter which opened his eyes to how much there is to know.



**Adjustable Oral Appliance for those who have mild to moderate cases of sleep apnea.**



**Rob Semtner taking digital images of a tooth that needs a crown.**

By asking simple questions, such as whether the patient snores or feels rested during the day after a full night sleep, and taking a picture of each patient's airway to examine, Rob can refer patients to a local sleep physician or ear, nose and throat specialist if he sees warning signs for the disorder.

Carilion Clinic has referred patients to him for treatment, and he supplies an adjustable

oral appliance that helps open airway passages to patients who have mild to moderate cases of sleep apnea. It's something he feels strongly about, because generic appliances that are not made to fit might help you snore less but won't help with sleep apnea at all. "It is a tremendous problem that most people don't know much about so I feel like it's my duty to provide a little bit of education and help screen for this disease," says Rob. 

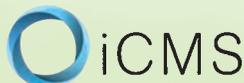
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**Virginia Veterans Care offers long term health care for the Commonwealth's former military men.**

Dan Smith

## Virginia vets and long-term care >

### **Executive Summary:**

*The Virginia Veterans Care Center in Salem meets a growing need as veterans age and often works closely with the huge VAMC.*

**By Susan Ayers**

The Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) in Salem is a state-of-the-art model for long term health care that serves as the state home for veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Because the VVCC sits next door to the massive Veterans Administrated Medical Center (VAMC), many people think the two facilities are affiliated, but that's only partially correct and the relationship is complex.

VVCC is not directly affiliated with the Salem VAMC. VVCC is a state veterans home and Salem VAMC is a federally-funded component of the Veterans Health Administration that falls under U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, a federal agency.

Still, the two are indirectly affiliated in several ways. They are advocates for veterans so they have the same goal. The VA helps veterans in state homes by assisting with a portion of the bill that the veterans pay. They do that for veterans who don't meet the requirement

at VA. The majority of the veterans in assisted living receive most of their medical care at Salem VAMC.

The VA and the state care center have a group that meets quarterly to determine ways they can improve their services. VVCC Director of Admissions and Public Relations Patti Smith attends veterans groups meetings throughout the state, learns of problems and brings them to the table at the quarterly meeting.

VVCC and Salem VAMC work together on facilitating and resolving health care concerns for the veterans. "I've never hit a brick wall over there. The doctors and administration are so open and easy to work with at Salem VAMC. VA performs annual inspections at all state centers. Results from 2009 indicate 'families to be happy.' VVCC had its own benefits department and that helps veterans get all they're eligible for," says Smith.

Opened on Veterans Day in 1992, the center was initially run by a hired nursing home management company with a 10-member board comprised of veterans appointed by the governor. In 2004, a new administrator was hired and the state took over the reins of managing and running the facility.

According to the Armed Forces Veterans Homes Foundation, "The demand for quality long term veteran care is growing at an astounding rate. Our nation faces the largest



Veterans Lester Grubb, John Poole and “Buster” White enjoy a quiet evening.

aging veteran population in its history. Today, roughly 10 million veterans are aged 65 and over, about 39 percent of all the veterans in America. This proportion will remain unchanged for the next 20 years. The number of veterans aged 85 and over will have increased by 600 percent from 1990 to 2010 and will total nearly two million in all.”

“Board members wanted the veterans to be number one and that same theme has continued,” says Smith.

Eligibility requirements for admission include an honorable discharge from the U. S. Armed Forces and Virginia residency at the time of admission, or entry into the Armed Forces. VVCC accepts payment from private insurers, Medicare and Medicaid. Some veterans

are eligible for assistance through U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Whether it’s a short stay for rehab or for long-term care, the center offers individualized services for varying levels of care including assisted living, skilled nursing, intermediate nursing, Alzheimer’s/dementia and hospice care.

The layout of each area is exactly the same, which works well for veterans who originally come in for assisted living and later have the need to go to the nursing home or dementia unit.

With a staff of 320 State employees, says Smith, “We obtain optimum and consistent staffing ... To remain working here, they



  
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**John Poole remembers his service days.**



**Patti Smith: "To remain working here, they must care and have respect and compassion."**

Susan Ayers

must care and have respect and compassion."

Five doctors in private practice make rounds for 180 patients in the nursing home. Nurses provide all 240 residents with 24-hour care.

Most of the 60 veterans in assisted living receive their medical care at the Salem VA Medical Center and VVCC transports the veterans to Salem VA Medical Center and to a specialist or dentist as needed.

Features, activities and amenities include:

In-house physical, occupational, respiratory and speech/language therapies; availability of a dietetics professional; therapeutic activities such as pet therapy, bowling, bingo, fishing trips and weekly shopping outings; two suites for residents' families; and a chapel, pharmacy, library, barber

shop and indoor bird aviaries.

Statistically, older women in poor health populate private sector nursing homes where the social atmosphere and activities are centered around them. "Guys like it [at the VVCC] because they're with guys. It's often referred to as 'camaraderie'—a band of brotherhood," says Smith. "The social atmosphere and activities revolve around their needs and provide more outside opportunities including fishing, bowling and sporting events."

Smith says rates are "are extremely reasonable. You would be hard pressed to find a facility that offers everything that we offer including free transportation to medical appointments. The veterans need to check us out. It's an entitlement to be here." 

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Zach Thompson enjoys his business coffee.

Michael Miller

Thompson, senior partner at RYP Marketing, and his brother Adam represent the quintessential bootstrap entrepreneur story. They grew up in Lexington and were home-schooled. Instead of heading off to college like many of their friends, they were impatient to enter the business world. Each brother started an e-commerce business in 2002, selling products like nutritional supplements or sporting goods the Web.

In an effort to increase sales, they were forced to learn how to drive more potential customers to their Web sites. They became such experts in the techniques that eventually they sold their online businesses and began designing and implementing Web marketing campaigns for other clients. And so, RYP Marketing was born.

## From the ground up >

### Executive Summary:

*At RYP Marketing, the Thompson brothers teach conversion, which "is much more important than visitor counts to your bottom line."*

### By Michael Miller

When Zach Thompson needs to meet with a local client he offers the client a choice of 22 different types of coffee to enjoy, including four separate kinds of decaf. No, he's not a coffee aficionado and he doesn't own a coffee roasting business. It's just that he doesn't actually have an office, so he holds his face-to-face meetings at Mill Mountain Coffee & Tea in Daleville.

RYP stands for "Raise Your Profits." That's exactly what they intend to do for their customers.

The world is full of Internet marketing firms, and so one might wonder how a couple of Shenandoah Valley boys without college degrees could compete in this rapidly-changing business. They learned early how to use "search engine optimization," or SEO to drive visitors to a Web site. But that's the problem. Hits alone don't make money. Hits have to turn into actions, like sales.

"That's called conversion, and it is much more important than visitor counts to your bottom line," says Thompson. That conversion rate is what RYP provides its customers.

The rapid growth of social media as an advertising channel has been impressive. These new opportunities to reach potential customers took many corporate marketing managers by surprise, and the immediate reaction was to throw

money at the problem to catch up.

"Social media advertising has been predominantly in the hands of 'guru consultants' without any ability to demonstrate a solid return," Thompson says. "But now marketing managers are looking at the budgets and trying to determine if this is the most effective way to use their resources. It's all about ROI now."

That's where RYP can compete with companies many times their size.

The world of e-commerce has no bounds, and RYP's major clients are scattered across the country, particularly on the west coast, and in Europe. RYP's only major local client is Smith Mountain Realty. It is truly part of the global economy.

Like its customers, RYP's employees are

rarely, if ever, in the same place. The company encourages telecommuting, and in fact senior partner Adam Thompson lives near Chicago. RYP draws on the skills of 15-20 people, although Zach Thompson doesn't actually know the exact count.

"Things change so fast in this field that it is impossible for one person to keep up on the latest techniques and knowledge in all aspects," he says. "But we can use a number of different individuals to be expert in small sub-domains, and let them keep us on the leading edge. Nothing we do requires us to be in the same place at the same time."

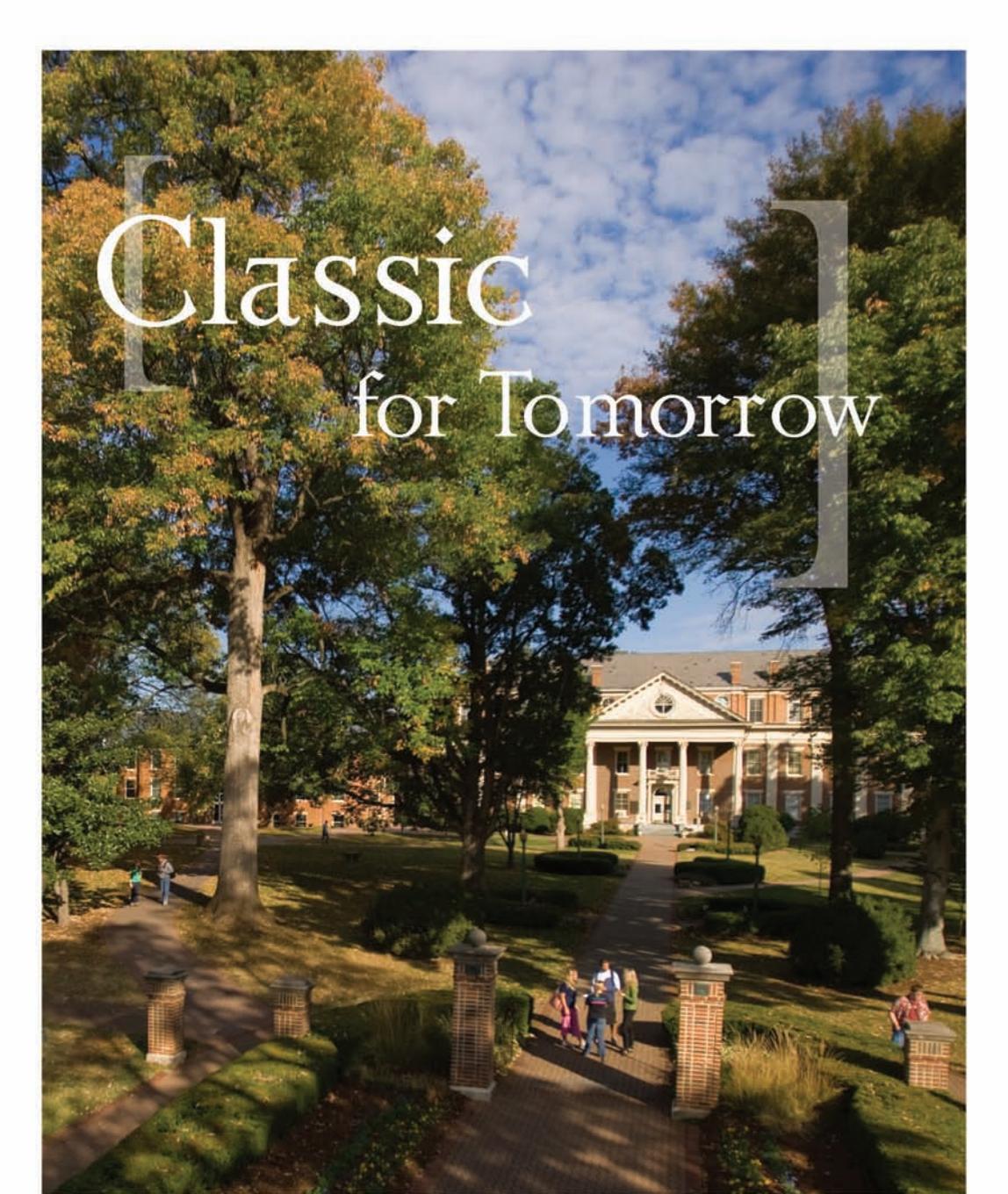
The company may be virtual, but its success is not. RYP Marketing is looking to expand its presence in the Midwest and will soon begin offering additional services such as programming, Web applications and back-end databases for their clients. 



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## netFRONT

Developing a Web  
traffic strategy >**Executive Summary:**

*There are a number of ways to maximize your Web traffic and get your message spread.*

**By Janeson Keeley**

Before your business Web site can help your business grow, you have to attract prospective customers or clients to it. Unfortunately, the adage, "If you build it, they will come," does not apply to Web sites.

There are five potential sources of visitors to your Web site: search engines, pay-per-click campaigns, direct referrals, site referrals, and social media. An effective Web traffic strategy taps into as many of these sources as possible.

When a business wants to increase its Web site traffic, "being number one on Google" is often the first goal. In many cases, high search engine rankings can be achieved through search engine optimization efforts for specific search terms. "A well-researched list of targeted keywords is essential," says Linda Martin, Web Communications Coordinator for Hollins University, which has been actively using SEO strategies since 2001.

However, it is difficult to get high search engine rankings for very general and very popular terms. In these cases, pay-per-click campaigns can be helpful. Martin reports, "Hollins started PPC programs with Google and Yahoo SEM in 2002-03 to increase search engine visibility for very competitive terms. We now get traffic on terms for which it would be difficult to rank high in the search engines."

Direct referral is a powerful, but overlooked, method of driving traffic to your Web site.



Janeson Keeley

Dan Smith

This occurs when a visitor sees, hears of or guesses at your Web site URL (address) and types it directly into the browser. To take advantage of this, "be sure to include your URL on all on signs, ads, and promotional materials for your business," recommends Salem graphic designer, Sue England.

Site referral occurs when a visitor clicks on a link to your Web site from a Web site other than a search engine. You can increase your site referrals by having your site listed in on-line business directories, related Web sites, and business partner sites. Your Web site should also include content to which other sites will want to link.

Social media has recently become a major source of traffic to Web sites. Roanoke blogger Heather Jacobson notes that, "When you integrate your site into your social media efforts, your potential reach and traffic increase exponentially."

Once you have developed and implemented a strategy, you need to monitor the results and determine if the increased traffic is actually resulting in more business. If it isn't, then you may need to improve the Web site itself.

Thomas Becher, president of tba (the becher agency) explains: "You need to have compelling content that gets noticed, and you need to analyze where your traffic comes from so you can constantly adapt the content. Analyzing your results using free tools [such as Google Analytics] is a proactive way to measure who's reading your site, who's linking to it, and what they're looking for." 



**Gio Guarini, Nancy Jurek, Callie Nicholson, Candra Cantrell of The Bank Food and Drink in Pearisburg.**

pictures: Lynn Margheim

## Work Spaces

### The Bank, Food And Drink >

**Executive Summary:**

*Finding contentment with the food, the work and the friends.*

**By Becky Hepler**

Ask anyone who has ever worked in a restaurant and you'll find pretty much all of them over-tip, because they know just what a hard, stressful job it is. Unless, that is, you talk with the relaxed group at The Bank Food and Drink in Pearisburg. Matching the relaxed, yet elegant vibe are some contented workers who believe they have a stake in the success of the business.

Nancy Jurek is one of those Tech students who, falling under the spell of rural New River Valley beauty, left for a little while, but migrated back after a stint in the city. A self-confessed foodie, she lived in Italy and went to culinary school in Florence, where she married her teacher, Giovanni Guarini, restaurateur and wine bar owner. She and Gio also run a catering business and work



**Gio making the ravioli with locally produced cheese and spinach, and sage from his garden**



**Herbs in the window**

with a home meal delivery business. Once back in the NRV, they considered opening a restaurant, but no feasible opportunities presented themselves, until this past summer, when The Bank Food and Drink, lost its chef and operator.

Nancy and Gio decided this was their chance. "The price was right and this place had so much character," she says. "We serve what we eat at home," which is to say, only organic and as local as possible. "That's challenging in winter, but we're doing pretty well, so far."

The entire operation is as green and sustainable as they can make it. They compost the food wastes, buy locally, use only biodegradable cleaning products, raise their own chickens and have a garden that supplies the fresh herbs and greens.

Unlike most restaurant owners who pay low wages and expect the staff to make up the difference in tips, Nancy and Gio pay the three part-time employees above the minimum wage and everyone shares the tips. "I've never owned a business or been a manager before, but I think you treat people the way you want to be treated," Nancy says.

"It's so great to work in a place where they share your values on everything," says Nate Flickinger. "It's not as if you're compromising your ethics to try and make a living, you're working with friends." He and his partner Candra Cantrell originally worked for Nancy and Gio cleaning up and painting the building when they took over the restaurant. The four worked together so well, Nate and Candra stayed on as wait staff once the restaurant reopened.

"I like that this job gives us time to build our home and farm, do art, have a life," Candra says. "They feed us here and it's so good. It spoils you for other restaurants, they seem so overpriced."

Callie Nicholson figured out the times that made her happiest involved food, so while she started out as a server at The Bank, she's talked herself into a prep cook position. "I've always loved cooking, but was never sure I could make a living doing it," she says. "This place is perfect and I'm so happy it worked out." 



Countertops



Folding napkins



Corner table



Living area



Janice Yearout-Patton at the landmark hardware store in Floyd.

Chuck Herron

corner of the intersection beneath the light, at 101 East Main Street, sits a retail operation that is a paradigm of that same sentiment.

The brick building that houses the Floyd Farmers Supply looks its age (built in 1897)—on purpose. Inside are a collection of products that shoppers won't find at Home Depot or Lowes—also on purpose. Store manager Janice Yearout-Patton, 57, has no trouble at all explaining why.

"We are all about providing items that customers just won't find elsewhere in this area, and sometimes even in the whole state," she says. "For example, we are one of the few stores in Virginia still carrying Alladin kerosene lamps. This is a company that celebrates its 100th anniversary this year."

More than a few of the items in stock are there because Janice has a passion for cooking, gardening, and all things natural. There are a variety of birdhouses and birdfeeders, seeds, organic pesticides, and

tools. Housewares include a full line of cast-iron cookery and small specialty appliances, such as cherry-pitters. Then, there is full line of distinctive toys, well beyond the little red wagon that seems to be typical in other hardware-type stores.

"Of course, we also have a full line of hardware," the manager explains, "although we don't have the space for lumber. But, we can and do custom cut angle-iron steel like we do downstairs in the basement or thread pipe for someone.

"All-in-all, we're very customer-oriented. If you come in to get something you've ordered, and it's not yet unpacked because it's just come in as part of the day's shipment, we won't ask you to come back tomorrow. Even when it's part of a large shipment, we go down, find it and bring it to you."

The staff (there are currently five employees)

## The very emblem of Floyd >

### Executive Summary:

*Here's a hardware store that makes a simple statement about Floyd: Floyd Farmers Supply is about simplicity.*

### By Rachael Garrity

Floyd is mighty proud of its one-stoplight-ness. Local artisans even make stoplight Christmas ornaments. Residents, an intriguing mixture of native Appalachians and transplants from other parts of the country looking for a simpler life, see the tri-color beacon as a totem of sorts, blinking out the statement that here is a place where the natural, the old, and the practical are valued. On one

also holds a Christmas luncheon to show appreciation to their regular customers each year.

Janice has been with the store for 17 years, and is the third member of her family to have acted as manager. First her uncle ran the operation, then her father was in charge for 25 years. The building is owned by the heirs of H. L. Lawson. Jack Lawson, spokesman for the family corporation, remembers that his grandfather and one of his grandfather's brothers-in-law started a business to sell Fords in the building, but closed that operation in the 1920s and rented the space to the owner of the farmers' supply store, who then left the business to Roanoke College when he died. The college decided to sell it to the



Lawson family, so that building and business were again under one owner.

Not surprisingly, when The Washington Post did a story on Floyd in 2001, it was the hardware store that formed the backdrop for one of the two photos. As Fiddler on the Roof's Tevye exclaims: Tradition. 



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-Edna Chase

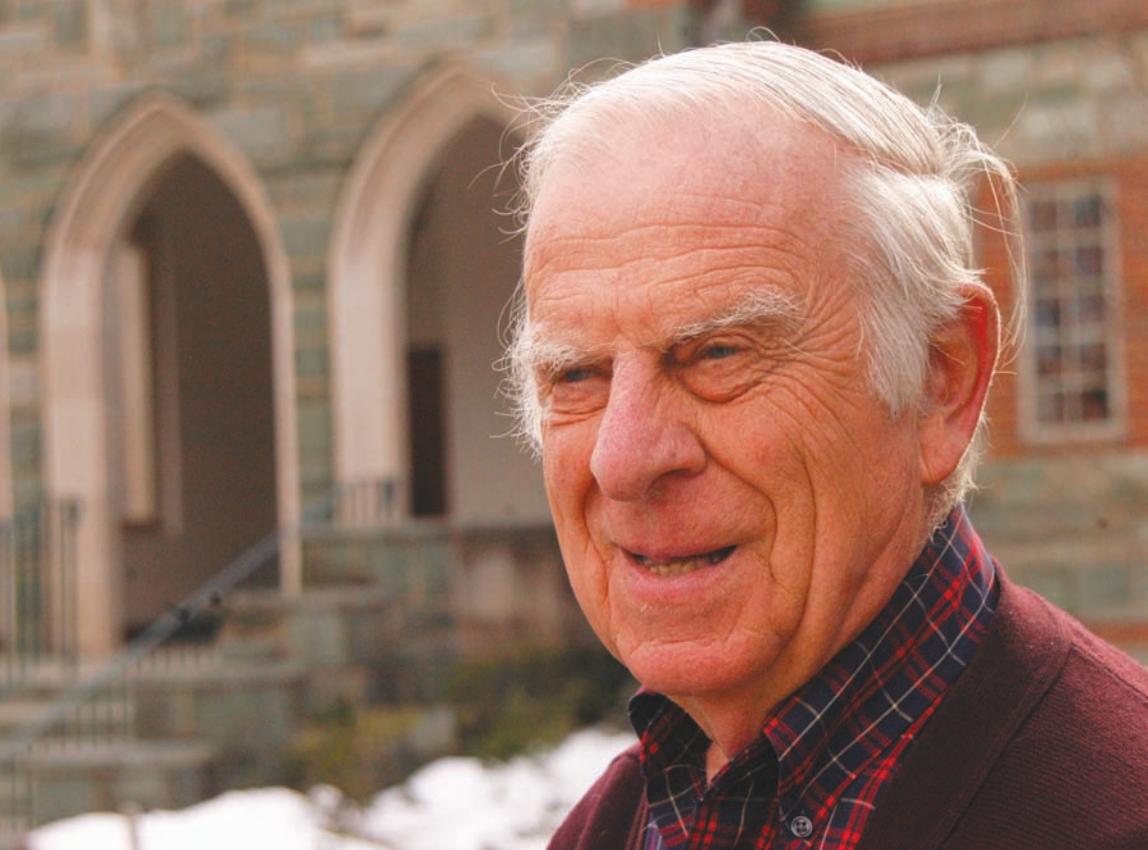
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**George Kegley: “What would happen to the community if all the volunteers stayed home one day?”**

Dan Smith

## George Kegley: Journalist, catalyst, doer >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Compact stories for a compact life.*

**By Michael L. Ramsey**

George Kegley was a newspaper reporter from 1949 until he retired in 1993 and he’s still a journalist in a sense, sharing his many talents with his Roanoke Valley neighbors through several channels.

A certain magazine editor you all know and love calls Kegley the “master of the 12-inch news story.” That is an important distinction that will be appreciated by journalists; for lay people, let’s explain.

Morning newspaper readers look for stories

that will impact their lives in the day that is unfolding before them. A 12-inch story, when done well, gives a careful writer enough space to convey the essence of the story that is important today, according to Kegley. And it doesn’t require a large time block to read.

One foot of news tells the reader to expect “the facts that are available to us, no opinion, no speculation, just facts. If there is more to be known, I will tell you about it when it happens.”

Kegley describes his method of developing the stories he wrote thusly: He would check background and facts after he had gathered current information. After spending the day finding the news and the newsmakers and conducting interviews, he would return to the newsroom and begin his research. Then he would write the story against a rigid daily deadline.

The 12-inch story may be a metaphor for Kegley’s life.

George Kegley has packed his life with raising a family, building a career, being involved in his church and providing yeoman service to

organizations dedicated to helping others.

At a lunch interview recently, he had just finished a Meals on Wheels (MOW) route for someone who could not deliver meals that day—that’s in addition to his own MOW route.

He is, or has been, involved in a meaningful way in organizations dedicated to history and the preservation of our cultural past. They include:

Historical Society of Western Virginia (board member and editor of the society’s Journal); Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation; Western Virginia Land Trust; Virginian Railway Station committee; and a contributor to the Library of Virginia Dictionary of Virginia Biography. He publishes an occasional Roanoke Valley history.

His community spirit has him involved with Meals on Wheel; the Rescue Mission; Transitional Living Center; Literacy Volunteers; Refugee and Immigration Services; and Roanoke City 125th Anniversary Committee.

He served 10 years as a member of the Virginia State Library Board. He has held many leadership roles with the Lutheran Church, and teaches a Sunday School class at St. Mark’s Lutheran Church.

He was Roanoke Citizen of the Year in 2002 and won the Humanitarian of the Year Award, Roanoke Region, National Conference

of Community and Justice (2004).

Kegley’s alma mater, Roanoke College, made him a Doctor of Humane Letters in 2001. His father was a Roanoke College graduate, and his grandfather was a member of the college’s board.

When asked about his volunteer work, he typically turns the attention away from himself, “Volunteering is so important. What would happen to the community if all the volunteers stayed home one day?”

Some projects will have a lasting effect on Kegley’s fellow Virginians. He and wife Louise (whom he met at the local daily newspaper) have used the Western Virginia Land Trust to protect the farm where they live from future development.

Having used the Land Trust’s conservation easement, Kegley promotes its use among others who want their land to remain undeveloped.

This shortened list of his contributions will serve to illustrate how the 12-inch story for which he is known is a metaphor for George Kegley’s life.

George Kegley may not work in the news business anymore, but is not retired. He reminds of the management bromide: “If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it.” 

## A New Building for an Old Neighborhood



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Museum Administrator Terry Nicholson.

pictures: Chuck Herron

Built in 1905, the building served for the first half of the 20th Century as a sacred space for the benevolent orders for which it is named and the site of business and social activities for African-Americans in what was then known as “New Town.”

Like many other towns of the same name, New Town was founded just after the Civil War by freed slaves. There were 27 homes and the residents were African-American, until the 1960s, when the demographics began to change. The only surviving structure of those 27, the St. Luke and Oddfellows Hall was where members of the Black community, barred from many social and cultural venues during segregation, could gather for parties,

ball games and other celebrations.

The second floor was off-limits to the general public and was used to store sacred artifacts and historical records, a retrospective of Black fraternal organizations that had been popular since well before the Civil War.

Keenly concerned that full attention be paid to preservation, members of the African-American Community found a way to collaborate with the Town of Blacksburg and in 2005 three trustees—Walter Lewis, Beatrice Walker and Aubrey Mills—signed the necessary papers to give birth to what is now a new museum.

The construction contract for the restoration was awarded to Building Specialists, the Roanoke company owned and operated by Bob Fetzer that had been tapped by ABC television to participate in the “Extreme

## A new museum treasure for Blacksburg >

### Executive Summary:

*The Oddfellows Hall will once again be a focus for the town’s African-American community.*

### By Rachael Garrity

In February 2009, the Town of Blacksburg held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of a project to restore the St. Luke and Oddfellows Hall, a simple building that rests on the lip of the Virginia Tech campus. The restoration—now finished—is a prime example of community collaboration among civic officials, historians, builders and ultimately the citizens themselves.



**Terry Nicholson shows off the inside of the hall.**



**Terry Nicholson outside Oddfellows Hall in Blacksburg.**

Makeover” project in 2006. The architect for the project was Barry Rakes, also from Roanoke.

Because the building had been hit by a beer truck, the first order of business was to make it level without cracking the horsehair plaster walls. In fact, the architect and builder not only “set it straight,” but managed to assure that some of that plaster and other elements of the original construction were clearly visible. “We left some places open, used a light wash instead of heavy paint, and really paid attention to showcasing what was there,” says Jennifer Caldwell, project manager for Building Specialists.

The approach was to reuse as much of the construction material as possible, and when additional pieces, such as hardware items, were needed to comb salvage stores and the Internet to find matches.

In addition, a smaller, new structure was

added to the property, to house bathrooms that are accessible to the disabled. While constructed of new materials, it is designed to look old.

Specifically dedicated to honoring the contributions of African-Americans to the Blacksburg community, the Oddfellows Hall will be operated in conjunction with the Blacksburg Museum at the Alexander Black House, moved from its original location to Draper Road.

Aware that budget cuts prompted current economic situation might give rise to questions about the wisdom of spending money on restoration projects, Museum Administrator Terry Nicholson noted in his comments to the group gathered for the groundbreaking that buildings are “triggers for memories . . . of people who lived and worked and prayed and celebrated.” Certainly, such memories have never been more welcome. 



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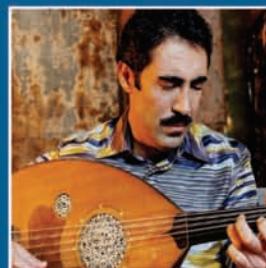
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**Chris Stup, Music Lab Director:** “we’re moving... to rigorous and relevant training for any aspiring artists.”

Tom Field

## Music education studio goes commercial >

### Executive Summary:

*Roanoke’s popular Music Lab after school program expands to include adult education and audio production services.*

### By Tom Field

Something’s happening over at the Music Lab at Jefferson Center. Something’s always happening on the third floor, west end of the building (the renovated and modernized old Jefferson High School, now managed as a non-profit organization, housing arts and culture entities and providing a nationally recognized performing arts venue). It’s just that it

used to happen mostly between the hours of 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.. That’s because the Music Lab primarily serves school children in 6th through 12th grades with its music and technology education program.

These days, the Music Lab adopted a business application into its mix, so to speak: it’s not just for kids anymore.

Not that there’s anything wrong with that.

“Our primary focus is still to serve youth in 6th through 12th grades,” says Music Lab director, Chris Stup, “but at the same time we’re moving from an ‘after school program’ to rigorous and relevant training for any aspiring artists.”

Stup knows a little about “the greater music business market.” Though he’s an educator—with music theory training, a master’s degree from James Madison University, and teaching music at the University of Colorado—his expertise also includes music business and audio



Tom Field

**Snarky Puppy on the Ropeadope label recorded at Music Lab and performed a benefit at Blue 5 restaurant in Roanoke**

## Music Lab at Jefferson Center

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production. He's worked the music biz scene from event management, ticket sales, and merchandising—to gigs as an artist development representative for Capital Records, EMI, and Virgin. The last decade, before accepting the Music Lab job, which opened in February 2009, probably has a lot to do with jazzin' him up and his excitement about the two new enterprises.

The Music Lab recently began a college level adult education program (offering three-credit courses in two classes: music business and audio production) and launched a commercial recording studio (available for booking before 3 p.m. and after 7 p.m. weekdays and weekends).

The adult classes are a joint program through Virginia Western Community

College, concentrating on real hands-on training, which Stup says rivals the equipment and amenities at other colleges and recording studios. He's familiar with other "music labs" that are anchored to community performance venues; and he likes to point out the astonishment of national recording artists passing through when they see his lab. As he puts it, this is "the real stuff." On the recording studio side, the Music Lab charges \$50 an hour (low in comparison to average rates) and includes Jake Dempsey, the house recording engineer. It even offers "recording parties," which arrived by happenstance, as word got out after a session was booked for a teenage girl's birthday party. That's not your typical skating party or Chuck E. Cheese outing.

Not that there's anything wrong with that.

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The catalyst for the new business services was there in the background all along (as far back as the original Downtown Music Lab) says Stup, which he summarizes in one of the most succinct vision statements ever: "What else?"

After nearly 10 years in operation at various locations, which includes surviving amongst all the difficulties facing a non-profit, Stup describes a significant step up in commitment to the Music Lab with the move to the Jefferson Center, facilitated by community visionaries and music aficionados like Ed Walker, Dylan Locke and Cyrus Pace. Along with development folk at Jefferson Center, the question of "What else" is being answered in a strong way, like nylon strings on a jazz guitar behind the scenes—to a screaming Fender Stratocaster front stage.

The Music Lab studio, with its 2,400 square foot state-of-the-art recording and tracking rooms, leading and preferred industry audio software programs, pro-grade systems and equipment—as nice as it is—is only part of the successful equation, according to Stup.

"Whereas the Jefferson Center covers the performing arts, my vision of the Music Lab is for it to be all about the digital arts. My dream experience here is to have recording artists come in to Roanoke, stay overnight in our hotels or perhaps the Cotton Mill [next door], eat at our restaurants like Fork in the City [also next door], use the studio or play the stage, and then meet the kids."

Music—it has been said—soothes the soul. At Music Lab, the souls can be young, professional, and commercial now. 

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# Roanoke's International Corridor? >

## My View

By Dan Smith  
Editor

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

**Executive Summary:** *Everything is already in place to create marvelous new attraction for the Roanoke Valley, so let's get to it.*

During the warm months, I've written occasionally and even presented photo essays on my blog about the marvelous international atmosphere that has been created at—of all places—Happy's Flea Market in North Roanoke, out near Hollins.

It has become an international bazaar on weekends with a fascinating mixture of languages, foods, dress and customs that few outside the flea market patrons are even aware of. I have found exotic foods at Happy's frequently, and brought them home to cook after getting recipes from the sellers, and I have watched this little community grow to the point that a number of the vendors are at least semi-permanent.

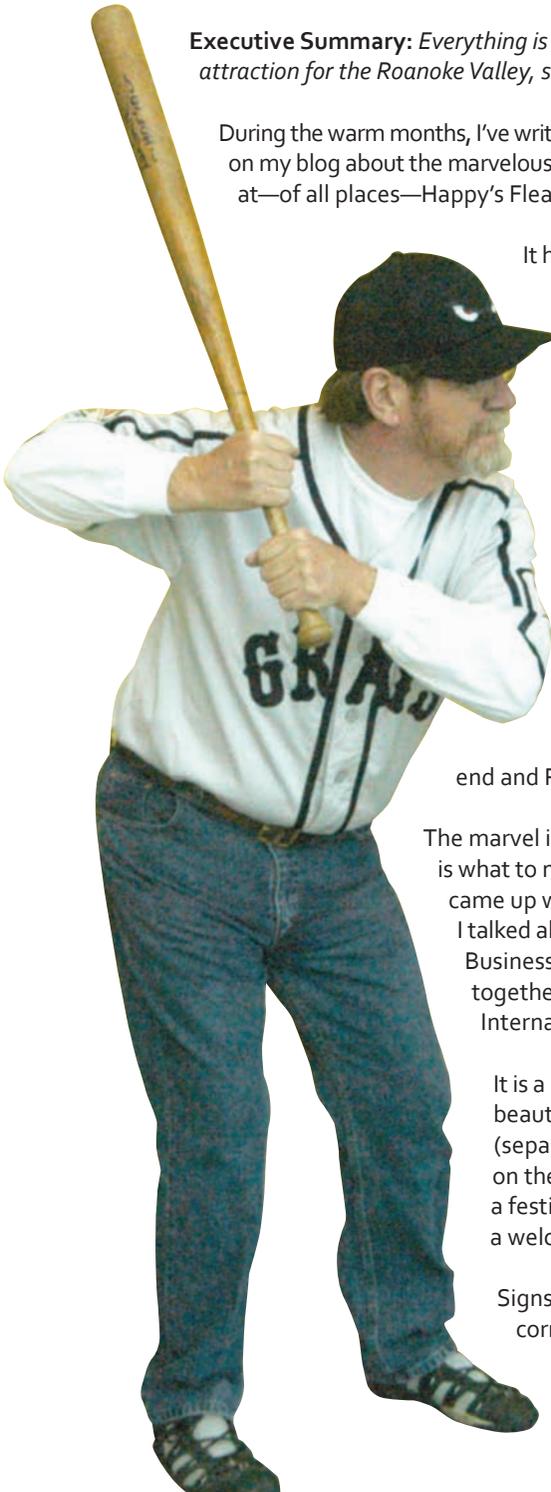
Happy's is but the most extravagant example of a diversity of culture that is growing up along Williamson Road where a number of ethnic grocery stores, restaurants and other kinds of shops dot the long boulevard from its intersection with Orange Avenue on one end and Peters Creek Road at the other.

The marvel is that it is there and it is thriving. The challenge is what to make of it beyond what it already is and my wife came up with a very good suggestion recently as she and I talked about it. "I'd love to see the Williamson Road Area Business Association and the City [of Roanoke] get together and create what they could call Roanoke's International Corridor," Christina allowed.

It is a bold and innovative idea that could be packaged beautifully around restaurants, an outdoor market (separate from the one at Happy's, which is a little on the seedy side for many potential customers) and a festive atmosphere. International music would be a welcome part of any International Corridor.

Signs would be important here. A specific-to-the-corridor logo would be necessary and it would need to appear prominently at the businesses involved, perhaps even linked to their signs. Marketing through WRABA, social media

continued to Page 52



The jobs answer is on your desk >

By Tom Field  
 Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

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

Great detectives from Sherlock Holmes to Columbo have told us that often the best clue for solving a crime is there all along, right in front of your face. It's not like you really have to work at looking for it. Very often, it's the most obvious piece of evidence. Something you see every day, pass by, touch, or use.

The nearly double-digit unemployment rate is not unlike a crime scene (ask the victims); so do we really need to struggle with all the clues to figure out what went wrong? Could it be the most important clue is the one right in front of us?

Hmmm.... sounds too simple. Besides, I'm just sitting here at my desk. There's not much that's interesting here at my *locus delicti*, Mr. Detective, but here goes...

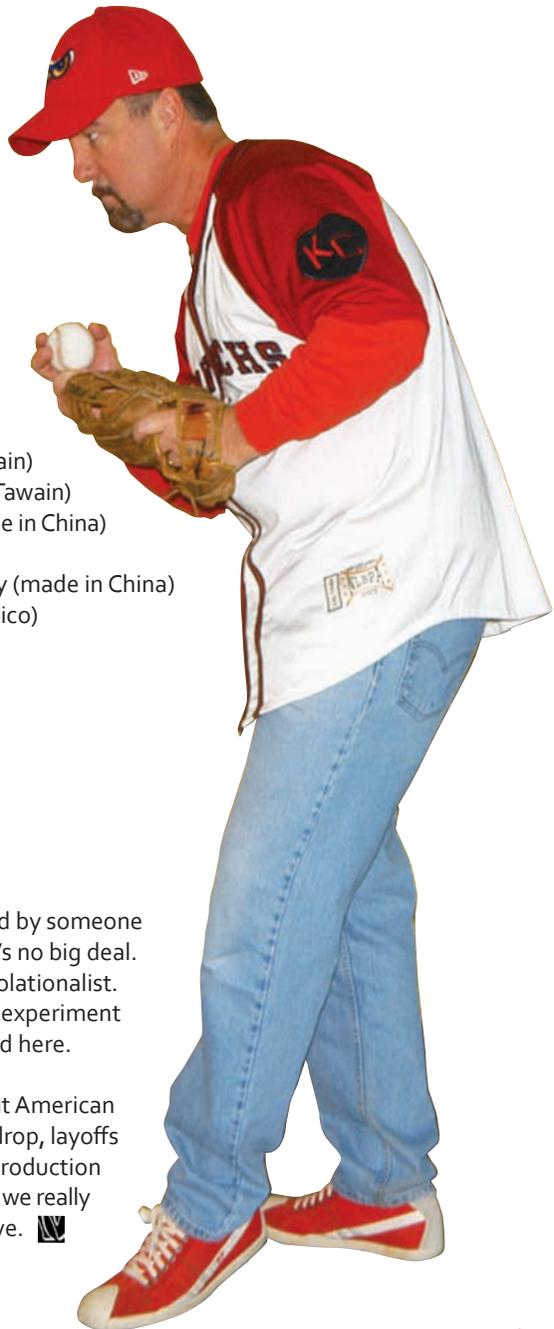
- an HP computer (parts made overseas; "some" are assembled in US)
- a snazzy green lamp (made in Taiwan)
- a brass business card holder (made in Taiwan)
- a Lexar multi-card media reader (made in Taiwan)
- a Logitech wireless mouse/keyboard (made in China)
- a Staples calculator (made in China)
- a stuffed Jiminy Cricket figure from Disney (made in China)
- a Verizon-issued Blackberry (made in Mexico)
- a Sony telephone (made in China)
- a Panasonic recorder (made in Malaysia)
- a Koss headset (made in China)
- a Pilot pen (made in Japan)

oh, yeah... and the desk itself...

- a Steelcase (very likely from USA\*)

The only thing on my desk that's manufactured by someone working in the USA is, well... *nothing*. But that's no big deal. We're a global economy. I'm an alarmist. An isolationist. It's no big deal that in this random, unplanned experiment we discover that *not a single item* was produced here.

Besides, there's always the desk itself. And that American manufacturer? It just announced a 30 percent drop, layoffs at its U.S. plants, and is now all set to lease a production plant in Mexico. But back to this jobs issue: what we really need here... I'm telling you... is a good detective. 



## Smith / My View

from Page 50

pages and even individual advertising from the members of the Williamson Road international community would be part of the program.

Everything that is necessary to get this started and running is already in place: the shops are flourishing, first-generation Americans and immigrants are centered in this section of the city, word is spreading. The marketing is the next step and it could start with something as simple as a Facebook page announcing the plan and telling us where all these marvelous businesses are (which would, of course be followed by a map and some signs).

Wendy Jones, director of WRABA, says the most significant barrier at the moment is the

language barrier and that her organization is addressing that. "We don't have the opportunity they have downtown—they're a square box; we're linear—but that doesn't mean we can't make it happen."

WRABA would need to be involved, since it is the most significant business organization in the area and somebody like Lisa Soltis of the Roanoke Department of Economic Development or one of the boys at Public Works could weigh in.

My guess is that if we get right down to it, this whole idea could reach fruition by the end of summer ... maybe even before. I suspect I should call Pearl Fu, who invented Local Colors. If Pearl took over, the whole deal would be done in a week. 

*Note: Tom Field's and Dan Smith's jerseys are Negro Leagues replicas of the Homestead Grays and the Kansas City Monarchs.*

# Coming up in the **FRONT**

Don't miss the next issue!

## Coming in June: Building Materials

What's new with buildings today? The FRONT talks to the experts—and presents the latest news on this developing front.

## Coming in July: The Business of Resorts

What are resorts in our region doing to seize opportunities in today's economy? The FRONT visits resorts in the region—and reports the findings.

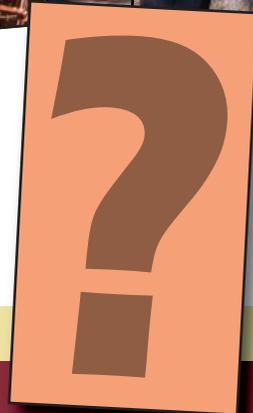
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## Letters

### Taking issue with the issue

Editor,

Regarding VBFront's environmental issue: I cannot agree that there's an actual benefit to the environment by going electronic instead of print. Indeed, quite the opposite ... When we talk about "carbon footprint," we're talking about the amount of carbon (in the form of CO<sub>2</sub>) that our activities generate ... What we want is "carbon neutral" where the net sum of our activities does not result in more CO<sub>2</sub> being emitted than is being sequestered.

When we go electronic, we're supporting a cycle that is heavily weighted towards emissions and has a terrible carbon footprint. Computers and other electronic devices require the mining and refining of dozens of metals ... not to mention plastics and hydrocarbon solvents. Electronics manufacturing gets 90 percent of its energy from fossil fuels ... and create a waste stream that is not generally recyclable or biodegradable. [In paper manufacturing] the material is truly renewable, and provides our planet's best way to sequester carbon. An acre of trees can produce over 4,200 pounds of oxygen each year, while sequestering almost 6,000 pounds of carbon dioxide ... Forests are managed with sustainability as their primary focus. ... Over three times more trees are planted every year than are harvested

... Many printing companies in our region get much of their paper from Mohawk, a mill which generates 100 percent of its electricity from wind power. Once used, paper can be recycled ...

When we turn away from print, we decrease the demand for paper. Over 90 percent of the paper in our country comes from forests that are privately owned. As long as there is a healthy demand for paper and other forest products, these forests will not only be sustained, but will thrive and grow. ...

Electronic and print media need to be used in appropriate ways; each is best for certain types of communication. Having the VBF online is terrific. But when we go exclusively electronic, we're reducing demand for paper, and thereby the incentive to plant trees, which damages our environment in the long term.

**Bill Gilmer**  
Christiansburg  
(Gilmer is president of Wordsprint, a printer.)

### Environmentalism

Editor,

I love this (the April issue of FRONT). Thanks for setting an example with your green issue.

**Brook Dickson**  
Hollins University

### Hugging trees

Editor,

I share your concerns for waste and I am a "tree hugger," so I understand your intention [in April's online-only environmental issue]. Planet-wide more awareness and regulation should be implemented to protect forests. Our forests produce the oxygen we need to be healthy and survive. The mentality that promotes deforestation is the same mentality that denies global warming, and will ensure the extinction of animal life on the planet.

It is my belief that the current level of deforestation and subsequent reduction in oxygen in our atmosphere has contributed greatly to the health problems that humans now suffer. So, good for [Valley Business FRONT] for making this very responsible decision to electronically print this fine publication.

**Arnette Crocker**  
Cundiff Heating & Air Conditioning

### Recruiting boost

Editor,

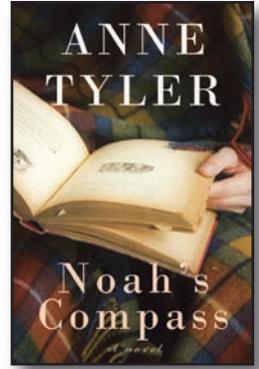
The [April issue] is an excellent upgrade in VBFront services provided to readership, and to organizations paying for ads. For us, it is particularly good to also have that direct link when visitors hit the postcard ... and get sent directly to our online site. This is an additional feature that assists our recruiting efforts here at LU.

**Barry N. Moore**  
Liberty University

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

## 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@vbfront.com](mailto:dsmith@vbfront.com)



### *Idiosyncratic*

Noah did not need a compass because he was not going anywhere in his ship, just floating until the waters receded, explains 60-year-old Liam Pennywell to his young grandson in Anne Tyler's *Noah's Compass* (Knopf Doubleday, \$25.95). Like Noah, Liam floats in his new, spare Baltimore apartment existence in the aftermath of a mugging while his daughters Kitty, Xanthe, Louise, ex-wife Barbara, and potential girlfriend Eunice come and go as he tries to remember the night of the mugging.

A man with definite ideas, no patience for religion, and an obsession with the process of remembering, Liam is another Tyler character whose idiosyncrasies define him. A former university instructor, then 5th grade history teacher, and finally a Zayda [grandfather] in a Jewish child care center, Mr. Pennywell is one more quirky Tyler character for whom giving, receiving, and spontaneity are the challenge. This novel subtly explores family relationships in the quiet life of a complex man.

—Ibby Greer

### *Top of his game*

Roland Lazenby's *Jerry West: The Life and Legend of a Basketball Icon* (Ballentine, \$28) is well on the way to being considered the best sports book of 2010, but it's a good bit more than that. This look at one of basketball's genuine icons (quite literally, actually: West is the model for the NBA logo) goes beyond the locker room and into the head of its subject, a West Virginia kid whose upbringing was not exactly the Cleaver Family Chronicles.

Wytheville native, Roanoke resident and former Virginia Tech professor Lazenby is just the guy to tell the tale, too, since he knows the West Virginia part by heart and soul (his dad grew up there). Roland's been writing these NBA books for about 20 years and my guess is that this is the one he's been aiming for all along because it is the very representation of a mature writer at the top of his game—much like West in an all-star game.

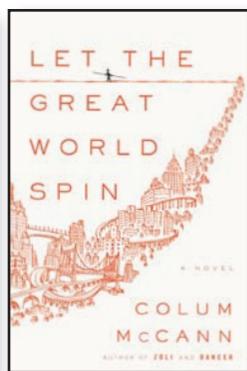
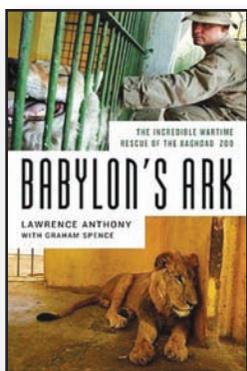
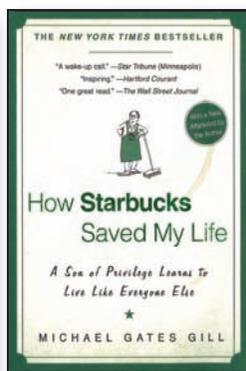
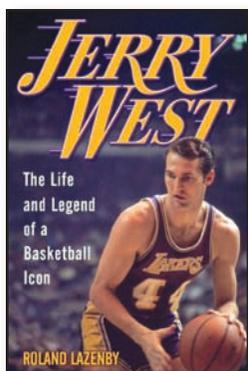
I worked with Roland at a Roanoke daily newspaper years ago and he was a tough, colorful, hellion of a reporter who never kept his opinions under his desk. His shouting contests with editors were legendary. And my guess is he was just about always right.

He's a fine writer, a great reporter and a guy whose stories are accessible whether or not you care a whit about the NBA. Good book. Read it.

—Dan Smith

### *Getting Venti in a tall*

First of all, I'm not sure if I made the coffee ring stain on the book cover or if it was printed that way. Either way, it makes the perfect watermark and complement to a memoir that's in a word: delightful. People who understand and live the Starbucks cult will cherish *How Starbucks Saved My Life*, by Michael Gates Gill (Gotham Books, \$13). But it's hardly exclusive to coffee connoisseurs. In fact, it's better than the average business book, because you extract Mike's philosophical insights (his fellow employees call him Mike in the book) like rich flavor from an espresso bean. Only here it's much easier.



Not exactly a rags-to-riches story, but a riches-to-another-kind-of-riches, *Starbucks* is an inspirational read destined to be made into a movie. I doubt there's ever been an easier book-to-script conversion. You're right there with Mike, commuting to your job, learning what constitutes meaningful work, and meeting interesting people along your way. You don't hear narration coming from a former corporate advertising executive (trust me, I hang with these guys), but that's the setup. You do get a venti's worth of sustenance in a tall cup (ummm... big content, small cup). And a lesson in how to order your drink properly. I asked my Starbucks friend if this was required reading for employees: it's not. But I'm betting you won't put it down if you pick it up.

—Tom Field

## War's privations

South African conservationist Lawrence Anthony's worst fears are confirmed in *Babylon's Ark* by Lawrence Anthony with Graham Spence, (St. Martin's Griffin, \$14.95 paperback) when he travels from Kuwait to Bagdad and discovers horrific conditions at the Bagdad Zoo. Once the largest zoo in the Middle East, it now is a mortar-shelled, looted wreck with abandoned animals, swarms of flies, urine and feces filled cages, no water, no food.

In Bagdad, he uncovers a black market zoo, Saddam's abandoned million-dollar Arabian horses, and Uday's starving pride of lions. Anthony's story gives the reader a window into the little reported repulsion of war - the destruction of a five-star hotel, citizens looting for their survival, the lack of water,

filth, and drunken soldiers. But among the degradation is great heroism, not only by Anthony, but Iraqi citizens and a coalition of soldiers determined to save a small piece of the planet.

—Jane Garnett

## Wire-walking

On a hot August day in 1974 in lower Manhattan, Philippe Petit is walking on a high wire strung between the two towers of the World Trade Center. It is on a fictionalized account of this event in *Let The Great World Spin* (Random House, \$15, paperback) that Colum McCann weaves the compelling stories of a dozen New Yorkers whose lives intersect with exquisite detail.

This is not a yarn you will race through, which is okay because you will want to enjoy the lyrical writing and the pitch perfect depiction of a time fraught with war, unrest and cultural upheaval. If you lived through the 1970s, it's an odd trip down memory lane, if you didn't, it explains a lot.

—Becky Hepler

(**The reviewers:** Ibbey Greer is a writer and artist in Rocky Mount. Jane Garnett, a writer in Cloverdale, is cataloging a collection of Girl Scout stories. Becky Hepler is a Montgomery County school librarian and a writer for hire. Tom Field is publisher of FRONT. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT.)



## Cool Cities & Hall of Fame >

It was a good spring for Valley Business FRONT editor **Dan Smith** who ended March with a **Cool Cities Coalition Media Award** (that's him in the green shirt with Denise Membrano of TV3 and Dan Radmacher of The Roanoke Times in the background) and began April by being inducted into the **Virginia Communications Hall of Fame**. Smith poses with the entire HOF class: (from left) Bob Jones, Ernie Gates (for Bea Kopp), Steven Sollinger (for his dad Harold), Smith, Bob Lee of WDBJ7, and Ed Jones. Smith and Lee were also commemorated with **"Dan Smith and Bob Lee Day"** for the City of Roanoke by Mayor David Bowers on April 1.



## NCTC TechNite >

The annual **NCTC TechNite** awards was held April 7 at the Inn at Virginia Tech, recognizing leaders in the technology community, including Winner of the People's Choice Award, NewCity. Left to right: **Mary Miller**, IDD and NCTC; **Jim Duffy**, Virginia Secretary of Technology; **Cory Donovan**, NCTC; **David Poteet**, NewCity; **John May**, New Venture Group; **Ed Lawhorn**, SunTrust Bank (sponsor).

photo: Jane Dalier

## Pulaski Chamber mixer >

**Jim Loux** of Allegheny Brokerage celebrates a 10th Anniversary at the **Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce** mixer in the NRV Airport at Dublin on March 25.



photo: Jane Dalier



## NRV job fair >

In the **New River Valley Job Fair Expo** was held on March 25 at New River Community College in Dublin. **Alan Foster** is the job seeker, speaking with **Madonna Gwinn** and Jan Harber of Thompson & Litton.

photo: Jane Dalier

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



photos: Jane Dalier

## Tech Showcase >

A "Technology Showcase" was featured as part of the **Entrepreneurial Summit** on April 7–8 by VT Knowledgeworks at the Inn at Virginia Tech. Among the presenters in the showcase were **Amy Ankrum** and **Katie Gignac** of CCS, Inc and **Laura Elliott** of Junior Achievement.



photo: Dan Smith

## Squared up >

The **FourSquare** event for social media types at Fork in the City is a business promotional event that is held all over the country. The April 16 event was ostensibly a competition with Richmond and drew a nice crowd that included: (front, from left) **John Seal**, **Neal Turnage**, **Kimberly Christian**, **Heather Jacobson**, **Ann Piedmont**; (center) **Suzanne**

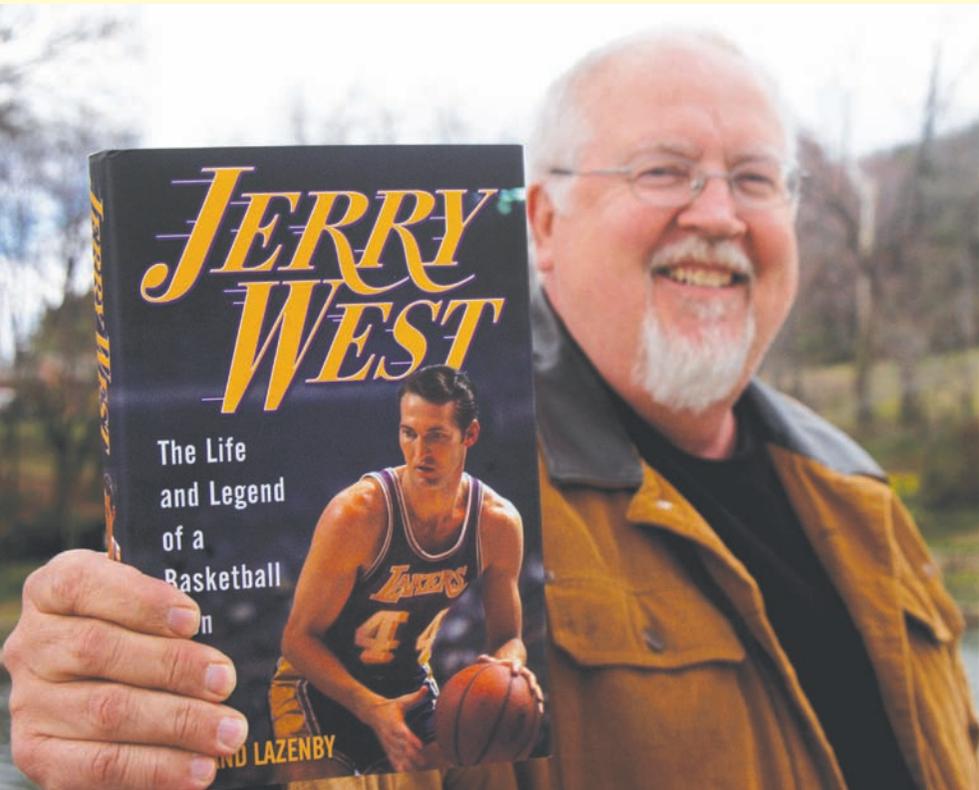
**Ashley**, **Kathy Bibb**, **Patsy Stewart**, **Amy Tuggle**; (rear) **Mickey Johnson**, **Janeson Keeley**, **John Lusher**, **Bruce Muncy**.



## Tough Marathon >

An opening reception was held for the inaugural **National College Blue Ridge Marathon** at 202Market in Roanoke the evening of April 23, before the race. Emceed by **John Carlin**, who introduced the organizers and sponsors, poster boy "**Gordie Z**" read off the list of original name suggestions for the new event, including the *WTF-was-I-thinking Race*, attributing the climbs runners will face as possibly their most challenging marathon. Zeigler was among the competitors who finished.





Roland Lazenby

David Perry

## The accidental author > from a former VMI biology major.

### Executive Summary:

*Roanoke's Roland Lazenby started out in biology and wound up covering the NBA and we're all richer for it. He's one of Virginia's most successful authors and his new book is a sensation.*

### By David Perry

Roanoke County author Roland Lazenby tosses around the names of the biggest stars in sports as casually as he would a football at a backyard picnic.

"I've been able to write about some unique personalities: Phil Jackson, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, Jerry West," he says. Lazenby, 57, is the author of a new book about West titled *Jerry West: the Life and Legend of a Basketball Icon* that's received positive reviews nationally (and is reviewed on our Book Page this month).

Lazenby has written numerous books about some of the biggest names and greatest teams in sports, including Tom Brady, Johnny Unitas, and the Chicago Bulls. It's not the output—or the subject matter—you'd expect

"After two and a half years of absolutely miserable grades I switched to English and managed to get out," he says of his academic performance in Lexington.

After teaching for five years at Blacksburg High School in the 1970s, Lazenby's career as a wordsmith began to get on track with a job reporting.

"I went to work as a sportswriter with the Blacksburg Sun," he recalls. "I got a chance to get into journalism. I'd never really written before and I wanted to do it, so I took that opportunity at \$2.80 an hour."

That job led to a stint as the night police reporter at the Roanoke Times in 1980. FRONT Editor Dan Smith, who worked with Lazenby at The Times, called him "one of the best newspaper reporters I've ever known. He was colorful, firey and a joy to watch. He took no crap from anybody, and that included the executive editor. Reporters like Roland don't much exist anymore, I'm afraid."

Says Lazenby, "When I was at the Times I wrote a book on Ralph Sampson that developed a lot of legs and sold pretty well, and one thing becomes another." The Sampson book led to

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

other deals, like writing text for coffee table books.

"I could get \$15,000-\$20,000 for a coffee table book, and I dropped back and took \$10,000 to do a full length book," he says. "I took a cut in pay to do more extensive projects, but it paid off."

Lazenby's resume grew, along with his reputation—"The Internet came along and brought me a lot more readers," he says—and he realized the time was right to do a book on West, his father's favorite player.

"It's an important family thing," he explains.

Lazenby says Jerry West is more than a sports book—it's the story of a dysfunctional family, an abusive father, the labor movement in West Virginia, and a perfectionist in West who was chronically unhappy throughout his career, despite enjoying great success.

It's the human interest angle behind the sports story that Lazenby likes to tell.

Former Coach "Chuck Daly told me, 'The games are simple but the people are complicated,'" he says. "As time's gone on, I've tried to focus more and more on the complications.

"I like to write about competitive people and the psychology of competing."

He'll have more time to write with his upcoming departure from the faculty at Virginia Tech, where he teaches writing. "I do think I've gotten what I'm going to get out of teaching," Lazenby reflects. "It's probably time that I write full-time now." His squad of journalism students

## In Brief

**Name:** Roland Lazenby

**Age:** 57

**Location:** Roanoke County

**Type of business:** author

**History:** Born in West Virginia like the subject of his latest book, Los Angeles Lakers' Jerry West, Lazenby is a prolific writer and a gifted matchmaker: he introduced Kobe Bryant to Tex Winter, the architect of Bulls and Lakers coach Phil Jackson's triangle offense. (There's no word on whether Lazenby got a championship ring for his efforts.) A former athlete from an athletic family, Lazenby is also a paid blogger whose recent reporting on LeBron James' overtures to the Lakers on hoopshype.com set the blogosphere aflame, and kept Cleveland Cavaliers fans up at night. Lazenby is married to wife Karen and has three children.

covered the Virginia Tech shootings a few years ago with such aggressive professionalism that they were the toast of the press corps.

But these days, "I've been going to bed at 10 at night and getting up at one in the morning and writing until five," he says. "It's going to be much saner." 

## The making of a book >

We asked Roland Lazenby, author of *Jerry West: The Life and Legend of a Basketball Icon* (Ballentine, \$28) to give us a quick breakdown on how a major book deal works. Here's his answer:

"A book deal is like any contract work. You submit a proposal and publishers that are interested make offers. Agents—who are hard to get by the way—get 15 percent of your earnings, including advances. They're worth it.

"If you accept the offer, you are paid an advance against royalties. It is my observation over the years that the more a publisher pays, the harder it works to get its money back. Thus, you're

always better off getting paid a lot of money; no stroke of genius there.

"The publisher spends all the money; you do all the work. Publisher decides how to do promotions. Editing is a cooperative effort, although in book editing the results vary widely from publisher to publisher. I've had some fine editors and some absolutely terrible ones.

"Publisher does all marketing, sales and distribution. You agree to fulfill publicity and appearance obligations in the contract. And it's all a crapshoot."

—Dan Smith

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



Hayes

### Banks

National Bank in Blacksburg has named **Larry Hayes** chief information officer and senior vice president of information technology.

### Investing

Krull & Company, a socially and environmentally responsible financial services firm owned by FRONT contributor **Pete Krull**, has entered into a cost-sharing arrangement with Minerva Planning Group. The merger creates a firm with nearly \$60 million in assets under management. Krull has a number of clients in the Roanoke Valley.

## WELLNESS FRONT



Fame

### Awards

Lewis-Gale Medical Center and Lewis-Gale Physicians have recognized **Dr. Thomas Fame**, an allergist,



Hagaimer

with the 2009 Frist Physician Award. **Scott Myers**, director of radiation oncology, was awarded the 2009 Frist Employee Award and **Bud Hagaimer** was honored with the 2009 Frist Volunteer Award.



Huffman

### Technology

Wireless MedCARE has hired **Stan Huffman**, former CEO at Friendship Retirement Community, as a contracted CFO.

## TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Ewing

### Manufacturing

**Meredith Ewing**, lead designer at Ewing Cabinet Company in Blacksburg has earned a kitchen and bath design certification

from the National Kitchen & Bath Association.



Nester



Clark



Brown

### Services

UXB International Inc., an ordnance and explosive waste services company in Blacksburg, has named **Paul W. Nester** Chief Financial Officer. He was recently the manager of finance at ITT Night Vision in Roanoke. **Karin S. Clark** has been named PR and marketing director and **Janette D. Brown** is the new manager of bids and proposals.

### Technology

**Joe Brislin**, a Web professional, has joined Roanoke's SiteVision Inc. as senior developer and



Brislin

development team leader.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Tulou

### Architects, Engineers

**Kimberly Tulou** of ECOM in Roanoke has passed the Principles and Practice of Engineering Exam to receive her Professional Engineer license in Virginia.



Prillaman

**Kristi S. Prillaman** of Draper Aden Associates in Blacksburg has earned her certification as a professional in human resources from the Society for Human Resource Management.

## Have a career announcement?

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

### EDUCATION FRONT



Tuel

#### Colleges

**Jesse C. Tuel** has been named editor of Virginia Tech Magazine, Virginia Issues & Answers, and VT NetLetter. He was director of advancement communications at Emporia State University.



Meyers

#### Childhood education

**Kris Meyers** has been named program manager for Smart Beginnings of Greater Roanoke, a coalition for school readiness.



Farber

**Heather Farber** will serve as program assistant through summer 2010.



Call

#### Facilities

**Jessica Call** has been appointed director of facility services for the Roanoke Higher Education Center.

### RETAIL FRONT

#### Automotive

Advance Auto Parts in Roanoke has named **Francis Nzeuton** VP of finance.

### OTHER FRONTS

#### Advertising/PR

Neathawk Dubuque & Packett in Roanoke has named **Betsy Parkins** a senior account executive.



Cowan

#### Moving

Premier Transfer and Storage in Salem has

hired **Brian Cowan** as a sales consultant.



Tatum



Ditzler

#### Organizations

The Roanoke Valley Society for Human Resource Management (RVSHRM) has named its 2010 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs: **Donna Tatum**, president, The Renick Group; **Susan Rose**

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# 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 FRONT Business Etiquette columnist, and owner of ProtoCorp in Salem. She has been an etiquette consultant for years. [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]

**Huong Fralin** is an award-winning photographer and writer who loves to travel, shoot film and lives by the motto of "happy endings aren't for cowards." Her photographs and writing have appeared in magazines, newspapers and even soda bottles. She is based in Roanoke. [write.to.huong@gmail.com]

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

**Becky Hepler** lives and works as a high school librarian in Newport. She has been writing for more than 20 years. [rbmteagu@pemtel.net]

**Paulette Jayabalan** is pursuing a graduate degree in library and information science at the University of North Texas. She was an HR training specialist for Roanoke City and a copy editor for Dow Jones Newswires (publisher of the Wall Street Journal, Asian Wall Street Journal, Barron's and Smart Money magazine) in Singapore for seven years and edited financial, breaking news headlines and features. [paulettejayabalan@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]

**Michael L. Ramsey** has been a regional life officer for a Roanoke bank, spent a decade marketing architectural and engineering services and prior to that worked in non-profit association management. He has been heavily involved in the community, especially the library system, and has reviewed restaurants for years. [repton@cox.net]

**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]

**Joel S. Williams** is founder and Managing Principal of Joel S Williams & Associates in Blacksburg, specializing in assisting the wealthy with wealth and estate plans. He is a Certified Financial Planner and graduate of the Certified Investment Management Analyst program at the Wharton School. He has a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Florida. [www.JoelSWilliams.com]



**Nicholas Vaassen**

**APRIL 2010 >**  
**Contributor of the Month**

Valley Business FRONT congratulates **Nicholas Vaassen**, of Berryfield, Inc., who receives the April 2010 "Contributor of the Month" award, including a "One Who's in the FRONT" certificate and gift for his April contributions. The April ecoFRONT all digital version was prepped and posted by Nick (like all our online magazines) but April also included the deployment of the new vbFRONT.com website—featuring, for the first time, online ads for each advertiser of the issue, with rotational placement and click-thru capability to advertisers' sites. The enhancement took the FRONT up another huge step; and you can see the results of Nick's work at vbFRONT.com

**Ditzler**, president-elect, Berglund-Farrell Automotive; **Coy Renick**, co-VP programs, The Renick Group; **Tina Ragland**, co-VP programs, Advance Auto Parts; **Jaime Clark**, VP arrangements, Premier Transfer & Storage; **Pat Johnson**, treasurer, Cobham Defense Systems; **Laura Spafford**, VP membership/secretary, DePaul Family Services; **Becky Reynolds**, roster chairwoman, Virginia Tech; **Gidget Woodward**, professional certification, CMR Institute; **Johna**

**Campbell**, legislative affairs, Cogent Management Resources; **Tracy Hale**, marketing, Virginia Lutheran Homes Inc.; **Marie Greer**, historian, The Orvis Company; **Barbara Phelps**, student chapter committee, First Citizens Bank; **Janelle Joyner**, student chapter committee, Associated Asphalt; **Sharon Bowers**, technology chairwoman, First Citizens Bank; **Sherry Duncan**, newsletter committee, American Electric Power; **Sylvia Moore**, diversity taskforce, Friendship

Retirement Community; **Dan Semones**, workforce readiness, Virginia Western Community College; **Kim Carte**, exhibitor chairwoman, Integrity Windows & Doors; **Jeff Smith**, foundation chairman, Titan Group.

Roanoke, has been appointed to the board of directors for the Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council.



Key

### Services

**Richard Key** has opened Gold Key Certified in Roanoke, a new vehicle service protection company.



Stanley

**Melissa C. Stanley**, a partner with Goodman & Company in

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# FRONT Notes



Ted Melnik

Dan Smith

*Melnik replaced at Novozymes*

**Patrick G. Patterson**, a former general manager at a **Novozyms** site in Switzerland, has been appointed president of Novozymes Biologicals in Roanoke County. He takes over immediately from Ted Melnik, who has presided over the division since before its merger with the Swiss company several years ago.

Melnik has been heavily involved in the region, especially with the Roanoke Valley Greenway, in which Novozymes has played a significant role, and with the NewVa Corridor Technology Council. He has served as president of that organization. Novozymes is a Danish biotechnology company. Melnik has decided to "seek new opportunities outside Novozymes," according to a press release.

*Kindig winners announced*

The Arts Council of the Blue Ridge will honor 10 individuals, businesses and organizations for their contributions to the arts at the Pery F. Kendig Awards June 9 at Roanoke College.

The winners are: visual arts, **Betty Branch**; literary arts, **Roland Lazenby**; performing arts, **Steven White**; individual arts supporter, **Ann Davey Masters**; business arts supporter, **George Cartledge Jr.**, **George Cartledge III**, **Robert Bennett** and Grand Home Furnishings; arts and cultural organization, **John McEnhill**, Jacksonville Center for the Arts; young professional, **Sarah Tune Doherty**; and arts education, **Lisa Martin**, Reynolds Homestead, Virginia Tech.



Ann Masters

Christina Smith

Lazenby is the author of *Jerry West* (among about 20 books), which is a hot seller nationally; Branch is one of Roanoke's most beloved artists; and Ann Masters was a long-time supporter of the arts and died in December while leading the Clean Valley Council. The Cartledge family (Bennett is a son-in-law) has long been an arts force and Sara Doherty has come to prominence of late, especially with her work on the board of Mill Mountain Theatre. White has been a leader with Opera Roanoke for some time.

*Merger costs N.C. jobs*

The newly merged **Carilion Labs**, which will employ about 2,700 people system wide, will eliminate 90 jobs in Charlotte when it moves that facility to Greensboro in the coming months. The lab—a combination of Carilion and Spectrum Laboratory Network—is one of the largest lab companies in the country and has 526 workers in the Roanoke Valley. The company will still have 125 workers in Charlotte after the move.

*Bass Tops NewVa*

The **NewVa Corridor Technology Council** presented its award for outstanding achievement within the community to **Henry Bass** of Automation Creations Inc. at its annual fete in Blacksburg. Bass, an officer with the U.S. Army Reserves, recently served a tour of duty in Iraq. Other awards went to: **Maxtena Inc.** of Blacksburg, which makes antennas, won the Innovation Award for devising a more efficient use for a simple product. **David Catalano** and **Aaron Herrington**, co-founders of Modea (digital advertising), won the Entrepreneur Award. **Interactive Achievement Inc.** of Roanoke won the Rising Star Award. It develops software for teachers. **Jay Foster** of SoftSolutions Inc. in Roanoke won the Leadership Award for his work with the Creative Class Leadership Program's 81 Reasons

to Connect group.

**Dale Viperman** of Christiansburg High School and **James Irby** of Montgomery County Public Schools won the education award. Blacksburg's **NewCity** (marketing, Web design) won the People's Choice Award.

*DirecTV hiring*

Christiansburg's **DirecTV** plans to hire about 100 people to take calls in a "remote call center." The "call center" will actually be wherever the employees have their phones, generally from home, and it is called the "Remote Agent Program" by DirecTV. The company has 1,120 remote agents nationally.

*Center recognized*

The **Lewis-Gale Breast Center** has been designated as a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology (ACR). It's the only imaging center in Southwest Virginia with this distinction. Fewer than 500 imaging centers nationwide have achieved this designation.

*Shaftman dies*

**Sydney Shaftman**, for whom halls at the Jefferson Center and the Taubman Museum of Art are named and who was a prominent supporter of the arts and charity, has died at 95. Shaftman and his brothers-in-law Adolph and Joel Krish founded

**FRONT Notes posted daily online at [moreFRONT.blogspot.com](http://moreFRONT.blogspot.com).**

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

American Motor Inns, a chain of Holiday Inns. Shaftman was the son of Polish immigrants.

#### *Western Sizzlin' sold*

Roanoke-based **Western Sizzlin'**, a company with a stormy history, has been acquired by Steak 'n Shake of Indianapolis. Western Sizzlin' has been a public company since 1999 and has requested of NASDAQ that it be de-listed in connection with the merger.

#### *Birth centers to close*

**Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital** in Lexington and **Bedford Memorial Hospital** will close their respective birthing centers because of declining use and physician participation. The decision to close the units was made by each of the hospitals' boards of directors and was not a Carilion corporate decision, according to Carilion's Eric Earnhart. Stonewall Jackson's center was to close April 30 and Bedford Memorial's will close Oct. 1, following the retirement of one of its physicians.

BMH President Patti Jurkus said, "We no longer have enough patients to support the ongoing operation of the Birthing Unit."

Dr. Samir Ghobrial is retiring after 20 years at Bedford Memorial and his partner, Dr. Barbara McLaren, is taking a temporary leave of absence. Current patients of the practice will be able to deliver their babies at BMH between now and October 1. The practice was closed to new patients effective April 1.

In 2009, 73 percent of pregnant women living in Bedford and Bedford County chose to have their babies at other hospitals in the region. The declining trend continues today, with the hospital averaging fewer than 12 births per month. In 2009, 43 percent of pregnant women living in Lexington and Rockbridge County chose to have their babies at other hospitals in the region.

#### *Sarmadi closes dealership*

The move of his dealership from Salem to Roanoke just wasn't enough for Dave Sarmadi,

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

who will close his automobile dealership—**Dave Sarmadi Imports**—on Franklin Road, leasing the facility to a company that will continue the service end of the business. Sarmadi has seen a 30 percent drop in business since 2008. He moved from his huge lot in Salem to the smaller lot on Franklin in 2009, hoping to be closer in South Roanoke to his customer base for luxury cars.

#### *ITT lays off workers*

**ITT Corporation**, which makes night vision goggles in Roanoke County, has laid off nearly 50 workers because of a "realignment" of one of its divisions, according to published reports.

#### *L-G staffing group sold*

TeamHealth Holdings of Knoxville has purchased **Southwest Emergency Physicians Inc.**, a group of physicians that staffs Lewis-Gale Medical Center's emergency room, according to published reports.

#### *Access wins PIVA*

**Access Advertising & Public Relations** in Roanoke has received a Best in Print 2009 Award of Excellence from Printing Industries of Virginia. Access received the award for its design of an annual report for Community Memorial Health Center. Of the more than 300 entries in the annual competition, fewer than 30 were recognized by PIVA.

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## *Progress now Chocklett*

Progress Press in Roanoke has changed its name to **Chocklett Press**, an homage to founder A.L. Chocklett Sr., who began a small print shop in his home in 1935.

## *CHP wins Energy star*

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development have awarded Christiansburg's **Community Housing Partners (CHP)** the 2010 ENERGY STAR Award for Excellence in Energy-Efficient Affordable Housing in recognition of its efforts to provide

energy-efficient housing for low-income residents.

## *Carilion wins award*

The coronary care unit at **Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital** has been honored with the Beacon Award for Critical Care Excellence by the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. Out of more than 6,000 intensive care units nationwide, only 242 have achieved "Beacon" status.

## *Lanford certified*

The renovated headquarters of **Lanford Brothers** has achieved LEED Silver certification,

the first in Botetourt County to do so. The 8,800-square-foot facility features a roof with plants, natural light, low-flow water fixtures and other environmentally friendly elements.

## *Hotel planned*

First Choice Real Estate of Virginia has sold 1.68 acres on Malin Drive at Exit 73 on the Interstate I-77/81 corridor in Wytheville to Raga Corporation for a new **Holiday Inn Express**.

## *Access wins award*

**Access Advertising & Public Relations** in

Roanoke won a silver ADDY award in the American Advertising Federation's District 3 competition. Access was recognized for its Roanoke Earthquake Relief campaign.

## *Recognized*

**Virginia Business Systems** (which has offices in Roanoke and Lynchburg) has been named among the country's elite dealers by OfficeDEALER magazine.

*Compiled by Dan Smith and Tom Field*

# So much more.

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- > Roanoke Workshop Set on Commercial Real Estate
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- > Labor, Employment Symposia Scheduled
- > Lewis-Gale Renovations Set for Birthing Unit

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

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Not networking means not working

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## *Signs of Stroke:*

1. **WALK** - Loss of balance
2. **TALK** - Slurred speech or droopy face
3. **REACH** - Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
4. **SEE** - Impaired vision or difficulty seeing in one or both eyes
5. **FEEL** - Severe headache with no known cause

## What Message is Your Body Leaving You?

Find out more at [KnowTheFive.com](http://KnowTheFive.com)



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Call 911**