



Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 26 • NOVEMBER 2010

vbFRONT.com



Lawyers
Suing Lawyers

Competitive
Designers

The Fabric
Shop

Copywrongs

Adaptive
Flooring

THE ROYAL COURT FRONTList 2010

Microfilm
to PDF

Ideas to China

Mary Miller,
NCTC president

Valley Bank has
\$50 Million to lend at very attractive,
all time low rates.

\$50
Million

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under our normal terms,
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WELCOME to the FRONT

With the November issue of Valley Business FRONT, we initiate a monthly Economic Indicators page that will give you a statistical look at business in the Roanoke and New River regions. Veteran statistical analyst Anne Piedmont, who worked for the Roanoke Economic Development Partnership for 18 years specializing in just this kind of analysis, will put the statistics together. We will organize them into a pleasing graphic format, giving you a great deal of information quickly and efficiently.

Anne, who calls herself a “numbers geek,” recently left the partnership to open her own shop, Piedmont Research Associates, offering her services to private businesses. She talks excitedly about statistics and that enthusiasm will be at the center of this revolving analysis, which will look at the issues most important to the business community. Anne will take a look at a variety of issues including housing (a special focus on foreclosures), air travel, freight, employment, utility costs, job creation among many others.

We are thrilled to have a professional at Anne’s level performing this service for you. It is yet another in a continuing effort to remain relevant and in FRONT of the media mob in the region.

Tom Field

Dan Smith

What will *you* take away?

- a. photos with Santa starting Nov. 20
- b. gift certificates (no fees)
- c. holiday gift wrap
- d. all of the above

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2 a.m., fever 104°

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Valley Business FRONT

DEPARTMENTS

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COVER STORY
The **Royal Court**

♠♥♣♦ **FRONTList 2010**

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Made in China

Thought up Here

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Susan M. Ayers



Anne Giles Clelland



Janeson Keeley



Gene Marrano



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 50.

Editorial Advisory Board

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS



Jane Dalier



Donna Dilley



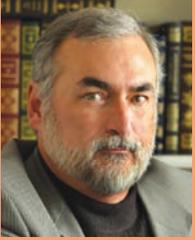
Tom Field



Rachael Garrity



Becky Hepler



Michael Miller



David Perry



Anne Piedmont



Jo Lynn Seifert



Dan Smith



Greg Vaughn



Joel S. Williams

2009 / 10 Members

- Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)
- Kim Bratic** Jefferson Center (Culture)
- Nicholas C. Conte** Woods Rogers (Legal)
- Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Seniors)
- Cory Donovan** NCTC (Tech/Industry)
- John Garland** Spectrum (Development)
- Nancy Gray** Hollins University (Education)
- Ellis Gutshall** Valley Bank (Finance)
- Nanci Hardwick** Schultz-Creehan (Tech/Industry)
- George Kegley** Retired (Seniors)
- Nancy May** HCA Southwest (Wellness)
- Stuart Mease** Rackspace (Tech/Industry)
- Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)
- 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.

“being thankful helps to improve both physical and emotional health”

— Page 18



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 Twitter: [@vbfront](https://twitter.com/vbfront)
 Blog: morefront.blogspot.com
 Editor's blog: editrdan.blogspot.com



Greg Vaughn Photography

Mary Miller plays a formidable queen as our FRONTcover model and 2010 FRONTList representative.

FRONTList 2010: A winning hand >

Executive Summary:
Our 2010 FRONTList is not unlike the game of poker. It takes more than a high card or two to produce a winning hand.

By Dan Smith
and Tom Field

The Royal



With Valley Business FRONT's annual FRONTLeader Awards, the operative word is "responsibility." It's ours. We take full responsibility for the accuracy or the oversight involved in our annual awards and, frankly, we'll put them up against anybody's.

We consulted our Editorial Board, whose members are at the top levels of the region's business establishment, and a few other knowledgeable regional business people, but when it came time to decide who got what, we made the selections because, frankly, we've been around this region long enough to know who's who and what's what.

Here's what we came up with:

Executive FRONTLeader

Ed Walker, downtown developer

Like so many serious entrepreneurs, Ed Walker tends to argue that this is not the year to judge his work. Next year would be so much better. Fact is, though, that just about any year Ed Walker has worked over the past 10 would be equally impressive. Walker is the downtown Roanoke developer (and lawyer, and music guru and economic development innovator and Roanoke Citizen—with a capital "C") whose innovative renovations to historic buildings have given new life to the center of the most important city west of Richmond.

His thumb print is all over downtown Roanoke: the Valley Bank Building (and the homes upstairs), Hancock Building, Patrick Henry Hotel, Cotton Mill and the renovation of the entrance to Old Southwest, all major projects that are helping re-shape the city. He even played a major role several years ago in bringing back the Grandin Theatre from the dead and creating an economic engine for the Raleigh Court neighborhood that is cited as a grand example of "city center" development.

Beyond the development—which is being done with sensitivity at every level, including making some of the housing available to those who can afford a little—Walker has become a walking

Court

FRONTList 2010

clinic in creating community and he has been especially sensitive to involving young people in projects.

Walker, who is almost painfully shy of publicity, insists that he has very little to do with all that is transpiring, that the team he has put together deserves most of the credit. Simple fact is that if you ask that team, you'd get the same answer you get from the business community: Ed Walker is the leader. His ability to put together teams of talented, ambitious, creative people is widely valued and the fact that he does what he does for the right reasons is equally applauded within the community.

Company FRONTLeader

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute is an idea whose time is finally here with the induction recently of its first class. The intent of the college is to improve health and life quality "by providing leadership in medical education and biomedical and clinical research."

Leaders in the region have almost unanimously hailed VTC as a new economic engine whose potential is nearly limitless and as a visionary effort that re-defines the Roanoke and New River Valleys economically. The institute will combine science



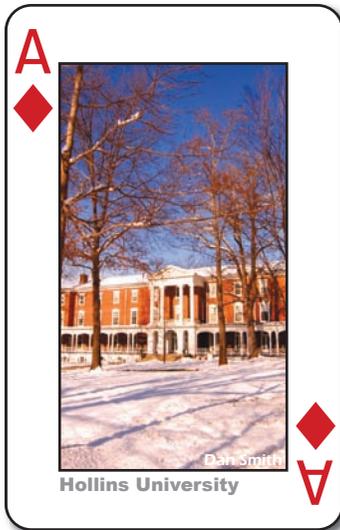
Who Made The 2010 List >

(FRONTLeaders only—
read the story for
the complete list

- Alternative medicine
- Ron Blum
- Bridgewater Pointe
- Community banks
- Community College
- Craigslist
- Beth Deel
- Droid smart phone / Android operating system
- Facebook Fan Pages
- Laura Godfrey
- Goodwill Industries
- Governor's School of Science & Technology
- Nancy Gray
- Hollins University
- Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center
- Inn at Virginia Tech
- River Laker
- Mary Jean Levin
- Liberty University
- Liberty University Law School
- Local Colors
- Luna settlement
- Chip Magee
- Marginal Arts Festival
- Mary Miller
- MedCottage
- Steve Musselwhite
- NanoSonic Inc.
- Novozymes Biologicals
- Roanoke County Recreation Center
- Roanoke Higher Education Center
- Roanoke Regional Airport
- Ray Smoot
- Sarah Elizabeth Timmins
- Virginia Tech-Carilion
- Virginia Tech-Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute
- Virginia Tech football skybox
- Ed Walker
- Yukon Pocahontas Coal Company victory



Laura Godfrey



Hollins University



Bridgewater Pointe

research from Tech and clinical expertise at Carilion to increase the potential for both.

understand IT problems and helped implement use of technology across state agencies.

Board Member **FRONT**Leader

Mary Miller, as president of the NewVa Corridor Technology Council, led the NCTC to attendance and membership records and to greater recognition during her term. She has been a dynamic leader, successful business owner (Interactive Design and Development), member of the Virginia's Information Technology Investment Board and served her community and the region in an astonishingly impressive number of capacities. She was recently inducted into the Virginia Tech College of Engineering Academy of Engineering Excellence (one of 97 members from 55,000 living engineering alumni).

She is widely regarded as a valued mentor and has accomplished a number of "firsts" for women. Her company, developed at Virginia Tech, has been named one of the Top 100 Multimedia Developers in the country. She has worked closely for more than 20 years with Virginia governors in helping

For the Right Reasons **FRONT**Leader

Laura Godfrey, who owns Claire V and Polished in Roanoke, a couple of woman-centered retail outlets, has built her businesses by being kind to those whose lives have been filled with challenges most of us could not imagine. Her purses for Claire V are made in Southeast Asia by women who have been victimized by mines in an area where war has been a way of life for decades. Polished is run by recovering addicts and alcoholics, given a chance by Laura when almost nobody else would.

Laura Godfrey is truly a woman who is doing business for the right reasons: in service of her community and her country.

Board of Directors **FRONT**Leader

Hollins University. The university's endowment is the best managed in Virginia (according to a survey) and





one of the best managed in the entire country. While other universities were losing their pants, Hollins was simply hemming its skirt. A startling accomplishment in a truly awful economy where sophisticated and knowledgeable people lost fortunes and Hollins held its ground.

FRONT Deal of the Year

Bridgewater Pointe sale. Sold out 48 condos in one day after sitting in bankruptcy for three years. Impressive marketing and execution of this real estate deal, along with a reduction of price of nearly 65 percent, led to the rush to buy and a lesson in selling in a bad economy. The units sold at between \$200,000 and \$535,000 after originally being priced on the top end to nearly \$1 million.

Honorable mention to **Liberty University**, which has purchased an airport, a manufacturing plant and a shopping center, among other things, as a way to build its endowment at a time when most universities' endowments were being clobbered in the stock market. Liberty grads in the past have generally gone into church work, where there



was little money to give back to the school, and it has had to be creative. It now has a law school and a college of engineering.

Work Environment FRONT Leader

Novozymes Biologicals in Roanoke County is an international company (U.S., Denmark, China, Brazil, Switzerland) with a superb reputation as a great place to work. Novozymes combines a purpose (creating environmentally-friendly enzymes) with an outstanding training program and consensus-based decision-making. It leans on personal accountability and reward. Forward-looking in every sense.

Most Underappreciated Executive

Ray Smoot, COO and secretary-treasurer of the Virginia Tech Foundation. Smoot has quietly and forcefully maintained an economic powerhouse with the foundation, which provides money to supplement state funding. He oversees the money end of the foundation, which doles out financial aid





and funds projects like the Corporate Research Center and NewVa Capital Partners (venture capital for local entrepreneurs). The foundation owns—through related institutions—the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, the Pete Dye River Course (golf), WVTF Public Radio, and the Center for European Studies and Architecture in Switzerland.

Smoot is on the boards of First National Bank, FNB Corp., Warm Hearth, the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine and Carilion Health System.

Toughest Legal Case FRONTLeaders

Tie: Luna settlement; Yukon Pocahontas Coal Company victory.

Scott Sexton led a Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore team (along with a team from Grundy) in a tedious, difficult case (so hard Sexton went fishing for a couple of months when it was over) that pitted Yukon Pocahontas Coal Company, et al. v. Consolidation Coal Company, et al., Island Creek Coal Company, Consol Energy and CNX Gas Company. He won a cash settlement of \$75 million, one of the largest of its type ever. Consolidation Coal Company had been secretly dumping billions of gallons of waste water from its Buchanan mine into neighboring mines where the plaintiffs' coal had been mined by Island Creek.

Because of an imaginative and creative settlement arranged by Chip Magee of Magee Foster Goldstein &

Sayers in Roanoke, Luna Innovations is back to doing what it does best: technological innovation. The company, which lost a \$36 million law suit to a company in California that said Luna stole secrets, could easily have been folded without the agreement. It was a long, tough case.

FRONTLeading Invention

Focal Lens, **Ron Blum**. This is just the latest in a string of inventions by Roanoke's ocular Edison. In a region where high-level invention is almost commonplace (think "Virginia Tech"), Blum is a star.

FRONTLeading Economic Development Idea

Virginia Tech-Carilion collaboration. This is being hailed as the new economic engine for the entire region by some heavy-hitting business people who know the real thing when they see it. It represents health care, education, employment, physical and fiscal improvements and a lot of high-level employees and students who could make this a better place to live over the coming years.

Honorable mention **Roanoke Higher Education Center** (10th Anniversary). Roanoke's own college system. Heavily used and a true benefit to the region.

FRONTLeading New Business Device

Droid smart phone / Android operating system. Apple /



iPhone lovers will never admit it, but the Droid is not only a worthy contender, it outscores the iPhone in the most important categories, according to leading technical review sources.

Most Underappreciated Regional Asset

The grumbling about **Roanoke Regional Airport** is constant, but the fact is that it is a fine, small-market airport with full service that includes excellent general aviation service and a regional hub for air freight. The airport is an attractive first impression for visitors in the visual sense and is operated efficiently. It is not LaGuardia, but this region is not New York City.

FRONT Leading New Business Trend

Facebook Fan Pages for companies and organizations. It's here, it's now and it's hot. If you don't have a Fan Page, you're not a player. Dude.

Business-Friendly Education FRONT Leaders

(Best Education Trend)

Community College system credit transfers to universities. This was a long time coming and it not only makes a lot of academic sense, it saves strapped families a lot of money. Good idea whose time finally came.

(Best Place To Educate Your Kids)

Governor's School of Science & Technology. The smart kids go here. The really smart kids.

The ones who skip grades in college.

(Quickest Program Rise)

Liberty University Law School has gone from being unaccredited to become one of the most respected in the country in a few short years. The chancellor of the university is a graduate of Harvard Law, so the rise is not surprising.

Best Dressed Executive

Man: **Steve Musselwhite**, Musselwhite & Associates. Always immaculate, appropriate, fashionable and high-end. One imagines Steve gardening in an ascot.

Woman: **Mary Jean Redon Levin**, Halifax Fine Furnishings. Mary Jean dresses with sometimes astonishing—but always tastful—flare. Her bright colors and soft materials fit well and are always the first thing you see when you walk into a room full of people.

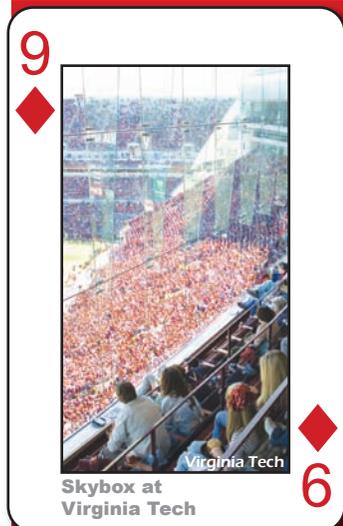
Business Entertainment FRONT Leaders

(Best Place to Take a Client/Prospect)

Virginia Tech football skybox. Nothing else is close if you're looking for impact. Try a Thursday night ESPN game for extra effect. Throw in a little lightning if you can manage that.

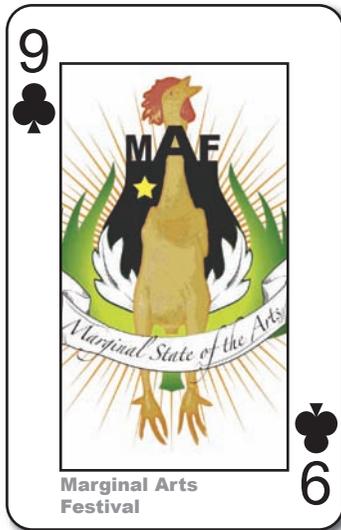
(Best Arts Organization for Business to Support)

Local Colors. Pearl Fu's annual event, and the mini-events that occur throughout the

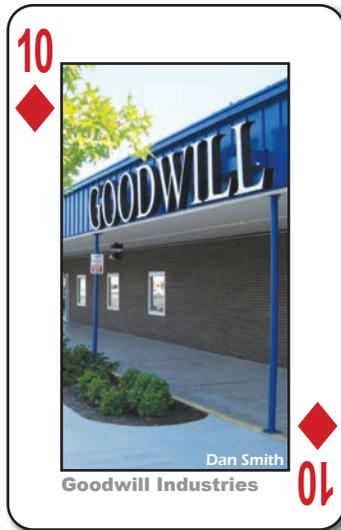




Pearl Fu



Marginal Arts Festival



Goodwill Industries

year, has given Roanoke an air of sophistication and international flavor. It is a spectacular celebration of diversity.

(Novel Arts Event)

Marginal Arts Festival. This one is so novel that many consider it quirky, eccentric and oddball even for the arts. The idea of Brian Counihan of Community High School, it allows art to be itself and promotes that as a positive concept.

Non-Profit **FRONT**Leader

Goodwill Industries is the pick in an outstanding field that includes the Rescue Mission (with its new restaurant and general merchandise store on Williamson Road) and TAP, which is always a force in generating money from something besides contributions. The one thing they all have in common is that they operate like sophisticated businesses. Goodwill has had an especially good year, capped with an imaginative runway fashion show that

raised \$36,000.

Best Meeting Facilities **FRONT**Leader

Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center and the **Inn at Virginia Tech** (tie). They set the standard in the region and both of them stay booked, reflecting that standard.

Industry **FRONT**Leaders

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

Financial **FRONT**Leader

Community banks. The region has a full complement of locally-based, small banks specializing in working with small business loans that the big banks often ignore. These banks, most often, have boards of directors who are well known and active in their communities and who know the customers on a first-name basis. Of late, many have been more reluctant than usual to loan money, but they have been



Inn at Virginia Tech

Rick Claus of
NanoSonic

MedCottage

a stalwart of support for the small business community for many years and when the current mess clears, they should be "old dependable" again.

Legal FRONTLeader

Chip Magee, Magee Foster & Goldstein, who helped Luna reach a settlement in its lawsuit (in which it lost a \$36 million decision) that saved the company. It was an impressive piece of legal work, counseling, dealing, reasoning and working toward a solution that a judge and both companies could love.

Wellness FRONTLeader

Alternative medicine. An in-depth explanation of why this is important is coming in the form of a cover story in the December issue of FRONT. For the moment, though, suffice it to say that many people are turning to it to get the kind of treatment they believe is best (and much less expensive) for them. It will likely never overtake traditional medicine in

this country, but its presence is being felt.

Tech / Industry FRONTLeader

NanoSonic Inc. is one of the region's leading-edge high tech companies, concentrating on advanced materials and employing 50. Founded by Rick Claus (Virginia's Outstanding Scientist in 2001) in 1998, NanoSonic is the overall leader in a 13-state study of the strength of the industry, bringing in more than \$10 million and totaling 39 grants. The company has 18 patents and in 2006 was named to the Nano50 by NASA. The company recently moved into EcoPark in Giles County in a 30,000-square-foot building as the park's first tenant. The company is a spinoff of Virginia Tech's Colleges of Engineering and Science.

Development FRONTLeader

MedCottage, Salem's Rev. Kenneth Dupin's, solution to taking care of an infirm family member at home without being in the main house. This is a small, temporary structure you can put in your back yard



A
♠

Nancy Gray



and install your sick relative during her declining years. Simple, affordable to many and sensible. The Virginia General Assembly likes them so much it passed a law overriding local zoning laws prohibiting MedCottage installation.

Retail FRONTLeader

Craigslist. This will drive every local retailer in the region nuts, but Craigslist is the changing face of retail. It hasn't yet changed all the way, but Craigslist's impact is felt down the line: The age of building-less shopping is upon us.

Recreation FRONTLeader

Roanoke County Recreation Center. An impressive—and expensive—recreation facility had those who don't want the government spending money in spasms, but its success shows the public loves the facility.

Education FRONTLeader

Nancy Gray, Hollins University president. You root for Nancy Gray because she's just so dang nice, but you follow her because she's a leader and an impressive executive. What she's done with the endowment and the Hollins budget has raised a lot of eyebrows. What she has done with Hollins' reputation and image in the community is no less so.

Culture FRONTLeader

Beth Deel, River Laker. The odd couple of the arts. Beth is

a professional ... well ... we haven't figured that out yet. But she is with the Water Heater, an all-over-the-place arts organizing outfit and she organized other things, as well. Her impact on arts in this region has been dramatic, exciting and often controversial. But never dull. Likewise River Laker, who—officially, anyway—is with the Roanoke City Library as a promotions guy. The library's image has never been better and its reputation as the cool place to be is improving daily. River is an Energizer Bunny on a bike and he's teaching the old guard how it's done.

Sarah Elizabeth Timmins of the movie "Lake Effects" deserves a mention here for raising enough money to make a movie at Smith Mountain Lake, for getting the community involved and for finishing the project.

Our Own Categories

Readers' Choice FRONTCover

"Senior bike babe" **Evelyn Blake**, on a Harley (February 2010) won the top spot. Eating her dust, but not too far behind, was "Betrayed" **Ed Couvrette** (December 2009) and "Superman" **Victor Ionello** (November 2009)

Readers' Choice FRONTContributing Writer

Alison Weaver brought us a lot of heavy hitters, including "The Frat Pack from ITT", "The Jobs Issue", "The New Builders" and "Immigrants in Business". 

Q
♦

Beth Deel

K
♣

River Laker



Not in FRONT and Other Awards

Clumsiest Exit

Gwen Mason lost a bid for the General Assembly; left her seat on Roanoke City Council; took a job as director of the Clean Valley Council; left that almost immediately and took what was at the time some mysterious job with some mysterious federal agency (turned out to be community liaison with the Justice Department, one of the first jobs of its type in the country).

On Second Thought Award

Developer **Larry Vander Maten**, who kept Roanoke County guessing for several years about his development plans for Explore Park, decided he didn't have any after all.

Let's Not Even Talk About Him

Spanky Macher, Renaissance man.

Worst Reason To Oppose Something of Value

The claim that **wind turbines on Bent Mountain** would hamper aviation.

An Idea Whose Time Is Gone

Shell buildings.

Absolutely the Very Worst Cellular Service

AT&T. Nobody's even second. When you can't get a signal in the center of the largest city in the region, there's a problem. One that AT&T ignores.

Oh, Let's Just Tear It Down, Nobody'll Notice

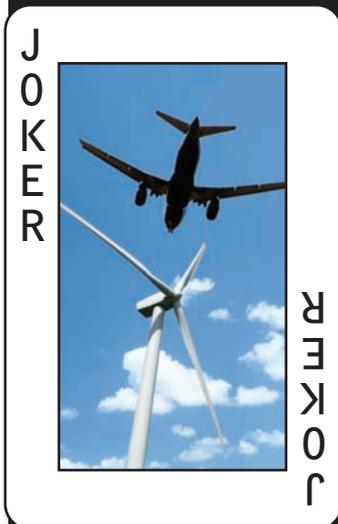
Green Memorial United Methodist Church's decision to raze the historic **Ropho Building**.

Complete Lack of Originality and Ethics

Prototype Media, the Lynchburg "agency" called the FRONT, collected all its media information, then apparently copied everything about it. (see *Letters*, page 51) Shame, shame.

Not So Business-Friendly Town Council

Blacksburg merchants have resorted to cardboard signs, rather than dealing with excessive fees and regulations. Businesses have had to delay grand openings. Mayor avoids ribbon-cuttings. The complaint list goes on and on. 



Pilots flying into Roanoke may soon be required to play putt-putt every weekend for training certification.





The value of a short note >

While Thanksgiving comes once a year, being thankful and appreciative are traits that can be practiced daily. Having an attitude of gratitude will foster good will and build better relationships with business associates, as well as friends and family. One simple and effective way to show sincere appreciation is with a thank-you note.

In business, it's appropriate to send a thank-you note or letter in the following situations:

- After a job interview
- After receiving a promotion
- When a manager/supervisor has provided a recommendation
- After a business lunch or dinner
- After a contact is helpful in a telephone conversation or e-mail
- After a contact is helpful in a career fair

A recent survey found that nearly 15 percent of hiring managers would reject a job candidate who neglected to send a thank-you note after the job interview. More than 30 percent would still consider the thankless candidate but the opinion of him would be diminished.

For a thank-you note to be effective in any situation, it must be sent promptly. A thank-you note should be sent within 24 hours of a job interview. Be sure to spell the interviewer's name correctly. According to Virginia Tech Career Services, the thank-you can be hard copy typed, handwritten or e-mailed. Hard copy thank-you letters are the most formal and are always appropriate after an interview. A handwritten note is more personal and can be appropriate for brief notes to a variety of individuals. E-mail is appropriate when the contact has expressed a preference for e-mail, but should be followed up immediately with a hard copy.

A simple formula for a concise and effective thank-you is to employ the acronym t.e.c. In the first sentence or two, *thank* the individual. In the next segment or sentence, *elaborate* on how much the action has meant. In the final section, *compliment* the benefactor sincerely.

Expressing gratitude in a thank-you letter does more than create positive impressions. UC-Davis researchers Robert Emmons and Mike McCullough demonstrated in multi-year studies that being thankful helps to improve both physical and emotional health. Writing thank-you notes may be a practice that leads to a longer and happier life. 

(E-mail donna.dilley@gmail.com with etiquette and customer service related questions.)

Business Etiquette

By Donna Dilley

Executive Summary:

Your mama always told you to write thank-you notes. She was right. Do it!

It's about the advice, not the choice >

Dear Getting a Grip: *I am a professional in residential real estate and I have a question that could apply to people in a number of professions where their advice and direction is sought. I have a client who simply will not listen to me. She is paying a lot of money for my advice in selling her home, but she goes for advice to her family, her friends, her employer, even the person next to her in the grocery line, then comes to me with the advice as if it were the final word in real estate. Usually, it is illogical, illegal or simply stupid. How do I get control of a situation that has gone awry?*

Dear Last in Line: When our friends ask us for advice, we give it for free, tending to let go of the outcome. When a client hires us for advice, we tend to attach ourselves to the client taking action on our advice because we believe our advice is important to the success of the client's enterprise. For our clients' well-being, for our own professional ethics, and for the sake of our future business with clients or for the clients' referrals, we want clients to do what we think is best for them.

Clients ultimately have the right to choose what they think is best for them, sometimes in accord with our advice, sometimes not. Negotiating up front that the value we provide in exchange for hire is the expertise behind the advice, not the outcome, can leave both parties satisfied with the give-and take of the transaction. Attempting to give advice, then control a client's choice, usually results in frustration and resentment on both sides.

When clients question or challenge our advice, it's either personal or not personal. If it's personal, clients have doubts about the quality or value of the advice we provide. That requires an up front, right-now conversation. "Your satisfaction is what's most important. If you're satisfied with the value I'm providing you, let's continue working together. If not, may I refer you to one of our other agents that may better serve your needs?"

When clients consult others and then quote that advice to us, it's usually not about us. When people are uncertain about an action to take, they seek a "Yes, but..." from as many sources as they can find to justify waiting, even stalling. That requires an invitational conversation. "You seem to be gathering advice from lots of sources. Are you concerned about proceeding?"

And, frankly, bad clients happen, or bad fits between clients and advisors happen. Time spent advising and re-advising one client doubtful of the value you offer could be time spent with two clients who appreciate your expertise.

Getting a Grip: When an individual is hired by another individual to give advice, whether as an agent, attorney consultant, accountant, coach or counselor, the advisor's job description is this: Give advice. This is not in an advisor's job description: Make the client take the advice. 



Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary: When you are hired to give advice, don't get too upset if the client doesn't take it.

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

Small business smarts >

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

If you think you're dressing only for yourself in business, think again. This could affect your bottom line.

Since the economy took a nosedive in October 2008 and large corporations downsized, thousands of small businesses have been launched. Competition is strong for business accounts and even small details of a company's business strategies can win business—or lose it. Professional attire is one detail that can make a big difference in the image a company projects and can contribute to its success.

Small business owners have the freedom to determine their own dress code—or lack of it. A professional appearance is an easy way for a small business to establish credibility. Professional attire can vary from a uniform to a polo shirt and khakis, to a sports jacket and open collared shirt, depending on the type of business. Increased competition for business opportunities makes it essential for small businesses to project an image of reliability and expertise.

Additionally a professional appearance can eliminate many workplace problems, especially for young entrepreneurs and small business owners.



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Dressing appropriately can:

- Gain existing employees' respect and increase morale.
- Attract talented, valuable new employees.
- Establish credibility and professionalism with clients.
- Create a positive professional reputation with competitors.

Tom Tanner, a professional business counselor at the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center, has shepherded many small businesses to success.

His experience leads him to conclude that, "Starting off in a new business, appearance (which also includes shoes, hair, shave, earrings, tattoos, etc.) is even more important because first impressions count. The new customer does not know you or the quality of your service or product. Be sure that you look professional to the customer. If you are sloppy, or poorly dressed, you will probably not get the job."

He goes on to say, "You need to look at business attire as part of marketing and branding, just like your logo, advertising, the condition and cleanliness of your facilities, vehicles, etc. Customers make perceptions on the quality of your services—whether right or wrong—on the way the owner, and employees look, on the appearance of the facility, or the look of the company vehicles."

So, if you want an edge in a competitive market consider the benefits of dressing professionally for your business type. Certainly it's not enough to merely appear professional—solid products and services are essential—but professional attire helps clients and employees focus on the value and expertise your company already provides. 





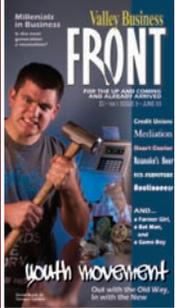
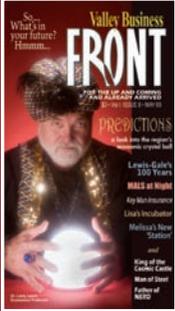
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Coming Up..

December 2010

Alternative Medicine

It may not be mainstream, but it's sure gaining momentum. Practitioners of alternative medicine and wellness boutiques are popping up all over our region—and in December the FRONT schedules a visit.

January 2011

Success in Hard Times

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

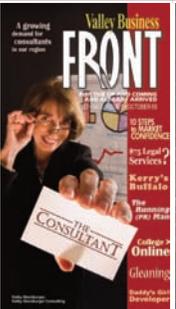
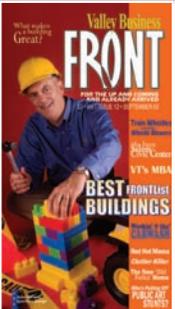
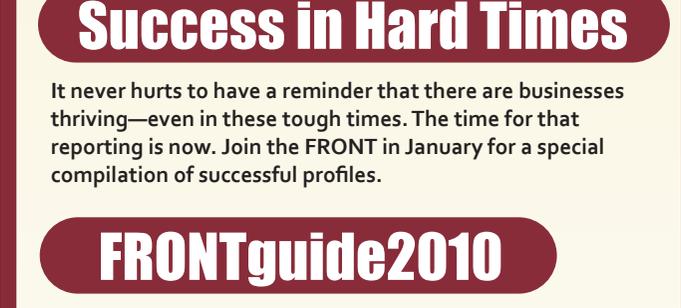
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Financial planning for entrepreneurs >

Executive Summary:

If you own a business, get a retirement plan. It's good for you and for the economy.

By Joel S. Williams

Wikipedia defines an entrepreneur as someone who "has possession of a new enterprise, venture or idea and assumes significant accountability for the inherent risks and the outcome."

We should be thankful for men and women of such courage because about 70 percent of the jobs are created by small- to mid-sized businesses and 50 percent of the gross national output is produced by the firms of these entrepreneurs.

Unfortunately, because of their creative spirit and tenacity, this group of laborers does a relatively poor job of planning for their eventual retirement or exit from the businesses they created. This is compared to other professionals such as doctors, lawyers, professors and executives of major corporations.

Why? Here are two reasons for this situation:

1. Financial planners did not come to realize until recently that the entrepreneur faces a different set of challenges than does, say, the university professor.
2. The entrepreneur as described in Michael Gerber's classic, "The E-Myth," is forever creating the next

successful idea and that retirement funding will take care of itself. The "myth" as revealed by Gerber is that entrepreneurs do not start their own business for great financial gain, rather to control their own destiny. They expect financial gain to come ... whenever.

3. From my observations, many entrepreneurs do not have a plan. There are plenty of business owners between 60 and 80 who are just as stressed today about the survival of their companies and the need for them to continue working.

The message here is two-fold:

1. If you are a business owner, your retirement will not be automatically planned for you. This is not a fault of the entrepreneur; most professionals are not inclined to plan. Procrastination is the single biggest reason for Baby Boomers having to continue to work. The entrepreneur is simply at more risk because there is no process in place to provide the automatic planning.
2. In many cases for older entrepreneurs, plans can be devised to prevent the deterioration of small business value. It requires as courageous a decision as it did to start the business.

This is a problem not just for the entrepreneur. It is a concern for all of America, because academic studies are showing that approximately 75 percent of small- to mid-sized businesses are losing value. The job engines of our economy cannot continue sputtering into a decline. As citizens of our economy we can help by supporting our local businesses and policies that strengthen them. 

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Jeff Krasnow: “They call because they are unhappy with what their attorney is doing with the case, or not doing with the case.”

Dan Smith

Lawyers suing lawyers >

Roanoke [Valley]” as part of his practice.

Executive Summary:

The Krasnow Law Firm takes on cases other law firms are not especially comfortable with: suing colleagues.

In many cases, says Krasnow, people call prematurely to inquire about a lawsuit against an attorney. “They call because they are unhappy with what their attorney is doing with the case, or not doing with the case.”

By Gene Marrano

Call it professional courtesy—or maybe not—but finding an attorney who takes on legal malpractice cases by suing another lawyer is rare. It’s a thorny challenge and The Krasnow Law Firm in Roanoke is willing participant.

Krasnow says most of the legal malpractice issues that clients have with their attorneys involve situations where that lawyer has “blown the statute of limitations” by not filing a lawsuit on time. “It’s generally an administrative screw-up in their offices,” says Krasnow, who has volunteered his services as an expert witness in legal malpractice proceedings.

Jeff Krasnow accepts those types of cases when they are related to the fields he practices in, personal injury and medical malpractice. “There are relatively few lawyers in Virginia willing to handle legal malpractice cases,” says Krasnow. “I think that’s unfortunate and its one of the factors that prompted me to accept cases in that area.” Krasnow has taken on legal malpractice clients from “well outside the

In most circumstances clients cannot sue for malpractice until the trial is over and the case is lost, says Krasnow. He prefers a direct approach: sit down and talk to your lawyer, “Let [him] know you are unhappy with the progress in the case.”

Clients can discharge their attorney at any time if they are not satisfied, something Krasnow believes many are not aware of.



He is not a proponent of changing lawyers in mid-case, however, and suggests hashing out any differences.

Virginia has no guidelines requiring that an attorney must have experience in a particular area of the law when he takes on a client with a related case. Krasnow has gone after an attorney for legal malpractice in that circumstance.

For a referral fee, some firms that advertise having experience in a particular legal field simply pass on those inquiries to law firms that actually have that background. "I don't think it's

ethical," says Krasnow. "I think it's misleading."

Lawyers can purchase malpractice insurance, much the same as physicians can for their line of work. The overwhelming majority of attorneys carry malpractice insurance, according to Krasnow. That's good news for clients: "The purpose of being able to sue for legal malpractice is to be able to put the client back into the situation [he] would have been in, if the case had been handled properly."

Krasnow estimates he has handled legal malpractice cases for more than 20 years. In that time he cannot recall any of the cases going to trial, with a settlement typically worked out beforehand. "Lawyers are like everybody else. From time to time we make mistakes," says Krasnow. "When that happens all we can do is hope it's not a serious mistake and that no one suffers a serious financial injury as a result." 

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Dr. Dan Harrington: “These are all things that would not have happened if the medical school had not come about.”

Gene Marrano

Juggling medical students >

Executive Summary:

The new medical school at Carilion Clinic does not have the only medical students at the facility.

By Gene Marrano

Carilion Clinic has long had an internal education program, designed to sharpen and broaden the skills of the physicians

working there. The Roanoke-based regional health care giant has also been host for third year medical school students from the University of Virginia.

Now there’s a new wrinkle, with the just-opened Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine nearby, those students will also wind up inside Carilion Clinic as part of the medical education process during their junior and senior years.

Dr. Daniel P. Harrington is Carilion’s vice president for academic affairs, overseeing the Graduate Medical Education program, which includes residencies in various

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disciplines, post-residency fellowships (up to three years long) and other continuing education tracks.

The faculty physicians recruited to teach in the Carilion program are “some of the best and brightest,” says Harrington. “That’s been a drawing point for many of the [physicians] that come to work at Carilion.”

Having the Graduate Medical Education component in place at Carilion also made it more feasible to start the medical school joint venture with Virginia Tech. Harrington says the panel that accredited the medical school was impressed by the number of residencies at Carilion and the fact that it was already training third year students from other schools.

Harrison says that sharing resources with the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute on the same campus as the new medical school

will lead to more “cutting edge” healthcare breakthroughs.

Harrington believes the Graduate Medical Education program may not be fully understood by many in the Roanoke Valley. “For the last 40-plus years, Carilion has been training physicians in various specialties.” That post medical school training is mandatory before licensing, he emphasizes.

The graduate program continues to evolve, with fellowships added in pulmonary medicine and several other disciplines over the past few years. Pending are applications for a new residency in emergency medicine and fellowships in cardiology, critical care and pediatrics, among others.

“These are all things that would not have happened if the medical school had not come about,” says Harrington, who is a liaison between Carilion and the new

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medical school. "[That] has given us a catalyst to add to our training programs."

Harrington hopes many of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine graduates will elect to do their residencies for Carilion. Having some go off to places like Harvard and Johns Hopkins for their residencies won't hurt either because it "really spreads the reputation and shows what great training they got."

Harrington acts as the senior associate dean to the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine next door. Those students (the first freshmen class numbers 42) will spend their third year doing clinical rotations at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, which is just down the block on South Jefferson.

Even in their freshmen and sophomore years, Harrington is matching students with physicians at Roanoke Memorial, where they will spend some half days at the hospital observing. Carilion doctors will also teach hands-on skills like patient examinations.

He hopes to see Virginia medical students continue to do their clinicals in Roanoke. "We have a long standing relationship with the University of Virginia," says Harrington. Virginia Commonwealth School of Medicine in Richmond has been sending third year students to Carilion, which has dorms on site. Harrington, a 20-year Carilion veteran, is a UVa Medical School graduate and did a double residency in psychiatry and internal medicine.

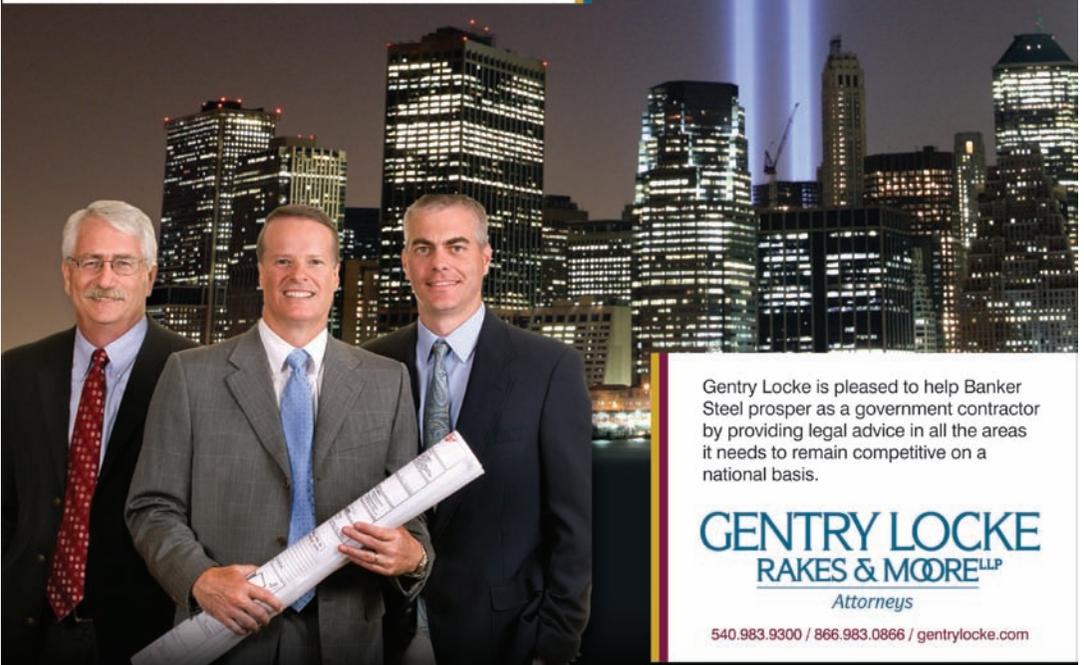
Having students from several different schools in the mix can be a good thing. "They really learn from each other," says Harrington, "[and] medical students are competitive. It raises the bar."

One benefit of providing that training to students from schools based elsewhere: many of the younger physicians opt to stay in the region, which is especially important in some more rural parts of southwestern Virginia. "That's been a phenomenal resource for the area," says Harrington. 

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This Tech team won third place in the Solar Decathlon Europe with Lumenhaus.

Virginia Tech

Ready, set, build! >

Executive Summary:

Architecture and engineering students are heavily involved in competitions throughout the year. What's the value?

By Michael Miller

What do bricks made of moon dust, robot warriors, steel bridges and renovation of 15-story hotels in Hawaii have in common?

They are all projects won by Virginia Tech student teams in national and international competitions.

In the modern world where new, high tech products like computers and cell phones hardly have time to warm up before they become obsolete, it has become increasingly important for companies to employ highly creative teams in order to remain competitive. A significant proportion

of these creative resources is provided by recent graduates from universities such as Virginia Tech. Real-world experience has become a prerequisite to real-world employment in many leading edge companies.

ABET Inc., the recognized accreditor for college and university programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology, requires graduating seniors to have an "independent design experience" in order to provide exposure to working in a team environment on a practical application of their skills. In addition, most engineering students will take internships during their time at the university, providing additional experience in the working world.

Student competitions provide another important opportunity to broaden the educational experience. During any given year at Virginia Tech 50 or more student led teams are working on projects that test their design and engineering skills in real-world situations, competing with other teams in national and international venues.



The 2009-2010 Hybrid Electric Vehicle Team of Virginia Tech (HEVT) witnessed delivery of a 2009 crossover SUV donated by General Motors, which will be re-engineered for the EcoCAR Challenge.

Virginia Tech

The competition teams are not just ad hoc working groups. Large programs with significant outside sponsorship, such as the recent Solar Decathlon/Lumenhaus and DARPA Urban Challenge programs, are multi-year efforts and so the team structure has to extend far beyond the classroom.

Each team functions essentially like a small corporation. For example, in the Virginia Tech Hybrid Electric Vehicle Team (HEVT) which recently finished second in the EcoChallenge competition sponsored by the Department of Energy (DOE) and General Motors, senior mechanical engineers serve as Program Manager (Chief Executive) and Finance Officer, the two most critical roles found in an early stage small tech startup. In addition to the engineering students who

build and operate the EcoCar, the team also employs the services of communications and marketing students to raise money and satisfy the DOE requirement for outreach.

Designing and building a new hybrid automobile or solar house isn't cheap. Virginia Tech provides a small budget to some teams, but it is not nearly adequate to support the work required even though much of the labor is voluntary.

In some cases, such as the EcoChallenge, the sponsor provides financial support and/or in-kind funding. GM provided a vehicle to each of the 16 university teams across North America, and the DOE provides budget for certain directed team activities such as student travel to conferences and

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Anna Karbassiyoon



outreach activities, which are a major objective of the project.

Graduate student Patrick Walsh is one of two team members who provides the outreach function. Walsh's graduate teaching assistantship is funded by the DOE, which means that he has to provide normal graduate assistance to his faculty supervisor in addition to his function as a public relations leader for the team.

"I still have to grade papers before I work on the project," says Walsh, "but it's worth it." Marketing and communications team members provide both public relations and fund raising functions for the team.

Walsh, like all of the members of competition teams at Virginia Tech, sees the experience as indispensable to his career development. Even though at times team members may have to spend 80-100 hours per week in addition to their normal class work building and testing the vehicle to make a deadline, they willingly put in the time.

"It's so rewarding to put what you have learned in class to work and see a tangible result," says Walsh. Comparing the team experience to an internship, Walsh says that while internships introduce students to the professional working environment, "it's a much more autonomous environment with the teams. We make the decisions and get the job done. It's a great feeling of accomplishment."

Of course, the team experience has other benefits beyond the competition itself.



Virginia Tech

Keith Van Houten (right) of General Motor talks with engineering students Lynn Gantt (left) and Patrick Walsh (middle), members of the Hybrid Electric Vehicle Team.

Successful teams attract sponsors eager to piggyback on the publicity of the team, and their participation provides exposure for the team members to impress potential employers. Walsh says many of his friends who served on the team have been hired by sponsors. The opportunity to be a part of a successful team also attracts top students to Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech's remarkable success rate in routinely placing at or near the top of these national and international competitions may not seem as exciting as winning a national collegiate football or basketball championship, but because of their experience, these students will be the next generation of technology leaders. 



Janeson Keeley

Dan Smith

netFRONT

Copyrights and wrongs >

Executive Summary:

Be careful what you "steal" from the Web for your own use. You could be violating copyright.

By Janeson Keeley

Have you ever seen an image, article, or site design on the Web and thought, "That is really cool. I could use that on my Web site!?" If so, you're not alone. With the advent of the Web, its vast array of resources, and the ease of downloading images, page copy, and designs, the temptation to "borrow" from other Web sites can be very strong. It is, however, a temptation that you should be very wary of, because doing so may constitute copyright infringement, which can result in legal action against you.

Dave Cohan, attorney with Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore (also cited in the June, 2010 issue of *FRONT*, "You paid for it, but you own it?") answers some questions here that were posed by business owners, do-it-yourself Web developers, and Web professionals.

Can I use images that appear in Google Images on my Web site? "Just because images are on the Internet doesn't mean they are free to use. Your use of Internet images may be copyright infringement, regardless of whether you give credit to the copyright owner."

Can I publish articles on my Web site that were written by others? "This would be considered copyright infringement if you do not have the written permission of the copyright owner. However, reprinting quotes or short passages, especially if they are for fair use purposes such as review or comment on the articles or news reporting, would not be considered infringement."

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Owners Lizi and David Gilkeson.

all photos: Dan Smith

Work Spaces

Creativity from scratch >

Executive Summary:

At the French Thistle you can design your own furniture, copy a classic or ask the experts for advice.

By Susan Ayers

Upholstery and fabric shop owners have a tendency to focus primarily on the technical side of the business rather than building relationships with the customer. Not so for David and Lizi Gilkeson who in September, 2006, purchased The French Thistle from the owners who were in the process of retiring. The store was Prime Fabrics at the time.

The French Thistle began with the two of them and they hired Ann Williams as manager and sales associate. "We're creative people. We're not organizers. Ann does that and more," says Lizi.

The store's name is derived from the national flower of Scotland, where Lizi lived for four years, and David's love for French antiques.

David has a bachelor's degree in business and has managed several restaurants. He worked in sales for 20 years, but he has had a lifelong interest in French and English antique furniture, which influences what is sold at The French Thistle. David can help a customer design a new sofa or reproduce an old one.

The French Thistle has classic styles and upholstery in an atmosphere of warm ambiance and elegant refinement.

"I quickly access what the customer wants to do color-wise and find out what the project is," says Lizi. "If the customer has no idea about colors, I ask her to clear her mind of any preconceived ideas and encourage her to pick fabrics she likes and in doing that she can see her color palette and it delights her."

Usually what a person is wearing tells Lizi what that customer will like. By the process of elimination, Lizi is able to figure out the fabrics that will go with what has been chosen and decide what fabric goes where. Lizi suggests to the customer that she paint after picking the fabrics.

"The most important thing we can do is to listen to the customer," says Lizi. "If we don't do that, we'll push our own ideas. I will guide them. It's all about building trust." Lizi loves to help customers put fabrics together because sometimes it can be overwhelming for the customer. She is an artist and her passion is color.



Exterior

Lizi graduated with a fine arts degree from West Surrey College of Art and Design in the United Kingdom. Some of her paintings are displayed for sale throughout the store. Studying sculpture has helped with the three-dimensional aspect to her work.

David handles all the custom work, which is typically done in the back of the store. He inspects everything before it leaves the shop. "I never thought I would be an owner of a fabric store," he laughs. "This business is in the baby stages. We will probably put a lamp shade shop in next."

Until the last year, the upholstery work was farmed out. The business now has two full-time upholsterers, two full-time seamstresses, three to four tear-down people, two part-time sales associates selling fabrics and one full-time sales associate/store manager.

If a customer has paid for the fabric and needs upholstery work done, it normally takes 4-6 weeks for cushions and pillows and 6-8 weeks for furniture. Upholstery work is paid for when completed.

The French Thistle creates custom bedding, headboards and window treatments, outdoor cushions, pillows, custom lampshades and much more.

"The down-turned economy has actually helped. It's a less expensive way to change a whole look," says Lizi. 



Fabric piled up.



Khambay Chanthavixay is a Laotian immigrant, who works the sewing machine.



The results of a lot of work.



Rolls and rolls of fabric.



Floored owner Jimmie Blanchard with a customer.

Rachael Garrity

Resourcefulness: A clinic >

Executive Summary:

Floored owner Jimmie Blanchard has taken small lessons every step of the way and wound up with the business he wants.

By Rachael Garrity

“Obstacles,” Henry Ford said, “are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.”

Meet Jimmie Blanchard, a Christiansburg entrepreneur who almost literally puts legs on that philosophy and makes it run. Where others see risk, Blanchard sees it, too, but then goes looking for what can be—the potential.

As an undergraduate at Virginia Tech, he recognized the need for student housing,

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convinced his parents to invest with him in a plot of land, and when, after four years, the snarl of red tape still hadn't been unwound, sold it at significant profit.

While real estate development with a focus on adaptive re-use was his dream as an undergraduate, he quickly learned that his lack of experience stood in the way of, well, getting experience (Real World 101).

But, wait! Working in a flooring warehouse, he'd started a new profit center by saving, binding and selling carpet remnants that had once been headed for the trash. With that experience behind him, he went with a wholesale distributor managing accounts in Virginia and West Virginia, then took a position managing a store in Roanoke, and eventually offered to buy out the owner.

When the buyout fell through, he searched for a location that would be geographically central, affordable and appealing. At the



These brick-like tiles are made from recycled bottles.

juncture of Highway 11 and Depot Street in Christiansburg he found an old movie theater that had morphed into a food store and then settled into several years of disrepair. By May, he had opened the doors on a clean, bright new showroom, with administrative offices upstairs in what was once the projection area.

"Yes, I guess you could say the timing is a bit courageous," he admits. "But remember,

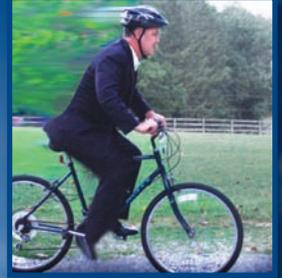
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I was managing a store that was still doing quite well. And, while I surely welcome working with custom homebuilders and new construction, as well as commercial clients, I see this business as focusing on the people who want to replace what they have.”

As the Floored – a name chosen by Blanchard’s wife, who is a technical writer – brochure explains, there is no single floor that is perfect for everyone. Since the typical customer purchases flooring of some sort about every seven years, knowing how and what to choose is an important part of the process.

Blanchard’s early interest in adaptive re-use is alive and well, too. “This is a big-ticket purchase for people,” he argues. “I want to make sure they know about all of the choices they have, and take a real leadership position on helping them find things that are green and sustainable.”

Floored carries only carpets that are

formaldehyde free, and stocks some that are made from corn and some that have a silver ion added especially for allergy-sufferers. Hardwood choices include lyptus, which is a hybridized eucalyptus grown in South America that is harder than oak and, when cut, re-grows from the same trunk. One entry to the showroom features iridescent tile manufactured from recycled bottles—just one of many such choices.

Blanchard’s knowledge about all this is encyclopedic. In addition to full installation on all that he sells, he offers consulting services to those who want to install themselves.

Customer focus, positive attitude and solid planning set the stage. And this businessman has a particular impetus at work, too. His older brother, Scott, died before Blanchard turned 16, and therefore never had the opportunity to deliver a poem written for the occasion. When Blanchard discovered it sometime later, he took the closing words to heart: “Dive in headfirst and challenge your days.” 

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Carol Patterson: "I'm talking about innovation."

David Perry

Getting inventions to market >

Executive Summary:

Sometimes getting those inventions manufactured means sending the information to China and dealing with a whole new world of understanding and misunderstanding. Carol Patterson can help.

By David Perry

Not far from where Carol Patterson attended college, a sign on a steel bridge spanning the Delaware River between Pennsylvania and New Jersey reads in bold neon, "TRENTON MAKES—THE WORLD TAKES." The letters, installed in 1911, reflect a time when America was the world's manufacturing center.

Fast forward to 2010. Today, China is quickly becoming the place that makes what the rest of the world takes. And Carol, who earned a bachelor's degree from Philadelphia's Drexel University, wants to

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make sure that American innovation is driving what those Chinese factories produce.

"Innovation is the key to the United States' success," she says from her home office near Smith Mountain Lake in Hardy. "Because we have been brought up free, we have a freedom of thought that's unique to the world."

Carol's company helps people with good ideas turn them into reality.

"They may have an idea, but they don't know how to get it made. What we do is get it made," she explains. A career in design and working with Home Shopping Network helps her understand what people want.

"All the buyers are under pressure from their bosses to find something new," she says.

Carol helps inventors hone their ideas into something marketable.

"I get a customer who brings something to me, and I say, 'Can we fix it for you?'" she kids.

Before a product enters the manufacturing stage, it has to pass muster with Carol. "Anybody can copy something and send it in FedEx and tell the factory to make it. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about innovation."

After clearing that quality control hurdle, the next step is translating the idea into something a Chinese factory can make.

"You must be very clear," Carol says. "First, there's a language barrier. In negotiations, sometimes things get blurred. So what we do is make very clear drawings, schematics and specifications

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sheets, both in English and Chinese.”

She adds, “The drawings are the third language. It’s not English, it’s not Chinese—it’s design.”

The language isn’t the only barrier. Cultural and business norms are different, too.

“Working with Americans, I understand the American way of doing business,” says Carol. “But it’s not the same way of doing business as in China. We have a motto in our company: ‘Most businesses go to China and try to do business in a western way. We go to China and do western business in a Chinese way.’”

Once the next great thing is manufactured, it hits the marketplace. Inventors “can do it one of two ways: they can either license it and get a royalty, or they can sell the exact product and ship it right from China.”

And that means shipping it not just to America, but anywhere.

“There are 225 countries out there that could get that product as well, so between licensing and selling it on the Internet, there’s a whole new world out there of international marketing,” she says.

Carol is proof the concept works—she designs and licenses her own line of jewelry on the side and understands the frustrations of someone with a great product who doesn’t know where to turn.

In Brief

Name: Carol Patterson
Age: 60
Company: The C.P. Group Inc.
Location: Hardy and Hangzhou, China
Type of business: International China consultants
Title: President/Product Development
History: This Pennsylvania native with a distinctive northeast accent has made her home in the Roanoke Valley after falling in love with the scenery while in town on a business trip for Home Shopping Network. Her mother, a Texan, taught her about being a southern lady, and she says she loves the region’s ambiance. A design degree from Drexel University led to a career in fashion that took her to New York, Los Angeles and ultimately Hangzhou, China, where she directed her company’s overseas office. When she’s not finding outlets for innovation, she enjoys learning about technology, cooking, sailing and entertaining.

Says Carol, “People have ideas. They shouldn’t be afraid that they can’t get them done.” 



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Worker goes through an on-site "lab" for a VWCC course.

Gene Marrano

A custom education >

Executive Summary:

What specific employers need in employees is increasingly a focus among community colleges in Virginia.

By Gene Marrano

Virginia's Community College System often has a different mission than do the four year schools. For many, the Commonwealth's two year institutions of higher learning are a fast track to a better job.

While that could mean an associate's degree or a certificate program focusing on a particular skill, in some cases it may involve customized curricula of various lengths, in classes held on campus or at the place of employment.

The community college system is all ears when it comes to working with employers in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. Ruth Z. Hendrick, until recently the Workforce Development Coordinator and the Career Center Coordinator for Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke, says VWCC's workforce program "is pretty much the liaison with businesses for the college."

"Our job is to go out find out what they need, and either develop it or refer them appropriately [to regular college courses]. Most of what we do is customized training." Hendrick says all community colleges in Virginia have a workforce development center or a liaison to local industries of some sort.

At New River Community College, Dr. Mark Rowh, Vice President for Workforce Development and External Relations, says the school "has a long history of working with companies and organizations in the New River Valley." That includes offering credit and non-credit courses.

"We respond to their needs and we also create new programs that are of interest to them," says Rowh. Case in point: NRVC has created several courses for Volvo Trucks in Dublin. Other on-campus offerings are more basic, like helping to prepare young students for the workforce.

"We call them transitional programs," adds Rowh, who calls the workforce development courses offered by New River Community College "broad based." That ability to adapt to industry needs—on campus or on site—is often music to the ears of local companies.

At VWCC four coordinators work full time with employers in the Roanoke area on everything from computer skills to

leadership training and foreign language for businesses. The average custom program might involve 5 to 15 hours, according to Hendrick. The Workforce Development Center is now based within the business, engineering and technology division at VWCC.

Hendrick says local economic development organizations looking to lure businesses to the area often tout the Workforce Development Center and the services it offers, like specific skills training for new hires and incubator space (at the Greenfield Center in Daleville) for firms looking to settle here. Two Botetourt County companies, LiteSteel and All Tech Industries, spent time at the Greenfield incubator before putting up plants.

Virginia Western crafted a custom on-site program for Titan America/Roanoke Cement in Botetourt County, which wanted to train maintenance personnel for future jobs that require electrical background and licensing. Virginia Western adapted its campus-based wiring certificate program and taught it in a Roanoke Cement meeting room.

"We used some of their equipment for labs," notes Hendrick, "[so] that we could customize it for their job." The entire Roanoke Cement program involved about a half dozen classes, taught one at a time, stretched over a two-year period. The first was a remedial math class, which helped when reading schematics and deciphering Ohm's law.

Those who went through the program

(priced like an in-state college credit course at \$115 per credit hour) were offered the chance to walk at the ceremony with other on-campus Virginia Western graduates. "Those guys stuck with it—we're talking about two years before or after work," notes Hendrick. The cost for workforce programs priced as non-credit courses can vary widely.

The Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR), a state agency which licenses qualified individuals and businesses that meet certain standards, approved the wiring certificate program. It's part of the process needed to obtain a journeyman's electrical license, something that the Roanoke Cement employees who took the VWCC courses are still working on.

Chris Bayne, the electrical maintenance manager at Roanoke Cement, says the company wants "to train our next generation of electricians, as we seek to fill those spots in the future." Right now those who took the workforce courses are used elsewhere at the plant, but Bayne notes that the electrical maintenance positions "are some of the most sought after jobs, in terms of reimbursement."

Roanoke Cement requires 13 electricians with journeyman's licenses on two shifts; Bayne says 10 made it through the entire two year VWCC program and are working towards licensing, which requires up to six years of training. 

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Becky Hepler

Carol Smith and Sally Warburton of the Pulaski County Public Library system: "We felt it was important to have our local newspaper available to people here in the library."

Over the years, the Library had lovingly built a microfilm collection, usually funded by grants from the C.E. Richardson Foundation of the local paper, The Southwest Times, that spanned from 1916 to the present. The Friends of the Library bought the microfilm reader and every day the library was open, you could be assured someone was using the resource. "Since we are a public library," said Warburton, "we felt it was important to have our local newspaper available to people here in the library."

The reader was computer-based, so people could make digital files of the material taken from the microfilm that they could save to a disk, e-mail to themselves, or print. Still, there was only the one machine, so one person at a time could use it and like so much computer technology, the software was not easy to upgrade. In fact, Smith knew the machine was on its last

legs and would need to be replaced. That would cost around \$14,000.

More important, the material wasn't indexed, so there was no easy way to find specific articles except plowing through the entire paper. The trend is toward Web-based resources that are available to any patron with a computer and not just people who come to the library. So Smith did more research and found a company that would scan all of the library's microfilm, turn it into pdf files, then through OCR (optical character recognition) software, make the entire paper—including the ads—searchable by keyword. All these resources would be available to anyone with Internet access for free. The cost to the library: only \$11,000 more than the machine.

Still that \$25,000 was more money than either the paper or the library had and the

Keeping history current >

Executive Summary:

The files of Pulaski County's local newspaper, which are always a valuable local resource, were updated with a group effort and some fancy technology.

By Becky Hepler

A community on a mission is a powerful thing. Just ask Sally Warburton and Carol Smith, director and technology coordinator respectively, for the Pulaski County Library System. They called on their locality and it responded in high volume, giving the community a valuable digital resource.

time frame wasn't conducive to foundations and the grant process. Says Smith, "We decided if we could raise the money from the community or anyone who was interested in this, we could make this happen," and that's exactly what they did. Starting in April and running until July, the committee created to solve this problem used every option at its disposal to get the word out.

In a small town, people wear a variety of hats



Kay Kline of The Southwest Times: "A wide swath of the community who feel a kinship with the paper's legacy."

Becky Hepler

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we felt it was important to have our local newspaper available to people here in the library.

—Sally Warburton

and the chairman of the fundraising committee, Jim Graham was also very active in organizing the Dublin High School reunion. He joined forces with the person organizing the Pulaski High School reunion and those databases of addresses were invaluable in getting the word out to ex-pats.

In the end, they raised the entire amount from almost 200 donations, coming from 10 states and in amounts from \$25 to \$5,000. Says Kay Kline, of the Southwest Times,

“We were particularly impressed that this goal was met, not by just a few contributors but a wide swath of the community who feel a kinship with the paper’s legacy.”

The library and the paper worked with Heritage Microfilm from Iowa, a subsidiary of Newspaper Archives, the company that works with newspapers of various sizes to convert story content to digital files that are part of a subscription database, usually sold to libraries. So working in a partnership with a newspaper and a library and offering the content for free was definitely a unique event.

“The State Library of Virginia had started a project like this where they were trying to digitize local newspapers as a historical resource but ran out of money,” said Warburton. “I’m glad we got our paper done.” 

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Setting a standard >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

It is embarrassing to feel the need to gush over a business person whose ethical investment is as high as that of Laura Bradford's. The delighted surprise is more a statement about our overall values than it should be.

Laura is the winner of our first "For the Right Reasons" award in this month's FRONTLeader Awards cover story, a category created with her in mind. She is not, of course, the only ethical, giving and caring business person in the region, but Laura sets a standard of assuming that caring for others is her responsibility.

I think most of you know the story of Laura establishing factories to manufacture the Claire V purses she sells (they're hot in Hollywood and with women who know trends everywhere), but you may not know that her new Polished by Claire V personal care salon on Roanoke City Market is run by women in recovery from a variety of substances and circumstances.

These are the people who need a boost of confidence and a chance that is hard to come by in a society consumed with spotless resumes and education levels that are absurd for the tasks they are required to perform. Laura has seen the possibility in people in a way that we seem to have forgotten.

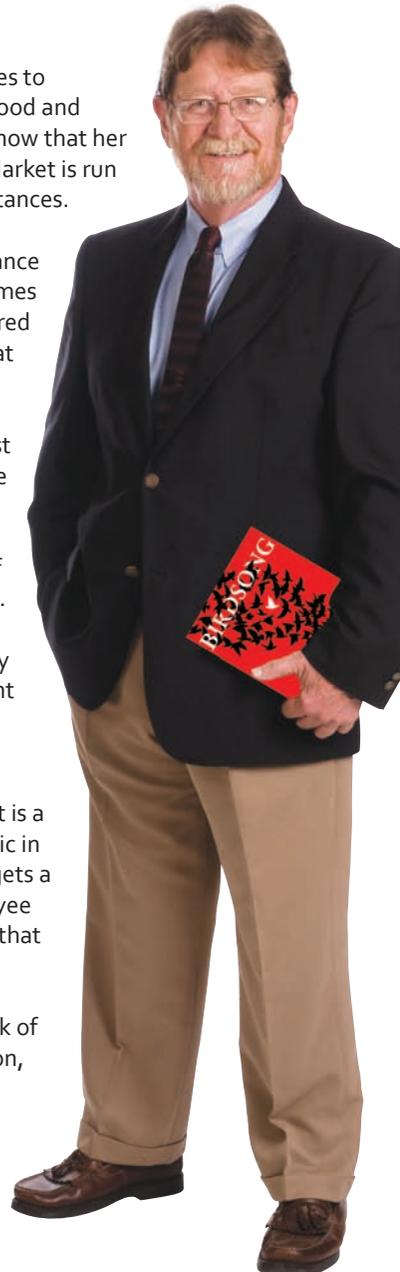
When I went to work for a daily newspaper in Roanoke in 1971, just about half the people in the newsroom (including me) didn't have college degrees. Several had no college at all. They were good reporters, good writers, excellent journalists, people who were trained within the organization and performed at a level many of our younger, better-educated journalists today don't understand.

My guess is that it was that way in many fields where today only the people with advanced degrees are allowed through the front door and many people who are capable—even outstanding prospects—begin without a chance.

Laura wants to give a chance to those at the bottom, whether it is a land mine victim in Vietnam or an abused and confused alcoholic in Roanoke. She's doing it for the two-pronged right reason: she gets a good employee who will be loyal and hard-working; the employee gets a chance nobody else will give her. I admire the hell out of that level of commitment and ability to stare down risk.

With all that in mind, I'm going to request something I rarely ask of you. For all of us, support Laura's businesses. This holiday season, she's offering up a novel way to cater a holiday party (as well as birthdays, bridal parties and others) and you can find out a lot more about it at www.polishedbycv.com.

Laura Bradford deserves your support because of the standard she is setting for all of us. 



Shouting for civility >

By **Tom Field**
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

BLOG: [ontapfrompub.blogspot.com]

Ah, election time. It's just mid-term, no doubt, but let's consider some proper and well-called-for *political etiquette*, shall we?

If you're frustrated, settle down, my friend. If you're angry, take a chill pill. If you object to what your president is doing or saying, be respectful, hold your tongue, and give the man a chance. If you're not happy with the system of government, remember that the system is the very best thing we have to provide solutions to our problems, if we would only unite behind it. If you feel like shouting, let's not do it in public—you look ridiculous. If you want to protest, reconsider your signs and your bumper stickers—you look ignorant, particularly when they're misspelled. And if you want to march on Washington, don't do it in such a demanding way. In fact, laugh. Have a "mock march." Let's make fun of the silliness of it all. There's no real reason for a march... come on, you silly ol' goose, admit it!

And who's giving this sound advice?

Hint: It's not the people and voices who have always remained quite, respectful, civil, and polite.

It's the same people who SCREAMED at injustices perpetrated on the disadvantaged segments of our society. It's the same people who MARCHED on Washington, college campuses, and town halls, in staunch opposition to our involvement in wars.

It's the same people who REFUSED to tolerate the system, demanding change, showcasing in front of cameras with unruly crowds, misspelled banners, and truly uncivil demonstrations. And it's the people who lambasted our president, continuously and incessantly, with charges of stupidity and lying—in full volume and with absolutely no hesitation.

Yes, it's people who did exactly what they were supposed to do in a free society. Making their voices heard.

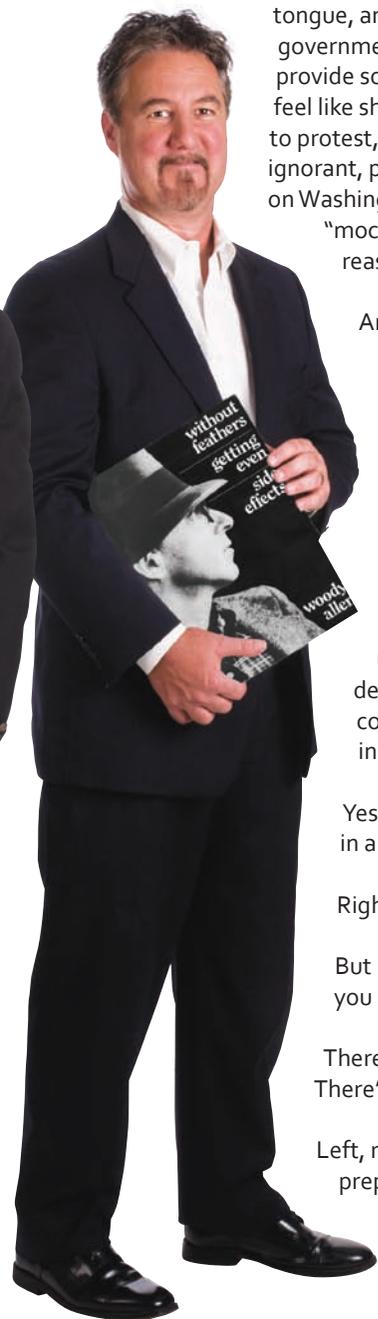
Rightfully so.

But isn't it ironic that protest is only honorable when... well, when you don't disagree with it?

There are times when disagreement is just not warranted. There's even a name for it. It's called *an oppressed society*.

Left, right. Liberal, Conservative. Or, completely radical. It's not such a preposterous thing to speak your mind. At least we should all pray that it should never be so.

Is it time to raise your voice? Are you alive?
Why, then, there's never been a better time. 



CONTRIBUTORS

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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]

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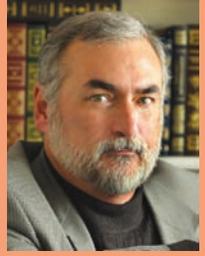
Dan Smith is editor and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT. A native of Asheville, N.C., he has been a journalist for more than four decades and has won many journalism awards (writing, photography and design). He was recently named to the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame and was a 2009 recipient of the Pery 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]

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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]



Michael Miller

OCTOBER 2010 > Contributor of the Month

Valley Business FRONT congratulates **Michael Miller**, who has quietly established himself as a force in writing about technology in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. The strength of his writing, reporting and understanding of the issues and companies has led to his selection as October's Contributor of the Month for FRONT. Miller is a business owner, senior licensing manager for Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties, an inventor and a consultant. In October he wrote about Valley Energy Consultants, and you can read that story or previous stories at vbFRONT.com We congratulate Michael and thank him for his efforts.

“you must
be very
clear

— Page 40

Letters

People I know

Waiting in line at Wachovia—a copy of vbFRONT was on a table beside the line—I really, really enjoyed the wait thanks to your mag. Love a mag that has people I know in it. The design is great—something about it just makes you want to look at that mag...

**Amanda Pauley
Salem**

Clarification

In a cover story on angel investors in the October issue of FRONT, Bob Summers was quoted as saying angel investors last year "put more money to work than Virginia Tech." Summers says he was misunderstood and meant to say that the investors put more money to work than venture capitalists.

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

Copy Cat

On a recent trip to Lynchburg I ran across a magazine by another name that looks exactly like Valley Business FRONT. Same format, same concept, same structure, same ad sizes and placements. When I was introduced to the FRONT in 2008, I was struck by how original and creative it was. Are you now publishing this other magazine in the Lynchburg market as a separate product?

**Kurt Navratil
Roanoke**

The Publisher and Editor respond—

We are disappointed in Prototype Media Inc., which appears to have copied our product in nearly every respect. Equally disturbing is that a business that claims to be "creative" would attempt to replicate someone else's original work; right in the same market. We applaud competition; but of all businesses, publishers and ad agencies should know better than to copy to that extent. The most informed and connected businesses and organizations in the greater Lynchburg market will likely notice the ethical breach; so we'll keep doing what we're doing, and serve our community in solid, reputable, and proper fashion.

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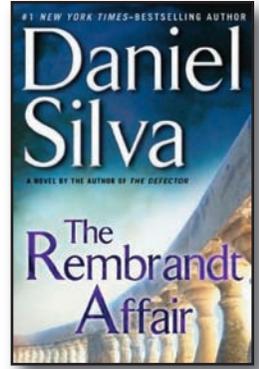
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



The great escape

The Rembrandt Affair by Daniel Silva (Putnam Adult, \$26.95) effectively weaves together art, history, culture and modern day Nazi war crimes into a fast-paced assassin-artist novel.

In keeping with earlier books involving the same central characters, Gabriel Allon, an Israeli art restoration expert, finds himself pulled from a quiet cottage vacation with his wife to find a missing virtually unknown Rembrandt. The twists from various continents, intelligence services and financial institutions meld into a chess match quality intrigue with a satisfying, yet somewhat predictable ending. Great for escape reading.

—Joyce Waugh

Winter's coming

Cold by Bill Streever (Little, Brown and Co., \$24.99) chronicles a year in the life of a man obsessed with the tiny numbers at the bottom of the thermometer. Set against Streever's travels to various Arctic locales over the course of 12 months, *Cold* is a rambling collection of anecdotes on how life on Earth copes with cold weather.

Aimed squarely at the Discovery and History Channel audience, *Cold* is equal parts "Man vs. Wild" and "Planet Earth," a story of survival, not just of our species but of eons of living things that have fought to stay warm. Whether Streever is describing how thawed woolly mammoth tastes, explaining the chemistry behind frozen frogs in the bottom of a lake, or freezing caterpillars in his icebox, *Cold* will

keep you entertained without burdening you with too much science. You may need to reach for a blanket, however, and turn up the thermostat a few degrees.

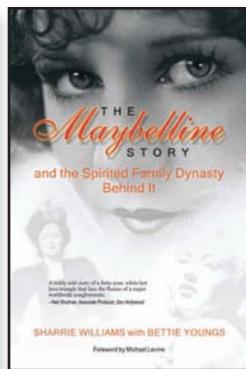
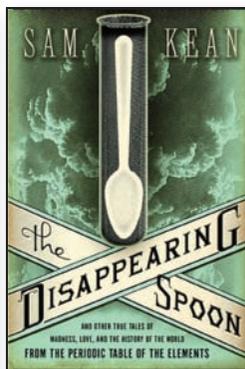
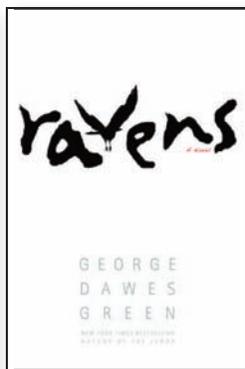
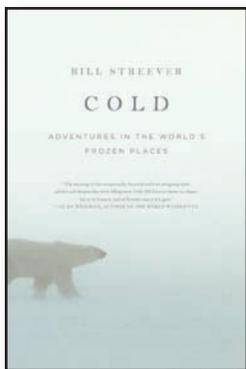
—David Perry

Gambling in Georgia

Back when I used to travel extensively, I developed the knack for selecting books that would last me through the trip. George Dawes Green's *Ravens* (Grand Central Publishing; \$14), is good for a very short trip. Short flight down, an overnight with just an hour or so in your hotel, short flight back. Not only is it a quick read, but it's best for that trip when you have a lot to do—and just need a lightweight story. Fun, but not a lot of required attention.

An entertaining premise: Win the lottery—and it's all downhill from there. But you'll be asked to suspend your disbelief a bit more than what should be customary. Two grifters take a Georgia family hostage until they can swindle half of the jackpot. Plausible, right? What's implausible is Green's version of such a story. The scheme is overreaching for two losers, who happen to be passing through, stopping at a convenience store. They're suddenly competent enough to run wire taps, hack into computers, trick the police and national media, and spend quality time with their victims, fishing, playing cards, and winning over some of their hearts.

The opportunities for escape and resolution are impossible to ignore. And even if you accept this barrage of improbabilities, the



timeframe is simply ludicrous: seven days. Ok, so I've decimated the plotline. Unlikely constructions bother me, especially when too many improbabilities stack up. It's still a fun read. Interesting characters. Buy it for that reason. Odds are 1 in 195,249,054 of you will consider it a classic.

—Tom Field

Shattering myths

Sam Kean's *The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements* (Little, Brown and Co., \$24.99) reveals the dirty little secrets behind the men and women who discovered and organized the periodic table, that iconic collection of elements that hangs in every chemistry classroom in the country.

From lowly hydrogen and helium (which make up 90 percent and 10 percent of the universe, respectively; everything else is a rounding error) to radioactive oddities that exist only for fleeting microseconds in a lab at U.C. Berkeley, *The Disappearing Spoon* blends history, gossip, romance, intrigue and politics with just enough hard science to keep things respectable.

Kean delves into how the 100-plus elements were discovered, often by accident and sometimes erroneously, and how our knowledge of the universe's most basic building blocks grew over time. In the end, he tears down some of the greats of science and leaves them looking like people, full of pride and prone to make mistakes, while

building up a few of science's unsung heroes along the way.

—David Perry

Made up

Take one Horatio Alger hero, throw in two world wars, the stock market crash of 1929, the depression, gangland Chicago during Prohibition, and you have the mixings for *The Maybelline Story and the Spirited Family Dynasty Behind It*. Part novel, part history, and part memoir, this is a tale of a larger-than-life man who founded a cosmetics empire and became the family patriarch at the same time.

Written by Sharrie Williams, the great granddaughter of Thomas Lyle Williams, the story moves rapidly through decades of boom and bust, happiness and sadness, drunkenness and drug use, unspoken and outlawed homosexuality, tragedy and glory, yet few people know the Williams family name or its history. Phrases such as "and soon, he would need all the inspiration he could get" pepper the text and weaken the presentation. This is a saga that deserves to be told better.

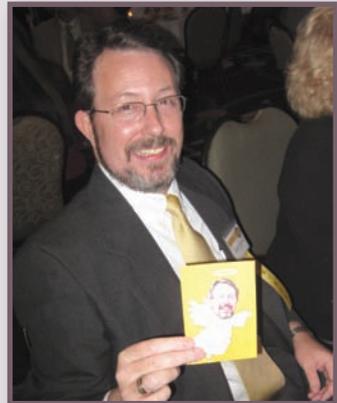
—Betsy Ashton

(The reviewers: Joyce Waugh is president of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce. David Perry works for the Western Virginia Land Trust and is a freelance writer. Betsy Ashton is a writer who lives at Smith Mountain Lake. Tom Field is FRONT publisher.)



Green groundbreaking >

Brandon Oaks became the first retirement community in the Roanoke Valley to be certified as a Cool Green Biz Oct. 7 when ground was broken for the construction of "The Pines," Brandon Oaks' sustainably designed residence, and the retirement community. Those breaking ground are (from left): **Sam Lionberger III, Chris Morill, Skip Zubrod, Charles Norfleet, Bonnie Allison, Andy Dickinson** and **David Underwood**.



photos: Dan Smith

Chamber biz awards >

Alan Turner of Magnets USA accepted the award as the **Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce's** Small Business of the Year Oct. 5 at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center. **Sam English** of CIE Partners in Roanoke (holding a cutout picture of his angel investor character from the October 2010 FRONT), was named the Small Business Advocate of the Year.

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



photo: Tom Field

Lights, camera, synergize >

Over 150 small business owner / operators and independent professionals gathered for **Super Synergy**, a business educational symposium directed by **Lynda McNutt Foster** and underwritten by Wheeler Broadcasting. The multi-level and regional Synergy program runs all year, culminating in an annual showcase, which was produced this year in Roanoke on October 21.



Internet futures >

A panel consisting of FRONT Editor **Dan Smith** (from left), WDBJ7 Internet News Manager **Tracie Gilmer** and Roanoke Times Editor **Carole Tarrant** discussed how the Internet is being used by news organizations at the **Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America's** monthly meeting Oct. 14 at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center.

Prosperity advisor >

Ali Velshi, chief business correspondent for CNN and author of *Gimme My Money Back* spoke at the **Roanoke Regional Forum** in Roanoke on October 18. On the economy, Velshi said it's "not a crisis if

there's a solution." After winning the lottery or marrying rich, he said we prosper by increasing the value of our property, income, and investments. The audience agreed the best treat of the night was the time Velshi gave in taking questions after only speaking for a half-hour.



photo: Tom Field



Digital 'mad man' >

Christopher-Ian Reichel, a Madison Avenue digital ad specialist, spoke to the **AAF / Roanoke** ad club (formerly AdFed) at its monthly lunch program on October 20. His advice for 21st Century advertising vocation? Keep your options open, diversify your work, and seek clients who need the most help.

photo: TJ Wells

Inclusive >

Building Specialists' owner **Bob Fetzer** has learned how to get the neighbors on board with construction projects by including them at the planning stage. On Oct. 7, Building Specialists held an open house at the site of the new Valley Bank in order to let local merchants, residents of Raleigh Court and subcontractors see the plans. About 50 people showed up.

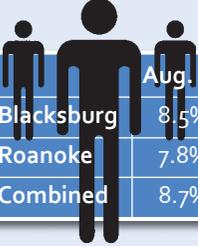


ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The experts may have declared the recession over, but for some of us it might not feel that way. Economic indicators in the Roanoke and New River Valleys show month-to-month ups and downs, but general improvement over the year.

Unemployment/Employment

That is true for one of the most familiar indicators: **unemployment**. Both the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas registered improvement from August 2009 to August 2010. Blacksburg's rate dropped from July to August, perhaps reflecting the return of students to Virginia Tech and Radford University, while Roanoke's remained unchanged. Taken as a whole, the broader region has seen improvement over the month and the year.



	Aug. 09	July 10	Aug. 10
Blacksburg	8.5%	8.4%	8.1%
Roanoke	7.8%	7.5%	7.5%
Combined	8.7%	8.5%	8.3%

The number of people **employed** in the two MSAs is up very slightly from 2009 and 0.2 percent from July to August.

August 2009	July 2010	August 2010
219,488	218,945	219,366

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Real Estate

Another set of indicators that hit close to home involves real estate: prices, number of homes sold and foreclosures. The Roanoke Region's housing market has stayed relatively healthy during the downturn compared to the national market. **Prices** of homes sold in the Roanoke Region rose 7 percent from August 2009 to August 2010, while national prices rose during the same period by 2.9 percent. Though local prices fell slightly in September, they are

up 7.2 percent from September 2010.

Roanoke Regional Average Home Prices

Sept. 2009	Aug. 2010	Sept. 2010
\$194,327	\$213,944	\$208,332

The prices may be up over the year locally, but the number of homes sold fell September to September.

Sept. 2009	Aug. 2010	Sept. 2010
352	263	261

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

On the other side of the coin, foreclosures in the Roanoke MSA bucked the state and national trends, falling slightly (3.8 percent) from August to September. Nationally, foreclosure activity rose 3 percent in September. Statewide, jump was 9.4 percent.

	Sept. 2009	Aug. 2010	Sept. 2010
Blacksburg MSA	23	26	34
Roanoke MSA	138	158	152
Combined	161	184	186

Source: RealtyTrac

Air Travel

As the economy starts to improve, flyers start to return to the skies. The Roanoke Regional Airport reports that passenger boardings are up both year to date over 2009 (4.04 percent) and September to September.

Year To Date 2009	Year To Date 2010
221,575	230,531

Sept. 2009	Sept. 2010
25,259	25,847

Source: Roanoke Regional Airport

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates



Cyrus Pace, mixing business with art: that's not a music score on the stand—it's a spreadsheet.

Tom Field

A pacesetter in art and business >

Executive Summary:

Cyrus Pace, the Jefferson Center's new executive director, brings right and left-brain competency to the table.

By Tom Field

Cyrus Pace likes to celebrate. Not even two full weeks into his new job as executive director of the Jefferson Center, he apologizes that his office isn't completely set up, and then smiles. His 13-week old child (at the date of this interview) just slept through the night for the first time.

"That's something to celebrate," he says.

The new director speaks in those terms frequently, muses philosophically, and sounds like a professor in an Art Appreciation class.

"We had Chick Corea at our Music Lab,"

(not just performing a concert, which he also did). "That's something!"

"We were able to offer Emmylou Harris tickets at \$40! Forty dollars, now, that's something!"

There's plenty to celebrate, apparently, as Pace describes the ongoing activities at the Jefferson Center, a non-profit organization and facility presenting performance art and educational programs in the downtown west area of Roanoke. (A major renovation project of the original Jefferson High School, the center first opened as an arts venue in 1993.) But for every moment of celebration, there seems to be at least 100 moments of hard work to get there. Pace celebrates the staff and the board, which he says do an amazing job in figuring out how to remain sustainable amidst a recession and an economic climate that is not currently throwing tons of money in the arts. He cites people like Dylan Locke and John Levin, who secure grants and sponsors to get ticket prices down to less than half of what they would actually cost. And the Roanoke Valley native celebrates the very mission of the Jefferson Center, which, despite all the possible lavish and highbrow descriptions, he likes to remind

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

people, "is really a community center."

"The things I believe in personally are the same as the Jefferson Center," he says. "Continue to be relevant and give our community access to a diversified and a deeply artistic—no, make that meaningful—experience."

As a musician, Pace could face skepticism in his ability to manage what is essentially—and some would argue, first and foremost—a business. Aren't artists supposed to be rebels, anti-establishment, unpredictable, performing their best only when the muse strikes? A little left-brain is OK; but doesn't a respectable institution like Jefferson Center need a right-brain person? Will this guy even be able to get up on time?

"I don't think there's a dichotomy," Pace answers. "I have survived as an artist because I do get up on time. The most creative people in the world are the hardest working. I believe in inspiration; but successful people really don't sit around waiting for 'creativity' to strike."

In less than 10 seconds, Pace rattles off a dozen names of recording artists who he says have to write every day. They're always working. In the end, Pace says "the arts' is really a product, like anything else. Artists sometimes want you to believe their craft is something different than that, but it requires sustainability like any business endeavor."

At the top of his list of objectives as the new executive director of Jefferson Center, Pace issues a declaration: "We all need to have honest conversations about the level of support [required to sustain this community

In Brief

Name: Cyrus Pace

Age: 38

Hometown: Salem / Roanoke Valley

Family: Married, Amber (works for U.S. Attorney's Office); Child, Louis (5 months old, named after Louis Armstrong)

Background: Salem High School; U.S. Navy Band; M.M., Manhattan School of Music, NY; B.A., Roanoke College; Emory University; Fine arts coordinator, Roanoke City Schools; Executive Director, Jefferson Center; Active musician and jazz ensemble instructor, Patrick Henry High School

Personal Philosophy: "Prepare the child for the path, not the path for the child" (also engraved on a stone on Rita Bishop's desk, Roanoke City Schools supervisor)

center]."

He expresses concern for the people who work so hard, put in so many hours, even though the foundation of the organization is very strong.

"Do something you believe in, then figure out how to make that successful," Pace quips.

A purely left-brain person wouldn't fret about things like that. 



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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Simmons

Insurance

Dianne Simmons has been named vice president at Charles Lunsford Sons & Associates in Roanoke.

LEGAL FRONT

Law Firms

Roanoke law firm Woods Rogers PLC has named **J. Andrew Keller** executive director. Keller has been executive director at law firms in Denver, Tallahassee and Atlanta. The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill graduate



Keller

also is a Certified Public Accountant.

Margaret Ann (Megan) Brown has joined the Roanoke law firm of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore as an associate attorney in the firm's plaintiff's practice group. Brown is a registered nurse and a lawyer.

WELLNESS FRONT

Pharmacy

CMR Institute, the leading independent, not-for-profit provider of biopharmaceutical sales representative education, has elected **Sam English** and **Dominic A. Marasco**

to its volunteer board of directors. English is the founder and managing partner of CIE Partners in Roanoke and Marasco is director of U.S. Sales for Sandoz.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Zielske



Linkous

Real estate

Amanda Zielske and **Suzanne Linkous**, leasing consultants for CMG Leasing in

Blacksburg, have earned their National Apartment Leasing Professional certifications from the National Apartment Association.



Eric Fansler



Tom Fansler

Prudential Waterfront Properties has announced that **Eric Fansler**, **Tom Fansler**, **Carolyn Pruett** and **Michelle Turner** have earned the professional designation, Fine Homes Specialist, conferred by Prudential Real Estate Affiliates.

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Pruett



Turner

EDUCATION FRONT



Willcox

Colleges

Dr. Jan Willcox has been promoted to vice dean for Virginia Campus of the Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg.

OTHER FRONTS

Awards

The Western Virginia Workforce Development

Board has recognized professionals and businesses who have made contributions to the local workforce system in the last year. Those honored were: **Sherrie Hammerstrom** of Franklin County IT, Program Participant of the Year; **Catherine "Kitty" Lambeth** of the Virginia Employment Commission and **Debbie Melvin** of the Virginia Department of Business Assistance, Workforce Professionals of the Year; Franklin County Administrator **Rick Huff**, Partner of the Year; **Jennifer Unroe**, retired from Virginia Cooperative Extension Service in Alleghany County, Workforce Community Advocate; **McAirlaids Inc.** of Rocky Mount, Business of the Year; **Jo Anne Lempeck**,

Franklin County Schools, Workforce Educator of the Year.



St. Clair

Chambers

Maria St.Clair has been named vice president of business development and member services of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce. She had been employed the Taubman Museum of Art as the membership and annual fund coordinator.

Clark Nexsen, which has an office in Roanoke, has named **Thomas T. Winborne** CEO of its six offices and 520 employees. Winborne replaces **Kenneth G. Stepka**, who will serve as board chairman. **Gregory J. Hall**, has been named CFO and **William R. Keenis** the new COO. Christopher M. Stone remains president.

fromtheeditr.blogspot.com

More

Dan Smith

than most can stand...



FRONT Notes



Vipperman pictured with his wife.

Tech gets \$1 million

American Electric Power has pledged a \$1 million gift to Virginia Tech's Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science in honor of **Joseph H. Vipperman**, a 1962 electrical engineering alumnus of

Virginia Tech, and a retired executive vice president of AEP.

The AEP Foundation's gift will support the sustainable energy and clean coal technology focus areas within the research institute. Vipperman, of Moneta,

is also a former president of Appalachian Power. Vipperman spent his entire career with Appalachian Power and its parent company, AEP. Vipperman served as a mentor to Dan Carson, of Roanoke, who also recently retired as vice president of Appalachian Power. Carson was instrumental in securing the funding commitment from the AEP Foundation. Carson, also a Hokie, is a former member of the Virginia Tech College of Engineering Advisory Board, and 1971 civil engineering graduate.

Carilion hires top neuro doc

Leading brain researcher **P. Read Montague** will join the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute Nov. 15. Montague will be a senior professor and will lead programs in human neuroimaging and the new field of computational psychiatry at the research institute.

He will be a professor of physics with an affiliation with the School of Biomedical Engineering and Science at Virginia Tech. Montague is the Brown Foundation Professor of Neuroscience and professor of psychiatry in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, where he founded the Human Neuroimaging Laboratory and the Computational Psychiatry Unit, the first of its kind in the world. The Association of University Research Parks (AURP) has selected the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (above) as the 2010 Outstanding Research Park in the United States.

CRC named best

The Association of University Research Parks (AURP) has selected the **Virginia**

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

- > New Twist & Turns Opens Friday at Valley View
- > AEP Gives Tech \$1 Million in Vipperman's Name
- > Law Firm Celebrates Local Foods, Kicks Off Harvest With LEAP
- > Carilion Research Institute Hires Top Man in Neuroimaging
- > Tech's CRC Recognized as Nation's Best
- > Radford U., Carilion To Offer PhD in Physical Therapy

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

Tech Corporate Research Center as the 2010 Outstanding Research Park in the United States.

The awards recognize the achievements of outstanding research parks and industry veterans and encourages the development of best practices among research and science parks. "AURP recognizes exceptional leadership in innovation by honoring university research parks, individuals and companies who are driving innovation in their communities," says AURP President Harold Strong.

The Outstanding Research/Science Park Achievement Award recognizes parks that excel in bringing technology from the laboratory to economically viable business activities, promoting the growth of businesses, jobs and public revenue. The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC) has developed 120 acres adjacent to the Virginia Tech campus.

Radford, Carilion offer PhD

Radford University,

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

working with **Carilion Clinic** and Jefferson College of Health Sciences in Roanoke will team to offer a doctorate degree in physical therapy next year. The DPT program will be located in Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital, sharing space, services

and resources with Jefferson College of Health Sciences.

Carilion Clinic Chief Operating Officer Nancy Agee says, "We have a long history with RU, working together in health professions education. We're pleased to be able

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FRONT Notes

to jointly bring this new doctoral program to the Roanoke Valley. The three-year program will admit 25 students per year for a total of 75 students at full enrollment.

"It will not only help us meet an important patient need, [but] it sets the stage for future opportunities to collaborate. With these doctoral students joining our JCHS Nursing and Health students, Virginia Tech Carilion and University of Virginia medical students, Carilion Clinic Medical Education residents and fellows, we are building a remarkable

center for health professions and medical education here in the Roanoke Valley."

Rural broadband set

Waynesboro-based nTelos has announced its implementation plan for a \$16 million federal broadband stimulus award to bring broadband services and infrastructure to underserved households, businesses, and community facilities in the Alleghany Highlands of Virginia.

The award, which required nTelos to match the \$8

million federal grant, enables nTelos to build a "future proof" fiber optic network to serve the needs of Alleghany citizens for decades to come.

Higher Ed Center boosts economy

The **Roanoke Higher Education Center** today released an economic impact report highlighting its financial contributions to the regional economy. The study, released at the center's 10th anniversary celebration, shows an annual stimulus of \$32

million in spending and economic development.

Highlights from the economic impact report include:

- The Roanoke Higher Education Center and the operations of its institutional members directly support 103.1 jobs throughout the regional economy. The induced and indirect impacts add an additional 35.4 jobs. The total impact of the center's operations and those of its institutional members represents a \$13.4 million dollar



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impact on regional sales.

- Student spending induced through participation at the center's programs adds an additional \$2.3 million and supports roughly 35 service-sector jobs.
- The survey sought to quantify the increase in personal earnings attributable to completion of one of the center's academic

programs. The spending resulting from increased earnings among alumni who remain in the region contributes an additional \$16 million and more than 135 jobs.

- The total impact is an annual stimulus of nearly \$32 million. This activity supports nearly 310 jobs earning an average of \$35,142 per year.

Krull UN case study

Krull & Company, a socially and environmentally responsible financial services firm with a number of clients in the Roanoke Valley, has been selected as a case study for the United Nations Principles For Responsible Investing 2010 Report on Progress. The firm was an early signatory of the principles in 2006 and continues to be an implementation leader. Peter Krull, president of Krull & Company and

an occasional columnist for FRONT, says, "We are very excited to have our investment strategy selected as a case study for the 2010 progress report. We welcome the opportunity to share our policies and procedures for the greater good of the responsible investing community."

Compiled by Dan Smith

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