

Valley Business

FRONT

TAKE
A
NUMBER

48
47
46

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 31 • APRIL 2011

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Stutterers
In Business

A Renewable

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Man

Safe,
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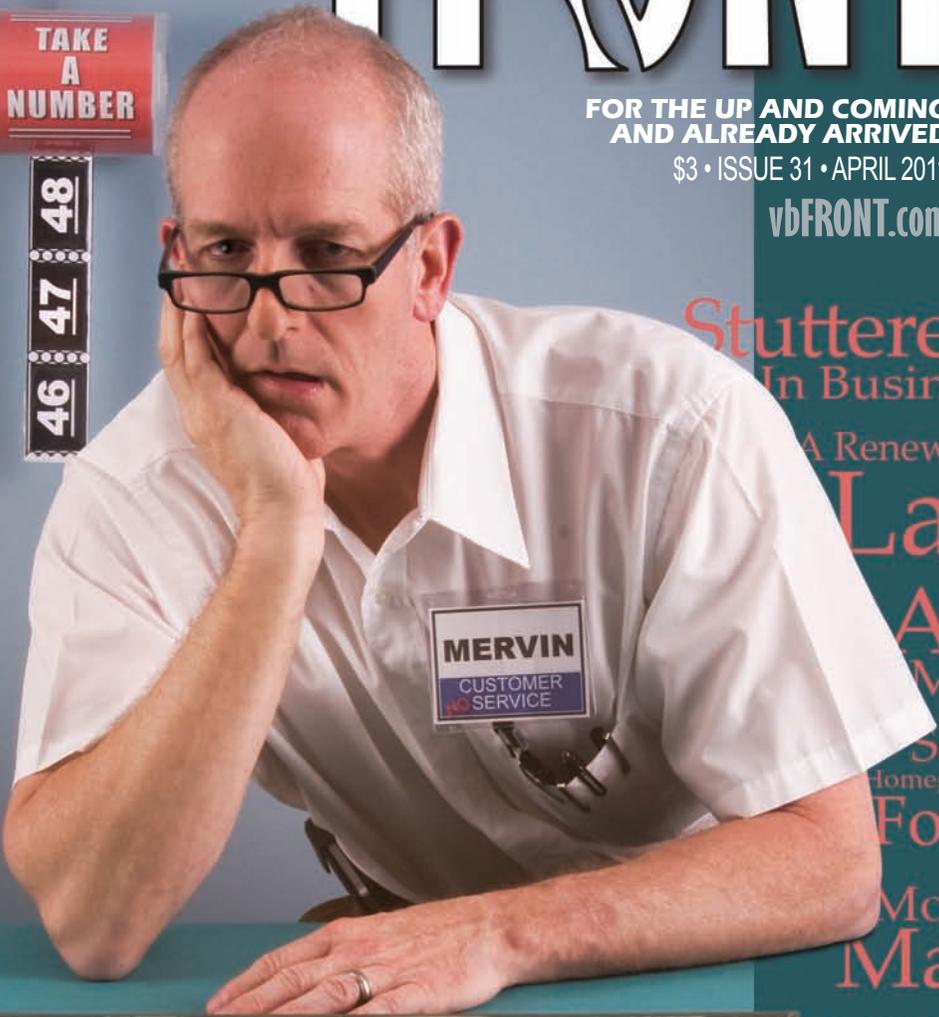
Food

Movie

Man

Civil War

Stories



COMPLAINT DEPT

Customer Service

Frank Martin,
Martin Research

NEW FACE AT VALLEY BANK, OLD HAND AT VALLEY BANKING.

Steve Turner

Steve Turner is Vice President, Private Wealth Manager with Valley Wealth Management Services, Inc., a non-bank subsidiary of Valley Bank.

From a recent conversation, here are thoughts of our new associate and 16 year financial services veteran.

Valley Bank's commitment to my community and its singular focus on the people and businesses of the Roanoke Valley is important to me as a valley native. Our Private Wealth Management services ensure my client's decisions are made locally by people who know our market and our unique financial needs. We simply listen better.

As a graduate of Virginia Tech with 16 years of financial services experience, I have learned the value of solid ethics and patience during difficult economic times.

I am an avid advocate for my clients and believe in the value of building successful financial life plans. My greatest enjoyment is helping clients achieve peace of mind knowing their financial future is secure.

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In an age when just about anybody with a computer can scream his complaint about whatever's on his mind from the highest Internet mountain to a worldwide audience, it was more than a little surprising that when we issued a readers call for compliments and complaints recently, we got barely a nibble.

The issue was customer service, this month's cover story by Susan Ayers, and we were looking for personal stories of outstanding service or the lack of same that gives some businesses a bad name. We picked up a few of the former, mostly self-serving testimonials from workers at specific businesses and we even got a couple of complaints. The negative responses were all followed by, "but you can't use my name with this."

The Internet has created the age of the drive-by, anonymous complaint that can be as ugly as the complainer imagines it in his wildest fantasy because he's not named and not responsible. But these words will not appear within these pages or on our Website.

Our policy is to publish signed letters from readers on a variety of subjects, so long as those letters are not slanderous or libelous (protecting the writer and us), are factual, and don't engage in low-level use of our language. We want, in short, intelligent, fair conversation, not talk radio/TV. And we want to protect free speech. Those who insist upon anonymity are giving away their First Amendment right to free speech without so much as a whimper.



Tom Field



Dan Smith

““”

Spoon soup away from you

— Page 19

“Power To The People”

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

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on a new day.**

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DEPARTMENTS

8

What's Being Done About CUSTOMER SERVICE

TRENDS

- etiquette & protocol 18
- business dress 20
- workplace advice 22

FINANCIAL FRONT 23

LEGAL FRONT 24

WELLNESS FRONT 28

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT 31

DEVELOPMENT FRONT 34

RETAIL FRONT 36

SENIOR FRONT 39

EDUCATION FRONT 42

CULTURE FRONT 46

REVIEWS & OPINIONS

- dan smith 50
- tom field 51
- letters 53
- book reviews 54

FRONT'N ABOUT 57

ECONOMIC INDICATORS 59

EXECUTIVE PROFILE 60

FRONTLINES

- career front 62
- front notes 66



Green Culture

Page 34



Movie Man

Page 39



Middle School CAFÉ

Page 44

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by Greg Vaughn Photography.

Valley Business FRONT

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

Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Editor	Dan Smith dsmith@vbFRONT.com (540) 556-8510
Account Executive	Jane Dalier (540) 239-2610
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

Departmental Contacts

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

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

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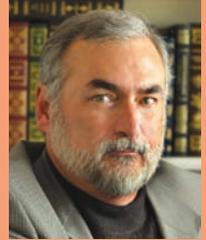
Susan M. Ayers



Anne Giles Clelland



Gene Marrano



Michael Miller



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 68.

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



Tom Field



Kathleen Harshberger



Andrew Hudick



Janeson Keeley



David Perry



Anne Piedmont



Erin Pope



Laura Purcell



Dan Smith



Greg Vaughn



Alison Weaver

2010 / 11 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)
- Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)
- Nicholas C. Conte** Woods Rogers (Legal)
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- Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)
- 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.

“ I make them laugh; I make them cry; I've even had students throw up

— Page 42

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



Greg Vaughn Photography

As head of Martin Research in Roanoke, Frank Martin knows customer service. He provides strategic information to diverse businesses. He also knows how to play the role of a disinterested customer complaint agent—serving as this edition's FRONTcover model.

Serving the customer >

Executive Summary: *Customer service remains at the very core of many businesses. It is often done badly, but there are many exceptions. Here's a look at how it's done well and how you can emulate that success.*

by Susan M. Ayers

What's Being Done About CUSTOMER CUSTOMER

The service customers expect is one thing. The service they experience is often something entirely different.

Three percent of consumers worldwide say their customer service expectations are always met and more than half (51 percent) say expectations are met sometimes, rarely or never according to Accenture, a management consulting company.

Providing exemplary customer service can be complex. More and more companies are employing outside resources for assistance.

A center at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business that focuses on designing and improving service systems



Tech's Robin Russell: "Quality involves making sure that the business has a product that meets customer needs."

opened in 2007. The Center for Services Science, Quality and Innovation (SSQI) takes an approach that combines an understanding of business processes, customer needs and emerging technologies.

"The science part applies methods of efficiency and insures processes are set up correctly," says Business Information Technology Professor and Director of SSQI, Robin Russell. "If the process isn't customer friendly, that's where the



science comes in. Quality involves making sure that the business has a product that meets customer needs and ways to measure that must be set up. Innovation involves finding what the customer wants.”

The knowledge gained is used in “trying to pull together people, processes and customer service, not impede it ... More and more customers are calling for assistance with customer service,” says Russell.

The changing customer

“People are more time pressured and impatient. Whatever the type of company, power has shifted,” says Sandy Smith,

“”

It starts at the top. The company sets the stage for what is to happen. It is so important to invest in good employees on the front line.

—Robin Russell, business information technology professor, Virginia Tech



Consultant Sandy Smith: “Whatever the type of company, power has shifted.”

Dan Smith

“”

In some ways customers have changed. There is more information out there. Customers want to be well taken care of.

—Terri Curro, branch manager, HomeTown Bank

“”

Companies who really differentiate themselves do continuous customer service training.

—Sandy Smith, Ph.D., corporate trainer, Sandy Smith Seminars



HomeTown Bank's Terry Curro and Bill Jones: "Customers want to be well taken care of. It's not that scientific."

Dan Smith

a corporate trainer with clients in this region and an internationally recognized expert in customer service. "Customers can now find information online that the company has released." (Smith is FRONT editor Dan Smith's brother.)

Says Hometown Bank Branch Manager Terri Curro, "In some ways, the customers have changed. There is more information out there. Customers want to be well taken care of. It's not that scientific. We get to know customers. We know what's going on in their lives. We look for products that will take care of them.

"We spend a few weeks with [new employees]. They spend time with other seasoned bankers. If you take care of your customer, everything else happens."

Technology's impact

The greatest impact on customer service is technology. "Speed has become the new competitive advantage in most business lines," emphasizes Smith.

This is evidenced by the streamlined processes where customers call and go including grocery stores that offer self-checkout and several express lines.



LG's Nancy May: "We post our quality outcomes online."

Dan Smith

In the travel industry, automated kiosks allow customers to confirm their reservations at airport terminals or in hotel lobbies. At hotels, guests use a lobby kiosk to check in.

Reliance on the hotel front desk has diminished because of technology. Even if hotels don't have the kiosk, online reservations leave clerks the task of validating credit cards and confirming that the person who made the reservation is the person showing up.

Patients visiting the emergency room at any of the LewisGale Regional Health System's four hospitals (LewisGale Medical Center, Alleghany Regional Hospital, Montgomery Regional Hospital and Pulaski Community Hospital) no longer have to guess how long it will be before they receive care. A new program publicizes the hospital's average wait times via text message, electronic banner ads and the Internet. Wait times also appear on digital billboards on main highways.

Wait times are tracked using a statistical tracker system in the emergency room, transferring data to an RSS feed. This feed automatically displays and updates the wait time every 30 minutes

The new program is designed for patients with relatively minor medical conditions.

"We post our quality outcomes online so someone can go to our Web site and compare how we're doing to other hospitals," says Nancy May, LG's marketing vice president. "This is another way we can provide up front information to patients."



Dan Smith

Carilion's Peggy Sowers: "Patients have become savvy about their health."

“”

You go most places because you want to go. When you come to the hospital, you don't want to be there. We have the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. It is important to make people as comfortable as possible, understand their needs and keep the communication lines open.

—Peggy Sowers, director of guest and volunteer services, Carilion

Carilion has eased the task for patients navigating the health system with Electronic Medical Records and My Chart. The new Electronic Medical Record (EMR) brings the patient's medical records together in one place, providing doctors at all Carilion facilities easy access to information. That leads to better care coordination.

My Chart allows patients to access and take part in compiling their own health records, communicate with their physician, receive test results, request medication refills and office appointments. The service is not yet available throughout the Carilion system.

"We're in such a technological age that people want information faster," says Carilion Director of Guest and Volunteer Services Peggy Sowers. "Patients have become savvy about their health."

Some companies try to use technology for the sole purpose of saving money, resulting in poor customer service. An example of this would be using an infinite phone tree, making it difficult for the customer to have the opportunity to speak with a representative. Dollars are better spent by businesses on making it easier for the customer to do business with them, insists Frank Martin.

Personal service

If the situation calls for it, offer flexibility when talking with customers. Consider the situation as a whole and try to find a realistic solution. “We try to look at people individually and use a little common sense,” says HomeTown Bank Retail Credit Administrator Bill Jones.

“The fact that their credit score is a little lower doesn’t automatically mean they aren’t creditworthy. We take into consideration what happened, such as a death in the family, resulting in reduced income. Depending on the situation, we may be able to give more time or restructure the loan. We have a very loyal client base.”

Balancing tech and service

Orvis had a double play recently.

ConsumerReports.org included Orvis in its Top 10 Companies in November. CR reported, “For customer service the old-fashioned way, shoppers can call a toll-free number and speak to a human being without

““

We deal with the individual and try to help people. It’s not just a computer reviewing an application. Each case is reviewed on an individual basis.

—Bill Jones, retail credit administrator, HomeTown Bank



**The call center at Orvis in Roanoke County:
“The traditional call center is more transactional.
That does not build relationships and doesn’t
build loyalty.”**

Susan Ayers



The core value is that the customer is always right. Give the customer what [he's] asking for. It's a matter of doing the right thing.

—Mike Rigney,
VP of Operations,
Orvis



There are all sorts of places online to post bad publicity. Businesses are having to be more proactive about what they do about it.

—Frank Martin, CEO,
Martin Research Inc.

wading through an arcane automated menu system. Alternatively, Orvis offers live-chat with support staff, e-mail queries, and a guaranteed response time of two hours or less."

E-tailing Group's Mystery Shopping study of 100 e-retail sites recognized Orvis for having the highest score. "It's personal and friendly service that sets us apart," says Orvis Vice President of Operations Mike Rigney. "Social media lends itself to the style of service Orvis has—building relationships with customers one by one.

"The traditional call center is more transactional. That does not build relationships and doesn't build loyalty. Having connectivity helps the relationship. It's a sense from a people standpoint. What I say is important because I'm building that relationship. It's a shopping experience. We want to costantly exceed customers' expectations."

A vehicle for complaint

"There used to be no vehicle for customers to express displeasure," says Frank Martin, CEO of Martin Research in Roanoke. "Now, there are all sorts of places online to post bad publicity."

It is important for a business to be in tune with its customers and establish a listening device, Martin insists. "One way to improve customer service for the customer is to have a blog to use as a way to educate customers. Let them add comments, negative or not."

Employees first, consumers second

Studies indicate that employee job satisfaction affects customer loyalty. And it isn't all about compensation and benefits. The majority of employees want and need more. Vital are regular training sessions that include customer service.

"Teaching customer service is a regular part of our meetings and training," says Virginia Utility Protection Service (VUPS) Director of Human Resources Bruce Wood. "In one way it's

Virginia U
ection Se



Utility
Service, Inc

PS



Susan Ayers

serious and in another uplifting because we learn something about how to handle a particular customer. We record every call and can go back and listen to calls to learn how the call could have been handled better. We do silent monitoring to help be better at what we do.”

Delta Dental of Virginia in Roanoke was recently named to a list of Best Places to Work in Virginia. It has also been recognized by Purdue University as a call center of excellence and is in the certification process to be one of the top 100 call centers in the country.

The company—a not-for-profit—has 40 percent of the market share in Virginia, according to executives, and reports a commitment to oral health of children. Delta Dental supported the purchase of the original Bigmouth in 2006 at the Science Museum of Western Virginia and its makeover for the Healthy Bodies Gallery.

“Turnover for the call center represents five percent yearly,” says Delta Dental Director of Human Resources Kathy Claytor. “Nationally, the average turnover rate is 30 percent. We’ve got great leadership in the call center. Barbara Burton holds regular staff meetings to include motivational topics. They’re on the front line. She makes sure they have the tools they need.”

Claytor says 80 percent of claims go through the system without intervention and the company is looking for improvement in that. The claims that require review “keeps the claims processors challenged and keeps the job

Bruce Wood: “We do silent monitoring to help be better at what we do.”

“”

Providing extraordinary customer relationships means folks supporting those on the front lines take the same approach on customer service as the folks interfacing with customers. Good customer service organizations understand that.

—Bruce Wood, HR director, Virginia Utility Protection Service

“”

Time has become really important. We have one click service for each service provided. Customers want that speed.

—Kathy Claytor,
Delta Dental of Virginia



Delta Dental's Claytor and Wayland

Susan Ayers

“”

It's all about value and service. You have to deliver on both. At one point, the customer would expect just one or the other. Not today.

—Charles Wayland,
VP of operations,
Delta Dental of Virginia

interesting for them,” says Claytor. “We pay 99.5 percent of the claims within 15 days. Associates are able to tie what they are doing into goals.”

Claytor adds, “We create a nurturing environment where [employees] own it. They're empowered to deliver service, move up and they have support around them that allows them to do that ... The focus is not on the number of calls daily. It's about being available to take the call and [showing] empathy. It's listening to the customer and meeting [his] needs. The answer speed is almost immediate.”

Major changes

Sandy Smith insists that communication is vital to success in customer service. Employees need to know about upcoming changes, how the changes affect them and training in how to implement the changes. They need to know how the organization is performing, its goals, their individual and if applicable, their team's role in meeting the goals, opportunities for improvement as well as the opportunity to celebrate their successes.

“When change happens, it impacts” the entire organization and its customers. “Employees need information. When they don't get information, they make it up,” says Smith. 



Service: In the Eye of the Beholder?

It's easy to determine which companies provide the best—and worst customer service, right? A quick Internet search will pull up a thousand ranking sources. But you want a credible source; therefore you go to the most reputable lists—the ones you're pretty confident will give you the most honest, objective assessments. Well... that's what we did. And the rankings—with rare exception—did not correlate. A few companies with great notoriety in 2010 show up on multiple lists. But for the most part, when you go to four of the most relied-upon customer service rankings—you get four different lists. Take a look below. See what you think. Our conclusion: the best indicator of customer service will ultimately (and always) come from one source: your personal experience.

—Tom Field

JD Power

"Champions" (partial)

Bass Pro Shops
Cadillac
Erie Insurance
Four Seasons Hotels
JetBlue Airways
Quicken Loans
Southwest Airlines
Sprint
US Cellular
Zappos

MSN Money

"10 Who Treat you Right"

Amazon
Trader Joe's
Netflix
Apple
FedEx
Publix
Southwest Airlines
UPS
Nordstrom
Marriott

"10 We Love to Hate"

AOL
Bank of America
Comcast
Sprint Nextel
Capital One
Dish Network
Time Warner Cable
Wells Fargo
Citibank
HSBC

Forrester

"Top 20 / CxPi ranking"

Barnes & Noble
Marriott
Hampton Inn
Amazon
Holiday Inn Express
Kohl's
JC Penney
Macy's
"a credit union"
BJ's Wholesale Club
Comfort Inn
Costco Wholesale
Hilton Hotels
eBay
Target
Lowe's
SunTrust Bank
Borders
Sam's Club
The Vanguard Group

CustomerServiceScoreboard.com

"Best 15"

Zappos
Kmart
Land's End
Charles Schwab
Kindle
LL Bean
Nintendo
Scottrade
Canon
Fisher Price
Discount Tire
JetBlue Airways
Netflix
Bed, Bath and Beyond
Earthlink

"Worst 15"

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Pioneer
Navigon
Facebook
Nero
Ubisoft
Ticketmaster
Hotmail
Roxio
BitDefender
Archos
FTD.com
Half.com
Google

Etiquette & Protocol

**Kathleen Harvey
Harshberger**

Executive Summary:

There are times—like when you're interviewing for a job—that knowing proper table manners can mean success or failure.

Eating: The basics >

"The world was my oyster, but I used the wrong fork!"

—Oscar Wilde

Dorothea Johnson, founder of The Protocol School of Washington once observed that "more business deals are done at the dining table than at the boardroom table. They may not sign on the dotted line, but you can be sure the decisions are made there."

Today, college graduates and aspiring executives are routinely invited for lunch or dinner as part of the interview process. This is not because the interviewer thinks they are hungry. It is a test. If prospects cannot conduct themselves comfortably at the table and demonstrate a rudimentary knowledge of dining skills, then what else are they lacking?

Recently, I conducted a protocol dinner at Radford University, one of a handful of universities in Virginia that offers its students dining skills training. Students, dressed in their "Interview best," enjoyed a four-course meal and I answered questions throughout the meal.

There is a teachable moment here. It is a wonderful thing to see how earnest these young people are, as they balance holding a knife and fork properly with making pleasant conversation, while seeking answers to some of the fine points of dining etiquette:

- How do I seat myself? You seat yourself from the right side of the chair.

*Some things are worth preserving...
So are your final wishes.*



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- When do I pick up my napkin? Wait for your host to pick up her napkin.
- What if I don't like the food? You're in the grownup world now. Try everything unless you are allergic or have dietary restrictions. If you have allergies or dietary restrictions, it is your responsibility to tell your hosts ahead of time.
- How do I eat soup? Spoon soup away from you.
- Can I cut all my food at once? Cut and eat only one piece of food at a time.
- What if someone talks to me while I'm eating? Take small bites to make swallowing easier.
- How do I eat a roll properly? Break a bite-sized piece, butter it, and then eat it.
- How do I excuse myself from the table? Say, "Excuse me;" place your napkin on the chair, and leave.
- What if a person has something stuck in his teeth? Discreetly let him know.
- Can I touch up my make-up at the table? No, that should be done in private.
- When is the meal over? When your host places the napkin back on the table.
- What's the difference between the American and European style of eating? Ah, that's another column. 



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Mitzi Hartwell

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Cuffs and pleats >

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

It is a matter of preference for both men and women, but there are some guidelines that help you choose which is best for you.

Have you noticed that cuffs and pleats on trousers seem to be disappearing lately? Flat-front trousers are showing up everywhere and are favored by young men.

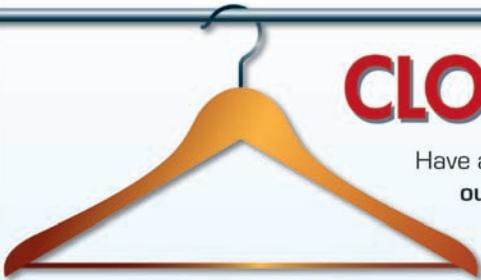
Fashion is going through a period where pants are cut slimmer. In fact, the whole silhouette has a trim line, making the fullness of a pleated trouser look dated. Cuffs are affected, too. When pants are cut flat-front and slim at the ankle, they don't drape over the foot well, and often are cut shorter and left un-cuffed.

You might ask, "Why do we even need cuffs?"

Cuffs evolved out of necessity, as a way to keep the trouser hem clean and dry. They were not a designer fashion trend and no one is credited with inventing trouser cuffs. Today they are simply a fashion option.

Kyong C. Yun, widely known as "KC," from Sunshine Cleaner on Campbell Avenue in Roanoke, has plenty of experience with cuffs. She says, "Most ladies' trousers do not have a cuff right now. When customers ask for cuffs, they generally want them one inch to one and a half inches, with some asking for two-inch cuffs. Men ask for cuffs all the time. Tall men look good in cuffs, but I recommend to shorter men that they wear trousers without cuffs to make the leg look longer."

It boils down to a matter of personal preference. Cuffs complement both pleated and flat-front trousers. True, cuffs can make the wearer look shorter by visually shortening the trouser line and pleats can make the wearer look heavier



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by widening the silhouette. This may be why women wear pleated trousers only when fashion dictates—pleats add fullness to the figure and no woman wants to look wider unnecessarily.

However, pleated pants with a cuff evoke a sense of the classic and traditional. Some suits simply look best with a pleated trouser and cuffs. Mature men and those wearing larger sizes often wear pleated pants because they are cut generously and, therefore, are more comfortable.

Fashion mirrors economic and social changes worldwide. Today's emphasis is on youth, fitness, and conservation of resources. The uncluttered lines of an uncuffed, flat-front trouser reflect that attitude.

So wear what you like—cuffed, uncuffed, pleated, flat-front—just make sure it looks good on you and you look presentable for the office. 




ON POINT

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It's a matter of defined goals >

Dear Getting a Grip: *I was recently selected to head a non-profit organization by the board of directors and the vote was split (a little more than half wanted me, I'm told). From what I have been able to learn about the organization, the board of directors has been split and primarily ineffective on nearly every issue. Finances are a shambles, public image is poor, and strong leadership is desperately needed at the director's level. Problem is, I don't have solid backing. What should I do?*

Dear Split: Whether taking on a leadership position at a non-profit or a for-profit, whether you're leading a start-up with no structure, an established corporation with a proven business model, or a well-meaning organization that's floundering, the place to start is the same. To quote old wisdom, popularized by Stephen R. Covey in the *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, "Begin with the end in mind."

What did you see was possible for this non-profit organization that called you to accept the position of leading it? When you resign this position for the next opportunity, what do you want to be able to say you've been able to make come true for the organization? That's your to-do list and there's your timeline.

Getting a Grip: Clarity in your personal vision, and how you're going to contribute that vision to any organization's mission will make you your own first, and best, backer. From that place of strength, rather than from one of doubt about what to do you, you are much more likely to accomplish your personal vision, build consensus around your leadership, and to achieve the ultimate goal—backing for the organization itself. 

Need to start "Getting a Grip" on a personal problem at work? E-mail your question to grip@handshake2o.com.

Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:

When your support is less than unanimous from the organization's brass, here's what to do.

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Zeroing in on the tax rate >

Executive Summary:

Enjoy the current tax rates while you can (and take advantage of them).

By Andrew Hudick

Pundits abound, but their omniscience failed. Pull up a few financial advice columns from the summer and fall of 2010 and note the certainty of every author that tax rates would increase. The rates had to rise for all of the reasons we can repeat today. The only question was, "How high will tax rates go in order to balance the budget and cover the massive debt service costs of your Federal and State Governments."

But, the tax rates on income did not increase from last year to this year (yet). In fact, for most of us making the same wage in 2011 as we made in 2010, the total income and employment tax we will pay will decline. President Obama signed a tax law in December of 2010 that decreased taxes for most Americans.

My thought is that (soon) tax rates will never be this low again. In planning a tax column, I pulled a few columns from last year and see that the experts suggested some of the following:

- Accelerate income into the current tax year,
- Take your bonus this calendar year (rather than next),

- Defer some discretionary business expenses to next year,
- Take your capital gains this year while rates are low,
- Convert to a Roth IRA from your traditional IRA (as rates will never be this low again),
- Add a Roth 401k feature to the company retirement plan,
- Massage your non-deferred investment model by taking gains this year and profits next year.

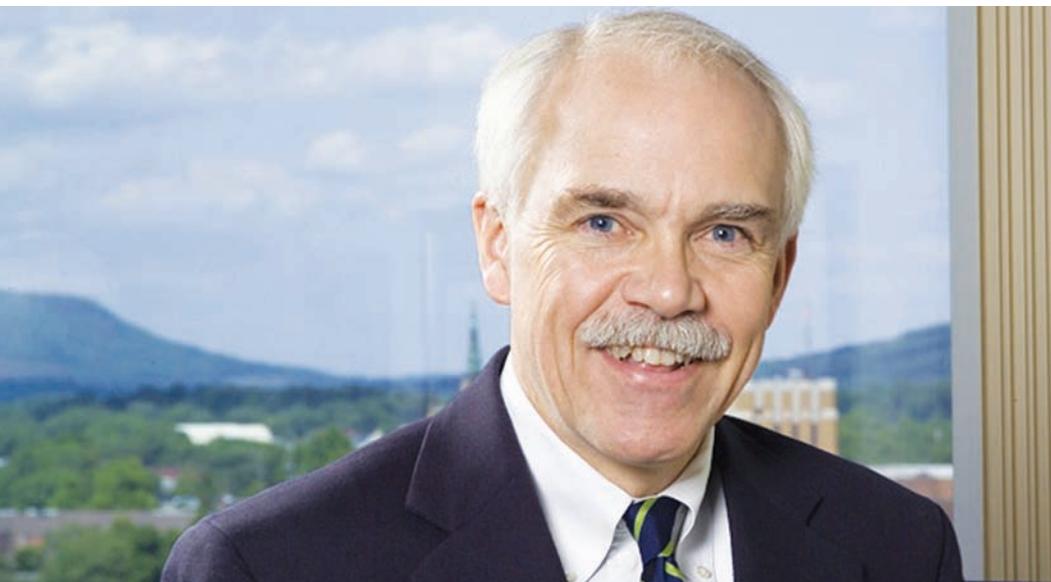
The above is the list of suggestions from the advisors who wrote this type of column from July 2010 thru October 2010. Maybe these "experts" would be correct this year. They were not correct last year.

My own crystal ball does not always work but I know history repeats and change will occur. I believe we will look back on our cost of living and wish for these tax rates on income in the not too distant future. Having just spent two weeks in Beijing and Hong Kong, I saw firsthand how spoiled and wasteful we are as a country. There is no excess in other parts of the world.

My tax advice can be reduced to the simple thought that we should save more of our income now while income tax rates are low and our income is relatively high. It is possible that in addition to seeing income tax rates increase in the near future, we will also see our individual income level out or decline. This land of plenty may experience some belt tightening so plan ahead while you have extra. 

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Webster Day: "We saw common needs."

Helping community banks weather the storm >

Executive Summary:

New federal regulations are among the challenges for smaller banks that don't have massive in-house legal departments. The law firm Spilman Thomas & Battle has added a department to help.

By Alison Weaver

As the banking industry regroups after the mortgage lending crisis, community banks are facing daunting challenges.

In response, Spilman Thomas & Battle, a West Virginia-based law firm with a good-sized branch in Roanoke, has developed the Community Banking Group.

"Banks in general over the last two to three years have seen tough and stressful times," says Roanoke attorney Webster Day. "We saw common needs and felt we could put together a specialized group to address those needs."

The Community Banking Group encompasses more than 20 lawyers with experience in a broad range of specializations including employment law, bankruptcy, construction and estate law.

The CBG launched at the end of 2010 and is headed by Timothy Moore, an attorney with Spilman's Winston-Salem, N.C., office.

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During a meeting with the co-chairmen of a banking and finance department, Moore says, "We realized that economic reforms, regulatory reforms and the economy itself" were taking a toll on smaller banks. "They'd had to retrench and re-examine where they are and where they are going. They needed help to address those needs."



Timothy Moore: "The \$100 million range is the sweet spot for this group."

The CBG is specifically designed for banks with assets under \$2 billion that are locally owned and operated and generally don't cross state lines. "Banks larger than that typically have in-house counsel," Moore notes. "The \$100 million range is the sweet spot for this group."

Moore points to the S.A.F.E. Act as an example of new legislation that has smaller banks scrambling to interpret and comply with its

guidelines. The Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 requires banks that originate residential mortgage loans to register all employees in a federal database. Registration began on Jan. 31, and, "It's not a cheap process to go through the registration," Moore says.

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FRONT411

After launching the CBG, the firm began sending a newsletter to banking clients with updates on regulations, compliance and legislation pending in general assemblies.

A newsletter interview with John Kilby, president of Bank of Fincastle, captures the mood of some community bankers. He is quoted as saying, "I fear that the increased regulation and other forces may make community banks a rarity in 10 years. These added regulations are making it expensive to do business."

Since being founded in 1864, Spilman Thomas & Battle has expanded to Virginia, Pennsylvania and North Carolina, selecting cities in the Mid-Atlantic Inland Basin that have similar economies. "We're not in Richmond; we're in Roanoke. We're not in Charlotte; we're in Winston-Salem," Moore says. "Part of our model is that we do a lot of our background work [such as accounting and billing] in West Virginia. The cost of living is lower, so our rates are lower."

Community banking groups are not a phenomena sweeping the nation. Day and Moore say they've heard of only one or two other law firms with community banking groups in the country. "Maybe we're innovative," Moore says. 



I fear that the increased regulation and other forces may make community banks a rarity in 10 years. These added regulations are making it expensive to do business.

—John Kilby,
Bank of Fincastle

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The business person's speech >

Executive Summary:

Professionals with speech problems face a difficult task, but help is available. Just ask Roanoke College's Gerald McDermott.

By David Perry

More than 68 million people worldwide stutter, according to the Stuttering Foundation. That's about one percent of the world's population. The numbers are similar in the United States, where about three million Americans have the communication disorder.

In a business world where image is frequently everything, it's not a stretch to imagine that stuttering can hamper one's professional life.

The Hollins Communications Research Institute (HCRI) in Roanoke County has helped more than 5,700 people with their stuttering problems. Roanoke College Professor of Religion Gerald McDermott has dealt with stuttering all his professional life as a school principal, professor and minister.

"It was always difficult, always frustrating," says McDermott of trying to teach with a

stutter. "There was lots of anxiety. I had to tell my classes sometimes to bear with me. I'd just have to slow down and I'd still block and stop on sounds that I couldn't get out of my mouth."

His description of stuttering sounds much like how people who suffer from depression describe their outlook and the disorder is dealt with powerfully in the current hit movie "The King's Speech."

"You feel like you're at the bottom of a pit," McDermott says. "The walls are perfectly smoothed and greased and there are no hand holds. There is nothing you can do to get out of that pit."

McDermott says even simple social interactions were challenging. "You feel humiliated because you're in public situations. The conversation turns to you, and you block, and everyone wonders, 'What's wrong with this guy?'"

He adds, "Speaking on the phone is difficult for a stutterer because you can't control the conversation. As a school principal, I never liked parent assemblies because I had to make all these announcements."

McDermott went through the program at HCRI about 20 years ago and today considers himself "fluent," or able to control his stuttering. Today, in addition to teaching at Roanoke College, he also preaches at St. John's Lutheran in southwest Roanoke County.

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David Winship of Abingdon, a Washington County schools employee, was met with prejudice, ignorance and even a waiver from military service due to his stuttering.

"I simply could not talk," says Winship. "It affected my social life. One of the administrators at the school told one of my closest friends, 'Don't associate with him because stuttering is a sign of homosexuality.'

"I was deferred from military service because of my stuttering. I received a 4-F. They didn't want me trying to warn others about what was happening and not be able to say it."

Winship was one of the first people to take the HCRI program in the early 1970s and is fluent today. "I consider it the miracle in my life," he says. "It's allowed me to be in the schools. I do public speaking, I do storytelling. I'm a member of the Rotary Club and I give the invocation and blessing every week."

Shannon Taylor, a Dinwiddie County resident who works at DuPont in Richmond, knew her career couldn't advance until



Gerald McDermott of Roanoke College: "You feel like you're at the bottom of a pit. The walls are perfectly smoothed and greased and there are no hand holds. There is nothing you can do to get out of that pit."



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she gained control of her stuttering.

"I was an administrative assistant, and my stuttering had gotten so bad that I couldn't even answer my own phone," she says.

"I had to let all my calls go to voice mail. I tried to do as much as I could via e-mail.

"That was not good for my career. As an administrative assistant I was meeting and greeting and escorting our customers all the time, and I always had difficulty with introductions."

Taylor's stuttering became so bad that she couldn't order her own food at restaurants. While she took the HCRI course in 2003, she didn't stick with the follow-up and soon regressed. She returned in 2009 determined to succeed and further her career.

"I have an excellent work ethic, and I have

the support of my management and my coworkers, so they knew what I was capable of," she says. "I knew there was a barrier there until I got my speech under control."

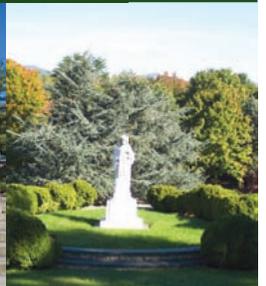
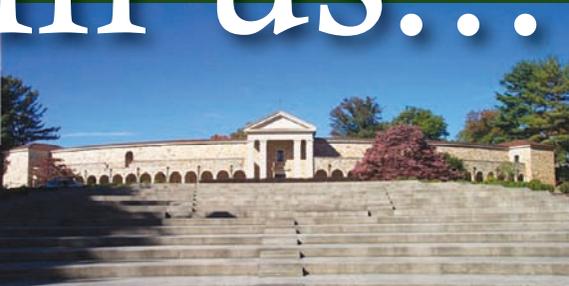
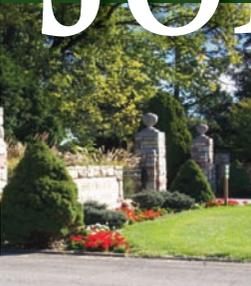
After completing the program for the second time, she started a national support group for stutterers that hosts conference calls several times a week. She also joined Toastmasters and sought new leadership opportunities at DuPont.

Says Taylor, "I wanted the folks that I work with, especially my management, to know that I was taking this seriously."

McDermott says, "Life for a stutterer is sometimes hell," especially when it hampers one's professional ambitions. But effective help is readily available.

Says Winship, "Fluency is wonderful." 

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Calling in the social
media cavalry >**Executive Summary:**

You already know social media is an important business tool. So, how do you get started in using it?

By Janeson Keeley

Social media is the Internet's version of word of mouth advertising. Like real life word of mouth, it can help or hurt you in business. Sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube allow people to express their opinions and share their experiences in real time to millions of people. This provides both potential benefits and pitfalls to businesses of all sizes.

Four social media specialists from this region answer frequently asked questions about the business use of social media:

Should my business be involved in social media? Patsy Stewart, owner of The Social BUZZ Lab, suggests, "Find out where your customers and competitors are. If they are on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, or YouTube,



Janeson Keeley

Dan Smith

you should be there, too." Stewart also advises, "Even if your business isn't involved in social media, it's important to monitor your online reputation. You want to know if someone is making negative comments about you. If you respond in a positive, proactive way, it can help your business. If you don't, it can do serious damage."

What does a social media consultant do? A consultant identifies social media strategies to help your business achieve its goals. Leslie Coty of Coty Connections notes that, "Working with a client can include setting up Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, developing and posting content, integrating social media with traditional media, analytics, branding, and blog consultation."



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Can't someone in my company run my social media campaign? "Unless a business is willing to have an employee make a commitment to a social media presence, it should outsource it," advises John Lusher, social media consultant and marketing director for Consolidated Construction Services. He warns, "If you use an employee, he needs to have experience setting up, evaluating, and managing a social media presence; not just be someone who is on Twitter and Facebook."

How can I measure the effectiveness of my social media campaign? Bonnie Cranmer, a partner with New Media Strategy Team, says, "Knowing the numbers tells the story. If a business wants to increase sales, what were the sales numbers before and after the campaign? If a non-profit wants to invite volunteers or hold a public input meeting, were the numbers of

inquiries/participation increased?"

Isn't social media just for kids? "No!" answers Leslie Coty. She observes that, "Social media is the biggest revolution I've seen in my lifetime. It has changed the way we communicate, the way we advertise, the way we learn, the way we do business. If its power is harnessed, it can have tremendous results for businesses."

If you're unsure about whether social media is right for your business, uncertain about how to use it, or unclear as to how it can fit into your existing marketing strategy, a social media consultant can help. If you don't know how to monitor your online reputation or how to best respond to customers' comments about you, a call to a social media consultant should be on your to-do list today. 

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Dan Smith

Exterior view of Breakell Inc. with solar panels (left).

Work Spaces



Stan Breakell: "Part of this whole initiative is to get people interested in it."

David Perry

Living the message >

Executive Summary:

At Breakell Inc. in Roanoke, it's not enough to preach green and to build green. You have to be green. And that means turning out the lights when you leave a room. Even when that room is the lobby.

By David Perry

"You can think about this building as a workspace, but also as a laboratory for all things renewable," says Stan Breakell. The headquarters of Breakell Inc. on Patterson Ave. in northwest Roanoke, is ground zero for innovation in the Roanoke Valley when it comes to sustainability.

Breakell Inc. has made its mark as a leader in green business: lowering a company's energy use and reducing its carbon footprint. Breakell's Patterson Ave. shop is the company's testing ground.

"We're a technology firm, really. We're the guinea pigs," says Breakell. "I don't want to

sell you something if we don't know what we're talking about. Part of what makes this fun is that we get to practice on ourselves."

But for Breakell, it's not just about how much clean energy a new solar panel can generate or how much money he can save by lowering the lights (including turning out lights in rooms that are empty of people, including the lobby). People are his primary asset.

"At the end of the day, it's the triple bottom line: people, planet and profit," says Breakell. "We're 100 percent ESOP (employee stock ownership plan), so whatever we save gets passed on to the employees."

Breakell doesn't rely on management fads or consultants to keep the employees happy, comfortable and productive. Their methods are much more high-tech. Carbon dioxide sensors monitor indoor air composition and adjust the amount of fresh air entering the building to keep employees awake and alert.

"The trick is to provide those creature comforts, but to do it intelligently and efficiently," says Breakell. "When that fresh air is coming in, it's coming in at the outside temperature. Energy has to

be used to bring it to 68 degrees.”

Low VOC (volatile organic compounds) paint and carpets help to reduce noxious odors and reduce downtime when renovations are necessary. On the lower level, project managers and their assistants were placed in an open workspace with earth-friendly cradle-to-cradle (C2C) office furniture. Throughout the building, south-facing windows and skylights allow ambient light to enter the building.

Breakell uses energy saving as a team-building exercise. Saving energy starts at the top and is emphasized at every level.

“I’ve got to try to lead by example,” Breakell says. “I turn off my lights. My computer shuts off after three minutes like everyone else’s does. I drive a Prius and not a Lincoln Continental. Hopefully that kind of stuff does trickle down.”

Says Director of Sustainable Practices Nell Boyle, “We walk the talk. I think the camaraderie that comes with this is pretty awesome and people really have bought into it.”

“It’s part of the culture,” adds Breakell.

As Breakell’s headquarters becomes more and more energy efficient, Boyle and Breakell keep the employees abreast of progress with motivational e-mails. The company’s goal is to be 100 percent energy

self-sufficient, a goal achieved largely through the use of solar panels installed in the rear of the building and a computer system that reports energy consumption in an easy-to-read graphical display.

“Part of this whole initiative is to get people interested in it,” says Breakell. The energy consumption meters “look like speedometers—even a CEO can figure it out.”

As of February, the building was generating 43.2 percent of the electricity it was using. Come summer, the company will sell power back to AEP.

“The point is that if you’re going to try to have a net zero building, you have to try everything,” says Breakell. “It doesn’t make any sense to put a bunch of solar panels out and still have a refrigerator in the basement from 1950 or an old air conditioner with no energy management policies.”

Up next for Breakell is a wind turbine. Breakell says Roanoke’s industrial zoning laws don’t specify a setback or height restriction, so he’s going to hoist one up and see how well he can do on his bluff on the north side of the Roanoke River.

Boyle says the results of Breakell Incorporated’s energy saving plans have been positive “The building is much more comfortable than it was three years ago,” she says. “We continue to improve it.” 



David Perry

The roof is alive with plantings, which help seal in heating and cooling.



David Perry

Solar panels behind the building.

Love, respect and safe food >

Executive Summary:

A new bill could give the FDA powers that could shut down small, local farm operations that give you fresh, local—and safe—produce.

By Laura Purcell

In August 2010, an outbreak of salmonella in eggs from one Iowa company, Wright County Egg, affected people in 14 states and involved a recall of more than half a billion eggs. In November, a second salmonella outbreak, this time in eggs from Cal-Maine Foods in Ohio, recalled 290,000 eggs in eight states.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates 2,000 people got sick from salmonella

poisoning. This isn't the first massive recall of produce in recent years. In 2006, it was spinach, in 2008, tomatoes, and in 2009, peanuts. That doesn't even cover smaller recalls, which have included processed foods, medicine, and pet foods.

When the U.S. Senate's S. 510, otherwise known as the Food Safety Modernization Act, began to make its way through Congress, many in the food politics movement celebrated. "The bill would, for the first time, give the FDA, which oversees 80 percent of the nation's food, the authority to test widely for dangerous pathogens and to recall contaminated food," wrote Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, and Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, in a New York Times op-ed. "The agency would finally have the resources and authority to prevent food safety problems, rather than respond only after people have become ill."

No one wants to consume food that is unsafe, but a group of food producers is



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very concerned about possible ramifications of S.510, which was voted through Congress and signed into law by Barack Obama on January 4, 2011. Many small and mid-size farmers, who sell their wares locally, are concerned that the FDA's new power may close them down.

"A farmer with a small operation might profit \$10,000 in a year, if they're lucky. The FDA inspector tells them to upgrade to a 'safe' facility, which may cost \$75,000 or more, then that farm goes out of business," Brent Cochran, manager of the Grandin Village and West End Community Markets in Roanoke, says.

For example, an industrial egg farm, producing millions of eggs each month, requires different monitoring for safety violations than an individual with a small farm who raises hens and collects eggs to sell by the mere dozens at a farmer's market.

Kathy O'Hara, proprietor of Runner-Bean.com, a Web-based farmer's market that operates



Dan Smith

Kathy O'Hara: "The optimal solution is to know your farmer."



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Brent Cochran: "The average pepper in the grocery store has been handled by over two dozen people."

Dan Smith

in the Roanoke Valley, sees a silver lining to the small farmer's dark clouds. "Since the bill passed with the Tester-Hagan [amendment] intact, I think our small farmers will not be affected," says O'Hara. The Tester-Hagan amendment attempts to enforce stricter guidelines for large corporate food producers, thus protecting smaller farmers.

Both Cochran and O'Hara agree that the best way to support the local economy and have access to safe, fresh food is to buy from local producers.

"The optimal solution," O'Hara says, "is to know your farmer." Cochran

concur. "If the item can be produced locally, then that's where I get it."

"Trust doesn't miraculously protect you from bacteria, and salmonella doesn't care about my relationship with our farmers," Cochran says. "But the average pepper in the grocery store has been handled by over two dozen people. One person doesn't wash his hands, touches the pepper, you eat it raw, and there you go."

"When we buy directly from farmers we know, that same pepper has been handled by one person, the guy selling it to you. And it's most often handled with love and respect," Cochran said. 

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Tony Stavola: “You have to hear what you don’t want to hear ... It’s great when people care enough to complain.”

Dan Smith

The last picture show >

Executive Summary:

Carilion family physician Tony Stavola has used his penchant for diplomacy in a peace-making role for the embattled Grandin Theatre board of directors.

By Erin Pope

The controversy trailing the historic Grandin Theatre throughout the past two years proves how deeply attached the people of Roanoke are to their favorite institutions.

For some residents, voluble concerns regarding management—or mismanagement—have long overshadowed the Grandin’s reputation as a destination for artsy new-release films which might be too quirky for nearby multiplexes.

Dr. Tony Stavola, the Grandin Theatre Foundation Board chairman, says he

understands the concerns voiced by so many people in the region over the firing of popular general manager Jason Garnett, who is now running Shadowbox Theater in downtown Roanoke.

Stavola, a longtime resident of Raleigh Court and Grandin Theatre patron for years, spends considerable time thinking of ways in which he can energetically tackle the new image challenges facing the theater.

Stavola has watched the theater go through “many reiterations” since he moved from New York to the Roanoke area with his wife, Diane, and their two children in the early 1980s. Most residents of Raleigh Court, the leafy, tranquil neighborhood surrounding the Grandin, have watched the building’s various transformations with curiosity.

Mill Mountain Theatre staged productions in the building before it moved to its downtown location, and the theater went from a closed facility to a resurrected art house with a striking façade after a successful fund-raising campaign to reopen it roughly a decade



Dan Smith

ago. Stavola was involved in those efforts, and attributes his interest to a longtime fondness for the theater and attachment to his neighborhood.

The list of movies Stavola has seen at the Grandin, a 1932-era theater that is the last of its kind in Roanoke, is countless. He fondly remembers taking his wife to see the classic "It Happened One Night," as well as the time he took his now-grown son, D.M., to see a matinee showing of "King Kong."

He says he appreciates how the theater is

a family destination, and wants to ensure that both classic films and kid-friendly flicks continue to pop up on the marquee. He points out that the Grandin is a prime post-dinner spot for dates, thanks to the plethora of restaurants within walking distance, and also wants to keep booking romantic comedies and more intellectual adult fare.

Stavola says the theater and its thriving adjacent businesses—many of which owe their success to the anchor of the Grandin—enjoy a "symbiotic relationship with each other. The Grandin is an anchor that brings

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and keeps people here, and we all help each other stay economically viable.”

Stavola’s career as a primary care physician with Carilion has helped him in his role as the board’s diplomatic peacemaker. “Working with such a broad array of people gives you perspective on all demographics,” he says. “It teaches you how to be intuitive, and how to negotiate.”

The Grandin has set up focus groups, and Stavola has extended invitations to some of the board’s most ardent detractors. He says their criticism has been invaluable in making the theater a more harmoniously-operated business. “You have to hear what you don’t want to hear,” he emphasizes. “And, really, it’s great when people care enough to complain.”

The Grandin turns 80 years old next year,

and Stavola hints that the board is planning something celebratory. Roughly 200 people have Grandin memberships, and the perks range from free concessions, to parking passes, to free monthly films.

Stavola wants to work more with area colleges to bring cinematically-related lectures to the theater. “It’s no small feat to maintain visibility in this town,” he says. “Besides, you have to think of where the entire film industry might be in five years, and adapt to that.”

Stavola cites cultural phenomena like Netflix and other advances in streaming media technology which might prompt cinemaphiles to avoid the theatergoing experience.

“We’re striving to bridge every gap,” says Stavola, “Fortunately, I think the Grandin tends to attract people who just love to come to the movies.” 

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James Robertson: "I have great fear for my country, because we have not seen anything like this since the 1850s, leading up to the Civil War."

End of a chapter >

Executive Summary:

Bud Robertson has regaled us all with his Civil War tales for many years. His career at Virginia Tech is coming to an end. But the stories continue.

By Mike Miller

"In 1854, West Point graduate Ulysses S. Grant was forced to resign from the army because of an alleged drinking problem. For the next seven years he failed in every commercial pursuit, including trying to farm some family land using slaves. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Grant was working as an assistant in his father's leather shop.

"But by the close of 1863, forces under Grant's command had wrested control of the vital

Mississippi River from the Confederacy and paved the way for a union advance across the South to the Atlantic Ocean. Rumors of his alcoholism persisted, but President Lincoln's only comment was, 'Find out what brand of whiskey he drinks because I want to send a barrel to each of my generals.' Then Lincoln put him in command of all Union armies.

"Grant's unrelenting attacks eventually forced an end to the conflict in April, 1865. And yet, few people realize that Grant could not walk across the fields of his own military triumphs because he became physically ill at the sight of soldiers killed in battle."

Regular Friday morning listeners of WVTF public radio could not read the preceding paragraphs without hearing the distinctive voice of Dr. James "Bud" Robertson, Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at Virginia Tech and nationally-recognized Civil War expert. Little-known anecdotes pulled from the lives of Civil War personalities both great and small are the hallmark of Robertson's teaching methods.

Although admittedly an expert on the Civil War period, Robertson rather describes himself as a "social historian." "It's not about names and dates," he says. "It's about people. It's about the emotions behind their decisions and actions. History is the study of human beings, the most unpredictable of all God's creatures."

Robertson's ability to evoke emotion in his listeners, whether students in his regular 9 a.m. class or a national television audience, is what makes him such an effective and sought-after speaker. "I make them laugh; I make them cry; I've even had students throw up in class when we discuss Civil War medicine and battlefield wounds," he says.

After decades using his Civil War knowledge to carry the Virginia Tech banner, Robertson will formally retire from his post at the end of the current semester. But that just

means he won't have an office in the university. In addition to leading the Commonwealth's sesquicentennial observances of the Civil War, he is working feverishly to publish a collection of his radio essays, edited together with period photographs restored by National Geographic Society. The book is scheduled to be available in October. Among his other projects is a three-volume seminal work editing the recently discovered diary of an insider in Jefferson Davis' government.

A Danville native, who was teaching Southern History and Culture in Montana before moving to southwest Virginia, Robertson enjoys traveling by rail across the country. He and his wife plan to make some rail trips after his retirement, and the country boy admits that although the rural mountains of Virginia have great beauty, "I think I'd like to try living in a city for a while, just to see what it's like."

Robertson's skill and knowledge provided him with numerous professional opportunities over the years, but, "deciding to come to Virginia Tech, and then later deciding to stay with the university were the best decisions I ever made," he says. His greatest joy has been in giving VT students, who he believes "are a cut above the rest," a respect for the past. And such a respect is critical to future leaders, he believes.

"Contrary to popular belief, democracy is the most fragile of human institutions," says Robertson. "It can only survive through continuous compromise which the present political environment is attempting to eliminate. I have great fear for my country, because we have not seen anything like this since the 1850s, leading up to the Civil War."

"Any culture which fails to understand its past, will not have a future," says Robertson. "That's why history is important." 

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Kids working in music class.

all photos: David Perry

CAFÉ is not just for food >

Executive Summary:

Good things are cooking after school in a small building off Cove Rd. in northwest Roanoke.

It's called CAFE, but it's not a place to eat—it's an after-school enrichment program offered by Kingdom Life Ministries International. CAFE, which stands for "Cultural Arts for Excellence," offers middle schoolers with an interest in the arts a chance to explore that interest while providing homework help, mentoring and life skills. Students are referred to the program by guidance counselors, school principals and teachers.

By David Perry

The goal of CAFE is to be a "community



Students in computer lab.



Students doing homework.

learning center that provides programs and services to nurture and inspire the community through the arts,” says Lenai Clegg, a local small business owner and CAFE project director.

CAFE opened its doors this past summer for a week-long world music camp and kicked off its after-school program in September. On a typical day, more than two dozen middle schoolers arrive in the afternoon by school bus to participate in art, dance, drama or music, followed by homework. The final 15 minutes before the program closes are given to chores: sweeping, taking out the trash, and washing dishes.

Fridays are field trip days, with busing provided again by Roanoke City Schools. “We like to take the kids out into the community and expose them to a wide variety of activities,” says Clegg.

Kingdom Life Ministries acquired the CAFE building last year and renovated it. Today it features a multi-purpose room with mirrored walls for budding dancers, along with a computer lab, meeting rooms and a full kitchen, as well as an outdoor patio.

Allstate Insurance Company provided computers for the computer lab.

Clegg is the primary staff member, although CAFE uses paid instructors for daily arts programs, and about 25-30 volunteers for tutoring and mentoring. Clegg says CAFE plans to expand class offerings in the near future to include youth and adult dance, exercise, GED courses, parent classes and computer training.

Looking to the future, Clegg says she wants “to see this place alive from the time we open to the time we close—all day long, having classes that are making our community better, that people are growing from and enjoying.”

Fundraising is a challenge. “Since we’re new, there are so many things that need to be done,” she says. “It’s been hard to do everything on a limited budget,” Clegg says. “The kids love coming here. They look forward to it every day. I love seeing the kids realize their creative abilities and their thinking skills. It’s good seeing them being open to a lot of new things that other kids may not think are cool.” 



Civic Center from the outside.

Gene Marrano

A dramatic comeback for the RCC >

Executive Summary:

New management at the Roanoke Civic Center has "exceeded expectations" and is working toward turning an annual deficit into a profit.

By Gene Marrano

Despite lacking regular tenants in the Civic Center the Roanoke Civic Center complex is climbing towards self-sufficiency. The city-owned facility, which includes the Performing Arts Center and the Special Events Center exhibition hall, was turned over to a private management company more than two years ago and the exacting management has proved a good move for Roanoke.

Philadelphia-based Global Spectrum took on employees that used to work for the city and adapted a new, more aggressive attitude towards booking events. Concerts,

monster truck shows, circuses, the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, trade shows, high-profile comedians, Broadway plays on tour and yes, even hockey (Virginia Tech's club-level team plays its home games there) have helped keep some portion of the Civic Center in operation almost every night of the year, according to new General Manager Robyn Schon.

There have been failures, notably pro hockey's fizzle after a long run by the Roanoke Express and minor league basketball that never really caught on, but the successes are far more numerous.

No stranger to the Civic Center, where she has worked for the past 13 years, Schon was promoted to the top spot when Chris Connolly departed in March for another complex Global Spectrum manages in Des Moines, Iowa. Schon has worked in public facility management for more than two decades, with stops in her hometown of Greensboro, Detroit and Atlanta.

"The best thing he brought [was] the Global Spectrum philosophy," said Schon of Connolly, who came to Roanoke just



RCC Manager Robyn Schon is a singer-song writer: "The city has given us a lot of autonomy."

Gene Marrano

over two years ago. Connolly was also "flexible," when working deals to land concerts and other events. Schon commends Roanoke's hands off approach: "the city has given us a lot of autonomy."

Connolly, who says his departure from Roanoke was "bittersweet," feels the Roanoke team he helped put in place has "made some great strides. I would have liked to see some things through. We're starting to bear the fruits."

Connolly says the bi-weekly booking calls he participated in with other Global Spectrum arena and theater operators was a networking bonanza: "I can't tell you how many more shows we have booked because of that." The city has also allowed Global Spectrum to share some of the risk in co-promoting events, something it shied away from previously. That has led to "many more bookings," according to Connolly.

Last year's popular "Walking with Dinosaurs"




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Big events like an Alice Cooper concert are beginning to be the norm at the Roanoke Civic Center.

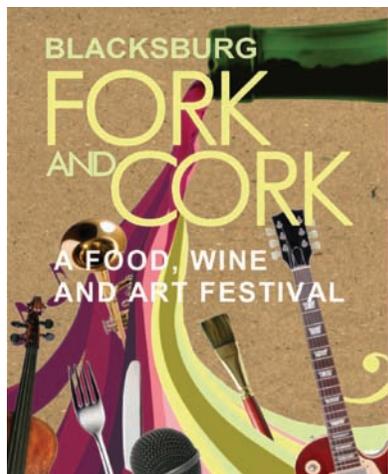
was a multi-day event that Schon championed and eventually landed here. Country music shows do well; James Taylor sold out his upcoming concert at the Performing Arts Center in less than two hours; and Cirque De Soleil's May extravaganzas should gross over \$1 million, according to Connolly.

Schon says the civic center has knocked about \$550,000 off a deficit that "was hovering" between \$1.2 and \$1.4 million for several years. "We will operate at a deficit of about \$440,000 this year, which does not include debt service and depreciation," says Schon.

Global Spectrum has targeted the end of its initial five-year contract with Roanoke as a

likely time when the subsidy paid by the city government could be eliminated, due to increased bookings and advertising revenue for onsite signs. "That's our commitment to the city," says Schon. A new ticketing service selected after a bidding process (with the naming rights sold to Hometown Bank) means additional revenue as well.

Eliminating the city subsidy on that schedule is not a sure thing: booking events for a price sensitive market like Roanoke can be hit or miss. Schon also says many music acts that draw well have pulled back from touring because of the sluggish economy. "It's not just this area," notes the sometimes singer-songwriter.



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The Civic Center and Global Spectrum would like to have professional hockey back, where they could pencil in 40 nights every year at the coliseum. They want a league with lower operating expenses, but enough star power to draw a sizable fan base.

"We are talking to people all the time about hockey," says Schon, who was in Atlanta when a minor league franchise got off the ground at the Omni arena and worked with the Red Wings in Detroit. "[But] we're not going to jump into anything."

The Civic Center is also working hard to fill the Special Events Center that opened several years ago, with regional trade shows and the like. "We've gone after a lot more meetings and smaller expos," says Schon.

Schon must report to the Roanoke Civic Center Commission every month. "They

really trust that Global Spectrum is doing the job that they were hired to do." Commission chairman Paul Anderson, an engineer for AECOM by trade, admits that there was skepticism about privatizing the Civic Center's management and operations when the idea was first floated.

Now he lauds Global Spectrum for being "creative," when taking calculated risks. As for the lack of a pro sports tenant? "We're actually doing better without a sports team," says Anderson.

Weaning the Roanoke Civic Center away from the deficit it has traditionally operated under is a priority for commission members as well: "The subsidies are going down," Anderson concedes, "[and] we're going in the right direction. They've exceeded my expectations." 

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Women in the majority >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *Women will soon comprise more than 50 percent of our workforce. Then what?*

The data says that right around Halloween of this year women will become the majority of the American workforce for the first time in history and we're still trying to figure out what that means for the long term.

Although women will represent the majority of workers, they will still earn 77 percent of what men earn and their representation in upper end executive positions remains paltry. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released a lot of data about this trend and, as its habit, it had no comment on what it means to us as a nation. That's left to us to figure out.

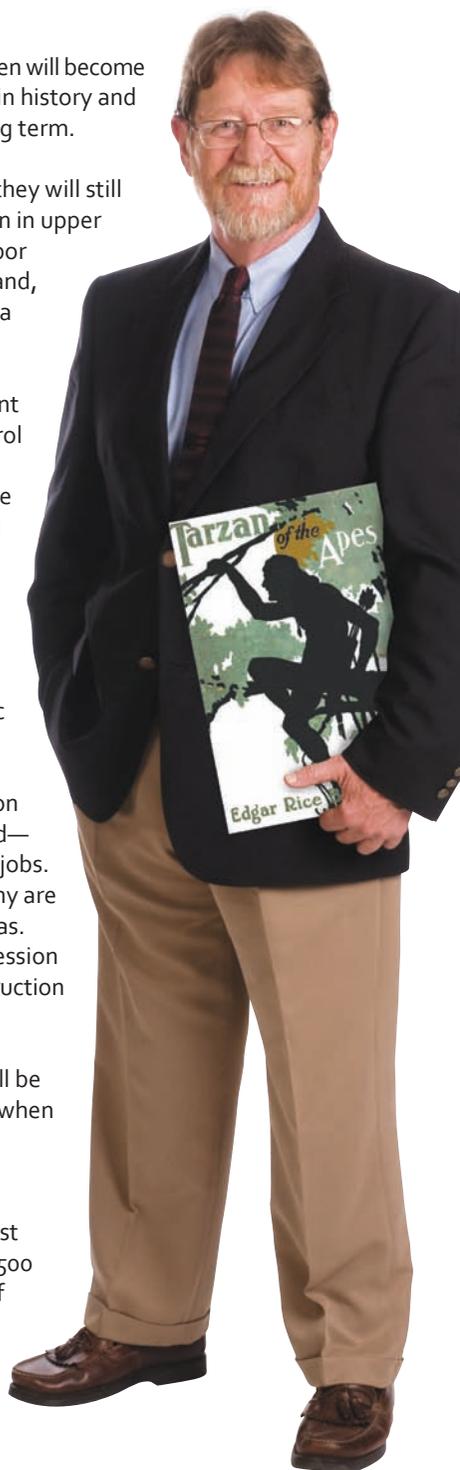
Already white women control 77 cents of every dollar spent by their families (African-American and Latinas also control more than half), but their political power seems to be diminishing. One report found that during the past decade American women dropped from 47th to 84th in the world in political representation. This at a time of some loud and strong women (and some, like their male counterparts, ridiculous dim bulbs) on the political stage.

Some of the emergence of women at work has been the result of natural evolution of our society, but the dramatic gains since the second Bush Administration pushed the bottom out of the economy can be placed directly at the feet of a recession that has been far harder on men than on women. The jobs that have been most negatively affected—manufacturing and construction—are traditionally men's jobs. Women, meanwhile have been protected because so many are in education, government and health care, all growth areas. One report says 74 percent of the jobs lost during the recession were lost by men and three million of those were in construction and manufacturing.

There is some expectation that women in the majority will be a workplace aberration and that men will regain the lead when the recession ends—if that ever happens, and it's looking problematic right now.

Women in executive ranks remain embarrassingly few. Just 14.4 percent of executive officer positions in the Fortune 500 were held by women in 2009. Women held 15.7 percent of corporate board seats in 2010 (just about the same percentage as women in Congress). That's the very top. At the lower end of the executive scale, according to

continued to Page 52

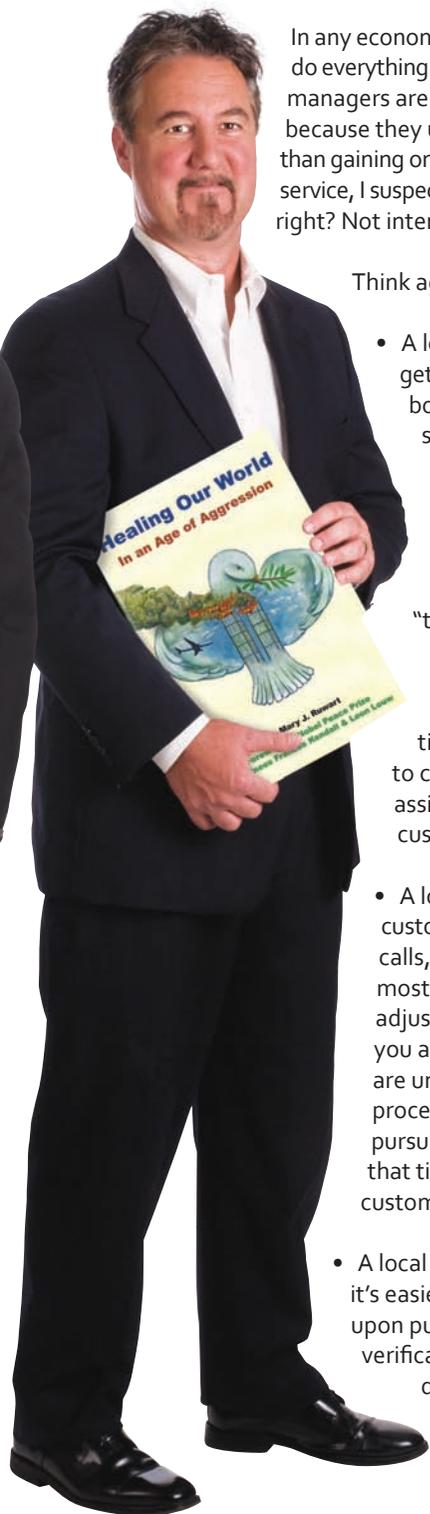


The dirty side of customer service >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

BLOG: [ontapfrompub.blogspot.com]



In any economy—but especially during a struggling one—a company better do everything it can to ensure good customer service, right? Surely, business managers are directing more attention to the area of customer service, because they understand “keeping” a customer is even more important than gaining one in the first place. The attention is needed, so we can improve service, I suspect. We certainly wouldn’t be exploring ways to diminish service, right? Not intentionally, anyway...

Think again.

- A local restaurant franchise prints its popular “buy one meal—get one free.” But they recently changed the fine print, requiring both diners to purchase drinks. Whereas before, the average savings was \$8; suddenly it has dropped to \$4 (the drinks are about \$2, even coffee). Yes, that single restriction “protected” the bottom line by 50 percent in many cases.
- A local technology company (following the trend of global tech companies) encourages the use of submitting “trouble tickets” online, instead of calling tech support “in the interest of improving our customer service.” The system doesn’t really expedite solutions; but it does curtail support requests, as it requires the customer to spend far more time describing the problem. In most cases, a technician has to call the customer anyway—so all the prioritizing and assignments are only for the company’s benefit, not the customer’s.
- A local telephone service demands iron-clad contracts to lock customers in, before they can access reasonable prices. On service calls, the company is compartmentalized to the extent that the most minor transaction will require a half-hour minimum. Billing adjustments or changes to services can easily take an hour; and if you are due any money or rebate from an error on their part, you are unlikely to get it resolved through regular customer service procedures—and will be required to spend more time and effort pursuing other channels. They know most people won’t spend that time or fight that hard, thereby guaranteeing a “retained” customer and “protecting” the bottom line.
- A local retailer frequently advertises attractive rebates. Though it’s easier and more convenient for all parties to award the rebate upon purchase, the company requires mail-in forms and multiple verifications before “reviewing” the authenticity (isn’t it easier to determine a real transaction at the real time and place it occurs?) and then sending back a check (or voucher) six weeks later. As all retailers know, a great percentage of

continued to Page 52

Smith / My View

from Page 50

the Bureau, women were in 51.4 percent of “management, professional and related” positions.

I was recently chatting with a good friend who owns a manufacturing company and she noted that her role as the head of her company continues to change as she comes to understand herself. There was a time, she says, when she ran the company the way she believed a man would run it, but that was never comfortable and not nearly as productive as it could have been had she followed her instincts.

She’s following both her head and her heart these days and her company is growing. It has been a painful and difficult self-searching, but she’ll tell you it has been worth every ounce of energy and time she’s invested, including a revelatory class on how to be a woman in 21st Century America.

That is a different woman than was common even 10 years ago and it will be different 10 years from now. My guess is that we’ll all benefit from the growth.

To recognize women’s move to the dominant position in the workforce, we at FRONT and Hollins University are planning an Oct. 1 women’s forum/symposium. It is called “Now That We’re in Charge” and you’ll be hearing more about it in the coming months. 

Field / On Tap

from Page 51

customers never bother to participate in complicated rebate programs. Bean counters even factor that in when they design the incentive (and the percentage of participation doesn’t change that much, even in a struggling economy).

These are just a few real examples of companies who intentionally lower customer services because they believe it will protect their bottom line. Some would engage in these activities in any climate, while others probably enacted them as a temporary measure (“so we can survive during this tough period”). Ironically, some of the actions are considered “customer retention” programs. They’re designed to prevent current customers from leaving—even in the very act of purposely irritating them.

Shamefully, I confess: I haven’t left any of them.

But they know I’m on to their game. Unfortunately, they give me the same look as “Mervin” does on the FRONTcover of this edition. 



Valley Business FRONT

congratulates **Jo Lynn Seifert** on the announcement of her retirement.

Like bittersweet chocolate—not so easy to swallow, but perfect for cooking up something sweet! We’ll miss you (and your ginger cookies) at the office, Jo...but we celebrate the savory future before you.

You’ll always be in FRONT.

Tom, Dan, Jane, Nick, Emily

Letters

Dolphins in Roanoke

Great article on the new 347 Grill ["A Coach and His Business;" March 2011 issue]. I have followed Coach Shula ever since his Baltimore days. When he went to Miami, I followed. The '72 team... What a bunch of over achievers. Talk about "no names". I did not realize he had a position on the UVa coaching staff at one time. I have a Dolphin helmet signed by him and it sets right up there above with my VT stuff. Congrats on such a great article.

**Gary Reedy
Floyd**

Retreats All Around

To think and behave more like a vibrant region of interconnected communities, we need to emphasize our regional strengths. So often and so aptly we talk about our region's beauty. I think we can frame this from a business perspective. When WilderWeber Leadership Group took

a step back from our own vested interest and really looked at what the region offers, we saw two key success ingredients—many wonderfully talented consultants and facilitators and a host of absolutely terrific off-site / retreat locations. Why wouldn't leaders from near and far want to bring their teams to Southwest Virginia for their retreat work? Valley Business FRONT has already featured consultants [October 2009 edition] and resorts [July 2010 edition] so you know first-hand how many opportunities we have out there. I would love to see a story about our region as a go-to destination for "great retreats."

**Paula Wilder
Blacksburg**

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

“ ”
I saw firsthand how spoiled and wasteful we are as a country

— Page 23

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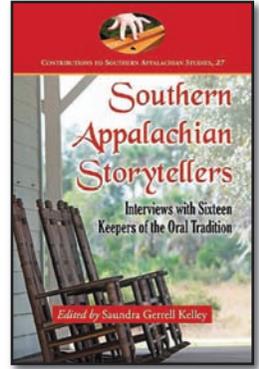
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



Appalachian larks

Appalachia's diverse storytellers have one thing in common: hills, rivers and hollers—not to mention generations of hardscrabble mountain-bred ancestors—are in their blood. Their rootedness is less a sense of place, more a reverence for air, water, land and soul.

Beyond that commonality, they're a diverse bunch, as you'll learn in Sandra Gerrell Kelley's *Southern Appalachian Storytellers* (\$35, McFarland), subtitled *Interviews with Sixteen Keepers of the Oral Tradition*. Some are dirt poor with little or no schooling; others pursued graduate degrees and spent artsy years living abroad. Ethnicity? Blacks and American Indians along with the more typical Scots-Irish immigrant mix.

This book is the next best thing to a personal audience with a backwoods storyteller. Elizabeth Ellis talks about how stories help us "utilize that part of the brain which is most in line with the Divine," no matter if the story is "that big ole fancy tall tale about killin' 8 ducks and 12 turkeys all with one bullet." Great fun.

—Andrea Brunais

Official language

The premise of the book by management consultants Jon Warshawsky, Brian Fugere and Chelsea Haradway is simple: "Business today is drowning in bullshit." They proceed with chapter and verse in the often funny, always telling *Why Business People Speak*

Like Idiots (Free Press, \$23). The approach is irreverent, mocking, critical, bemused bewilderment and, ultimately, one filled with solutions (that, I suspect, those who are guilty will be completely unable to absorb).

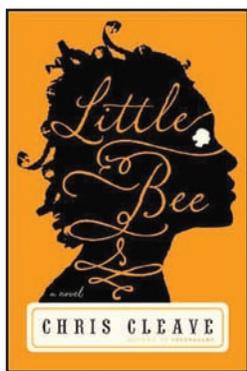
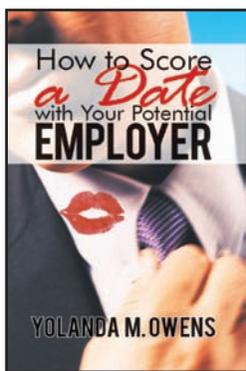
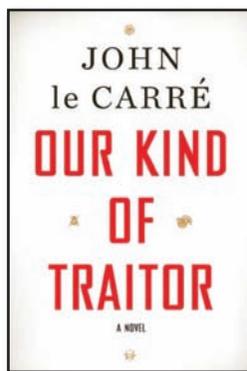
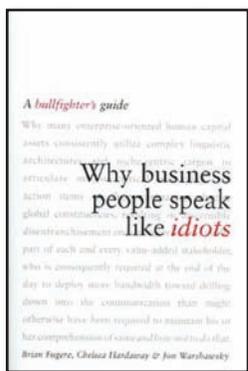
Still, this is the book to give your boss, who will promptly say, "I know people who talk just like that" without realizing he is one of them. There are plenty of examples and practical solutions, but you'll be spellbound by paragraphs that are ostensibly in English, but don't translate that way. Fun read, even if a little discouraging.

—Dan Smith

Enjoyable, fast

I have been a fan of John le Carré's books (and occasional screen adaptations of them) since reading *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* 40 years ago. *Our Kind of Traitor* (Viking Adult, \$27.95) is another attempt to couch a story in a nest of recent events. Perry, a young British academic, and his barrister girlfriend, Gail, on vacation in Antigua, meet a wealthy Russian named Dima, an international money launderer and member of a Russian criminal brotherhood, a "vory." Believing he is marked for death upon his retirement, he seeks asylum for himself and his family in England.

Dima latches onto the young couple in the belief that they can connect him with the British secret service, which he hopes will rescue his family in exchange for his deep knowledge of the underworld of international finance.



Le Carré's latest is not his strongest, but set against the financial shenanigans of recent months, with the naiveté of the parties juxtaposed against the realities of greed and the struggle for power within the secret service and the British government the book makes an enjoyable and fast read.

—Bill Elliot

Job search basics

Dating and job searching are activities everyone has experienced. Yolanda M. Owens, the lead college recruiter for AOL, shares her years of experience in *How to Score a Date with Your Potential Employer* (iUniverse.com Press, \$12.95) by communicating the similarities between these common, frustrating and unpredictable experiences.

The 99-page book highlights the basics in the job search process by offering examples and illustrations. Each chapter ends with "Deal Breakers" every seeker should avoid (do not make repeat calls or e-mails to recruiters asking if your resume has been received, for example).

Her commentary also mentions recruiter truths (recruiters normally do not read cover letters) and touches on the recruiter's volume of applications and workloads and how a candidate can stand out. Job seekers neglecting the insight from this book are receiving a career kiss of death.

—Stuart Mease

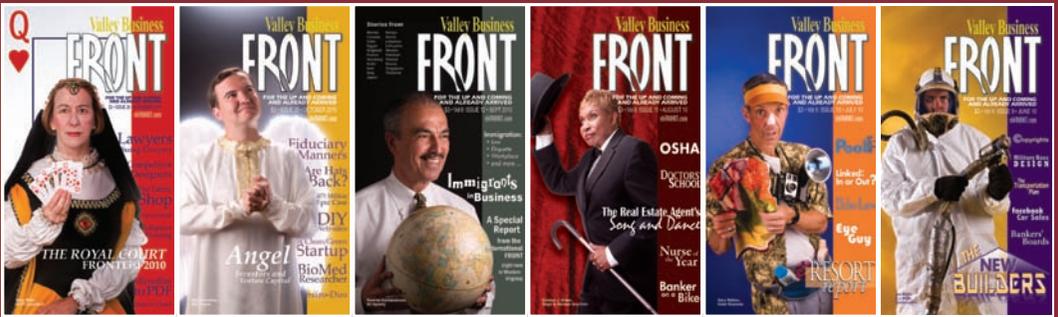
An odd little tale

Chris Cleave's *Little Bee* (\$15 paperback, Simon & Schuster) tells the story of two women whose lives become intertwined through an act of violence in Nigeria. Sarah, a white English woman, and her husband Andrew vacation in Nigeria to try to repair a damaged marriage. On a beach, they meet Little Bee, who was being chased by armed men.

Two years later, Sarah is back in England, raising her four-year-old son, Charlie, who decides he's Batman. He won't take off his costume, because "... if I is not in mine costume then I is not Batman." Little Bee is released from a detention center for refugees, where she has taught herself to speak like Queen Elizabeth, and walks across London to Sarah's home. The situation becomes complicated when the reunion of the two women opens deep wounds and forces them to confront the blackness within each. The ending is a surprise few readers will see coming.

—Betsy Ashton

(**The reviewers:** Andrea Brunais is with Virginia Tech's Outreach and International Affairs. Bill Elliot is president of Davis H. Elliot in Roanoke. Stuart Mease is with the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech. Betsy Ashton is a writer who lives at Smith Mountain Lake. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT)



Coming Up...

May 2011

Manufacturing

The United States has traditionally been a country where things were made. These days, though, that goal seems much harder to achieve. The May FRONT visits people who want to return to manufacturing to lift the economy.

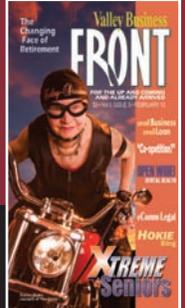
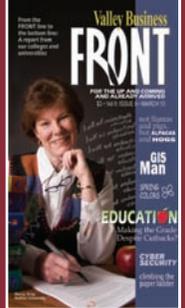
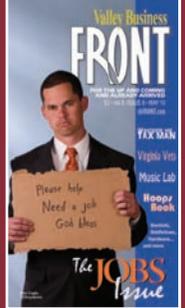
June 2011

Rec Sports

Think "recreational sports" is just ... recreational? Think again. It's pretty big business. The June edition of FRONT will open your eyes to the business impact of rec sports in our region.

FRONTguide

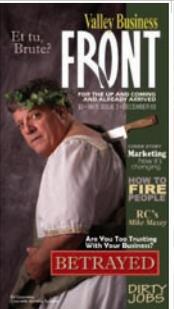
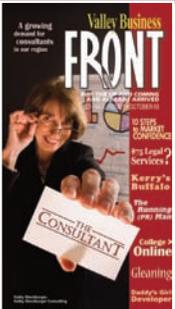
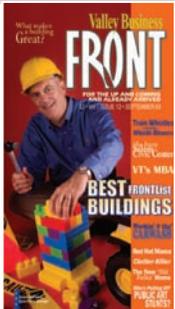
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Preview at Harrogate >

photos: Tom Field

Developer Louis (Luke) Waldrop and Dr. Preston Waldrop hosted a preview on March 3 of the new Salem Terrace at Harrogate, an assistant living and retirement center overlooking West Main Street, Salem. Administrator **LeeAnn Brochero** stands with a chocolate art replicating the brand, a property managed by Coordinated Services Management, Inc. (CSM).



NRV Cares gala >

photos: Jane Dalier

NRV Cares celebrated its annual Gala in Blacksburg on March 12. Its goal is to help prevent child abuse and bring awareness of the services of CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for abused and neglected children. From left to right: **Caleb Valentine** from Applebee's; **Jessie Trenouth** and **Rosie Davis** of ATK Radford Arsenal; **Mona DiGiulian**, NRV CARES; **Terri Lynn Howard**, YMCA at Virginia Tech; **Dr. Steve Jacobs**, O.D., P.C.; **Ron Rordam**, Mayor of Blacksburg; **Fran Horton**, frame specialist for Dr. Jacobs.

Education discussed at Forum >



photo: Tom Field

The **Roanoke Regional Forum** hosted its "Our Schools—Our Business" presentation on March 14 at The Jefferson Center. Moderated by Roanoke City Schools superintendant **Dr. Rita Bishop**, panelists included **Dr. Susan Magliaro**, director of the School of Education, Virginia Tech, who likes the idea of "year round school"; **Dr. Thomas Morris**, president of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges, who asked state legislative bodies to "give local schools more freedom and flexibility" and to "think before you send down another mandate or directive", and **Dr. Juliette Myers**, principal of Roanoke County's Glenvar Middle School, who illustrated the frustration of responding to a good teacher whose number one fear was, "I'm scared I'll lose my job."

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

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Forbes | 2011
BEST BANKS
IN AMERICA

“One of the Top 5 Banks in the Country”



**First Citizens
Bank**

Forbes named First Citizens BancShares, Inc. the fourth-best bank in America in its December 2010 “Best and Worst Banks” ranking. First Citizens Bank is a subsidiary of First Citizens BancShares, Inc. Member FDIC

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Want an indication of an improving economy? Almost 500 new jobs have been announced for the Blacksburg and Roanoke MSAs since the year began (Dynax America, FreightCar America, UnitedHealthcare and Canatal Steel, USA). Add to that the fact that initial unemployment claims continue to drop compared with a year ago, foreclosures are down and retail sales are up.

Unemployment/Employment

January unemployment numbers weren't available in time for publication (we'll cover them next month), but the number of people filing initial unemployment claims continues to fall. From week 8, 2010 to the same week this year, **initial unemployment claims** in the Roanoke and Blacksburg MSAs fell by 29.3 percent, a sharper drop even than Virginia's impressive 27.2 percent.



INITIAL UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS	
Week 4 2010	Week 4 2011
607	429

The typical person receiving unemployment benefits in February in the Blacksburg and Roanoke MSAs might be a white male. Of the 3,935 people receiving benefits, 62 percent were male and 77 percent were white. Statewide, 59.3 percent of claimants were male, and 55.9 percent were white.

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Real Estate

Following the national trend, the average January **home price** in the Roanoke Region was down from a year ago. Locally, the average price was down 11.8 percent, compared to 2.6 percent nationally. But the number of homes sold locally was up by 8.1 percent

HOME PRICES		
Jan. 2010	Dec. 2010	Jan. 2011
\$188,797	\$211,977	\$166,369

HOMES SOLD

Jan. 2010	Jan. 2011
173	187

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

Foreclosure activity for January in the region was down 23 percent from the same month a year ago, according to Realtytrac.

FORECLOSURES

	Jan. 2010	Jan. 2011
Blacksburg	31	15
Roanoke	108	92
Combined	139	107

Source: Realtytrac

Retail Sales

Retailers in the Blacksburg and Roanoke MSAs had a happy holiday season. Local option sales tax revenue rose by 25.6 percent in December from the previous month and nearly 5 percent from the previous year. Statewide, sales tax revenue rose by 5.3 percent from December to December.



RETAIL SALES		
Dec. 2009	Nov. 2010	Dec. 2010
\$5,469,877	\$4,570,773	\$5,740,318

Source: Virginia Department of Taxation

Air Travel

Passenger boardings rose nearly 9.2 percent in January compared to the previous year, but were down 17 percent from December's holiday influenced travel.



AIR TRAVEL			
	Jan. 2010	Dec. 2010	Jan. 2011
Passengers	20,603	27,128	22,495

Source: Roanoke Regional Airport

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates



David Catalano of Modea.

interview candidates ask Modea's David Catalano.

"Quite simply, we are attempting to build the best advertising agency we possibly can," Catalano says.

In 2006, Catalano and Aaron Herrington co-founded Modea, an advertising and marketing agency that focuses in interactive and immersive media. Catalano and Herrington, both Virginia Tech alumni, had previously founded, and sold, a company focusing in online marketing. They wanted to take that online focus a step further with Modea.

"In my mind, it's always about using technology to help businesses communicate," Catalano says. This concept is reflected in the company's name, which is a combination of the words "modern" and "idea."

Catalano says it took him 10 years to realize he was in advertising. "I guess that makes me look a little dense."

There's nothing dense about Modea's success. Last year, Inc. magazine estimated that Modea grew 1,335 percent between 2006 and 2009, and ranked the company's growth 221st out of 5,000 other businesses, and 27th in advertising and marketing. However,

A Treasure of Talent in the NRV >

Executive Summary:

Marketing with technology is the new force in advertising in this region.

By Laura Purcell

"What in the world are you guys doing in Blacksburg?" is the first question most



Modea's current offices are just off the south and north sides of Virginia Tech campus.

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Catalano believes the quality of Modea's work, cultivating lasting relationships with clients, and attracting talented employees to Blacksburg, are better gauges of success.

In March, Modea and Blacksburg agreed that Modea would move into Blacksburg Middle School, making it the headquarters of the company.

Modea devotes itself to clients' ongoing needs, not just one-off campaigns. "When you do what's best for your clients in the long-term, you build trust to a level that they typically have never experienced," Catalano says. Modea's clients include Graco Children's Products, HTC, Verizon Wireless, Levolor Blinds and Lenox Tools.

This long-term focus is "not a complicated strategy, but we can execute it because we're independent," Catalano says. He attributes that independence to the agency's unique location. "My hope is that we become one of the best in the world at what we do. The likelihood of us doing this in a major market greatly reduces our ability to achieve this goal."

But basing a cutting-edge business in this region of Virginia presents challenges. "There is a lot of talent that is not willing to move to Blacksburg," Catalano says. Those who come, come for the right reasons. While corporate culture at other advertising agencies can be cutthroat, Modea has an ego-free atmosphere. "We support each other, trust each other, are truly friends with each other. We share in the successes of the team and take the failures to heart."

In Brief

Name: David Catalano

Age: 32

Company: Modea

Location: Blacksburg

Employees: 60

Background: An entrepreneur and Virginia Tech alumni, Catalano has been fascinated by the power of the web since he was a teenager. After dabbling in Web site design and starting an online marketing company, he co-founded Modea, an advertising agency dedicated to using the latest technologies to make meaningful connections between people and businesses.

Right now, there is a lot to celebrate. At the American Advertising Federation's 2011 ADDY Awards, held in Roanoke on March 5, Modea won accolades in Web site design for Mizuno and teutonia, video production for HTC, and online games for Hasbro. Aaron Herrington was named Roanoke's Advertising Person of the Year.

Another of Modea's ADDY-winning games, the Buzzword Bingo iPad app, pokes fun at meaningless industry phrases like "shifted paradigms" and "win-win." "The day we stop having fun is the day we slide into mediocrity," Catalano says. 



In March, Montgomery County announced Modea's expansion to the 20 acre site of old Blacksburg Middle School on Main Street (upon rezoning).

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Banks

Wachovia Bank in Roanoke has named **Jeffrey Linick** senior VP Western Mid-Atlantic Commercial Banking, responsible for managing commercial banking relationships in Southwest Virginia.

Harvey Goldberg has joined Freedom First Credit Union, which serves Roanoke and the NRV, as vice president of mortgage lending.



Davis

T. Clay Davis has been named president of Select Bank of Lynchburg. He is a Board member and organizer of Select Bank and has served as senior VP and CFO for more than three years.



Bush

Insurance

Rutherford, a Roanoke insurance company has promoted **Melinda Bush**,



McDaniel



Thomas



Thomas Jr.

Gary McDaniel and **Frederick W. "Chip" Thomas** to vice president. The company has hired **Joseph C. Thomas, Jr.** as a surety specialist.

LEGAL FRONT



Ellis

Organizations

The Roanoke chapter of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association has named the following



Ellerman

officers: **Robyn Smith Ellis** of Robyn Smith Ellis PLC, president; **Lauren Morgan Ellerman** of Frith & Ellerman Law Firm, VP; **Erin Ashwell** of Woods Rogers, secretary; and **Wendy T. Slemp** of Moss & Rocovich, treasurer.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT

Organizations

Marty Muscatello, CEO of CCS-Inc. in Christiansburg, is the new president of the NewVa Corridor Technology Council. He follows **Mary Miller** of IDD in Blacksburg whose record-setting two-year tenure recently ended.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Montgomery

Architecture/Engineering

Beau Montgomery, an electrical engineer at Spectrum Design in

Roanoke, has passed the Professional Engineer (PE) exam.



Owen

J. Todd Owen of Wiley + Wilson in Lynchburg has earned a LEED AP O+M accreditation.

Real estate

Robert Lichtenstein and **Rod Rowan**, who formerly worked for Long & Foster Realtors, have opened Lichtenstein Rowan, Realtors in Roanoke.



Crabtree

Carolyn Crabtree has joined the sales force at Prudential Waterfront Properties at Smith Mountain Lake.



Gardner

John E. Gardner III has joined Waldvogel Commercial Properties in Roanoke in a commercial sales and leasing position.

Have a career announcement?

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



Broughman



Robertson

Cushman & Wakefield | Thalhimer in Roanoke has added **Brian K. Broughman** to its

sales force. He has specialized in industrial/manufacturing. **Timberly M. Robertson** is a new sales associate specializing in tenant and landlord representation in retail.

EDUCATION FRONT

Colleges

The Virginia Western

Educational Foundation Board of Directors has named **Harvey D. Brookins Jr.**, of Wachovia Bank and **Tammy Moss Finley**, of Advance Auto Parts directors. **Stan Lanford**, retired president of Lanford Brothers Company, is a new director emeritus of the Educational Foundation board.

Edwin J. Jones has

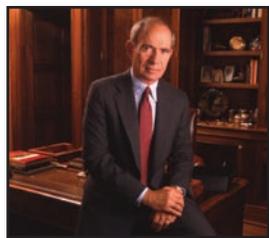
been named associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech and director of Virginia Cooperative Extension. Jones has served as associate director and state program leader for agriculture, natural resources, and community and rural development at North Carolina Cooperative Extension since 2004.



ADVANCE AUTO



MEDECO



BERTRAM FIRESTONE



BRUCE HORNSBY



ROANOKE TIMES



ROWE

gregvaughnphotography.com

Career FRONT

After leading Virginia Tech's Reynolds Homestead Continuing Education Center in Critz for almost three years, **Kay Dunkley** has been named director of the Virginia Tech Roanoke Center.



Tuttle

Annual Awards Dinner. **John Tuttle**, Marketing Representative for SERVPRO of Montgomery & Pulaski Counties has served as Vendor Director for the New River Valley Apartment Council, since January of 2009.



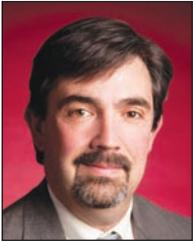
Baker

communications manager.



Saunders

OTHER FRONTS



Dunnivant

Advertising/PR

Access Advertising & Public Relations in Roanoke has added **Jerry Dunnivant** as director of new business development.

Awards

The New River Valley Apartment Council named SERVPRO of Montgomery & Pulaski Counties as "Vendor of the Year" at its recent



Boothe

Marketing/PR

Tanglewood Mall in Roanoke has named **Brad Boothe** marketing manager.

United Way of Roanoke Valley has named **Whitney Baker**



Humphry

Media

Keith Humphry of WDBJ7, will retire at the end of May, ending 31 years at the station. Humphry, whose run at WDBJ7 as a reporter and anchor began in 1980, will broadcast for the final time May 27. Humphry, who is an award-winning journalist and a college instructor in journalism has agreed to be involved in special projects for NEWS7.



Dill



Ornelas

Organizations

Local Colors in Roanoke has named the following board members: **Jay Saunders** of Saunders Enterprises (president), **Ivy Dill** of First Citizens Bank, **Edgar Ornelas**



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Deveau



Boyes

of Valley tree Mortgage, **Omar Deveau** of Cox, and **David Boyes** of JDSU (fundraising chairman).

Project Access of the Roanoke Valley has elected new members to its board of directors. The new members are **Jason Lavinder**, Merck & Co.; **Verne F. Baker**, Carilion Clinic; **William E. Caldwell Jr.**, LewisGale Physicians; **Richard Eggleston**, Eggleston & Eggleston; and **Dr. Catherine Daniel**, Jefferson Surgical Clinic.

The YMCA of Roanoke Valley has named **Becci Emanuelson** director of financial development and **Katie Wagner** human resources coordinator.



Emanuelson



Wagner

Photography

Roanoke photographer **Kevin Hurley** was presented the



Hurley

Southeastern Award at the 2011 Virginia Professional Photographer's Association state convention recently. The award is the highest award given by the association and goes to a member in each state who has made a significant contribution to professional photography.

So much more.

vbFRONT.com

morefront.blogspot.com

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

- > Speaking of Green (as in Money and Environmentalism)
- > An Evening with the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce
- > Modea Moving to Middle School in B'burg
- > Airport Kiosk Features Region Outdoors
- > ACI Spins Off New Company, MatWeb
- > Cabell Brand's Book Nominated for Top Award
- > ISO Training for IT Scheduled in Roanoke

- > Manufacturing Continues Decline in Roanoke Region
- > Aetna, Carilion Enter Care Partnership
- > Corrugated Best in Show; tba Wins Most ADDYs
- > TECHLAB To Open Radford Facility
- > 'This Old House' Picks Mountain View Among Best
- > Dan Carson To Tech Engineering Hall of Fame
- > Huge Sale of SML Rec Land Scheduled

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



Nancy Agee

*Agee replaces
Murphy at Carilion*

Carilion Clinic has named **Nancy Howell Agee** CEO, replacing Dr. Ed Murphy, who has resigned to take a position with TowerBrook Capital Partners, a New York and London based investment firm. Murphy will become chairman of the board of South Physicians.

Agee takes over one of the region's largest organizations and employers July 1. She has been with the company for more than 30 years. Early this year she was named president and CEO of Carilion Medical Center, the company's hospital services.

"This is a unique organization with truly remarkable people," says Agee, "and I am honored to have this opportunity. I still remember the faces of my patients back in 1973

and as I see our patients today I know that even with new technology, new facilities and a new medical school, we'll continue to serve our core mission."

"The decision to leave Carilion was difficult, but the time is right," Murphy says. "The building blocks for successful transformation are in place, especially in light of our new relationship with Aetna. The organization is in good position to move forward with excellent, stable leadership."

TECHLAB to Radford

The Radford Industrial Center will become the home **TECHLAB Inc.**, a New River Valley Company making medical supplies. TECHLAB, headquartered in Blacksburg's Corporate Research Center, will buy the 54,000-square-foot Radford Shell Building to

develop, manufacture and distribute medical supply products are focused in the areas of intestinal inflammation, antibiotic associated diarrhea and parasitology.

The company will locate 20 jobs initially, and invest \$3 million in the acquisition of the building, adaptation of the space and purchase of equipment. TECHLAB plans to begin operations by the end of this year.

ATI wins award

Adaptive Technologies, Inc. in Blacksburg has received a Tibbetts Award from the Small Business Administration for its extreme noise hearing protection and digital communication systems. The SBA presents the awards to companies and individuals that have advanced technological innovation and economic growth.

Warm Hearth adds service

The **Kroontje Health Care Center at Warm Hearth Village** in Blacksburg has added Skilled Care to its list of services. The facility has assisted living and long-term nursing care and the short-term Medicare approved option is available for those with a qualifying hospital stay and physician's order.

Design Nine contract

FastRoads LLC has selected **Design Nine** in Blacksburg to manage the construction of the FastRoads fiber-to-home project funded by a Department of Commerce

broadband stimulus award. FastRoads is owned by the nonprofit Monadnock Economic Development Corporation, and represents 43 towns in west and west-central New Hampshire.

Tech wins gold

Virginia Tech has won awarded a gold award for the second year in a row for its Alternative Transportation programs, in the **Best Workplaces for Commuters Race to Excellence** for the 2010 year. The Race to Excellence is designed to encourage sustainable transportation innovation and recognize organizations that have taken steps to offer transportation alternatives for their employees.

Jefferson degree

Jefferson College of Health Sciences in Roanoke, an affiliate of Carilion Clinic, has received provisional approval from the Virginia Board of Nursing to begin offering an Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) degree in fall 2011. The ABSN track allows students to complete a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree in four semesters over 16 months.

J Crew expanding

Lynchburg's **J. Crew** plans to add 100,000 square feet to its retail clothing factory and create 177 jobs. The factory is one of 85 the company has in the U.S.

New Neathawk client

Roanoke advertising agency **Neathawk Dubuque & Packett** has begun work with Search Associates, a recruitment organization that places teachers, administrators and interns in international schools throughout the world. ND&P will redesign Search's Web site.

automated stacking cranes. The port project will be completed in two phases, 14 cranes by the end of March 2012, and 16 by the end of June 2012.

ADPC's Khalifa Port development is an infrastructural landmark that will support the development of Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi as a major industrial zone in the region.

Clinic contributions

The **Free Clinic of the New River Valley** has received two local foundation contributions to provide dental care to the underserved and uninsured in the area. The C. E. Richardson Benevolent Foundation in Pulaski County has awarded \$2,500 and the Corning Foundation in Montgomery County has contributed \$1,500.

More Goodwill expansion

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, which has been in an expansion mode for about two years in this region, has opened its first Goodwill Bookstore next door to the Christiansburg Goodwill store on Peppers Ferry Road. Paperbacks will sell for 75 cents and hardbacks for only \$1.

TMEIC, Abu Dhabi sign

TMEIC GE in Roanoke will provide the crane automation systems to Abu Dhabi Ports Company for the new Khalifa Port in Abu Dhabi, UAE. TMEIC GE will automate 30

Spectrum honored

Spectrum Design of Roanoke has been recognized by the Virginia Chapter of the Council of Educational Facility Planners with the 2011

Have an announcement about your business?

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

Project of Distinction Award for its design of the new Eastern Montgomery Elementary School in Elliston.

customer base and expand to new families and friends."

Big rail contract

Norfolk Southern Railway has ordered 3,000 cars for its trains from **FreightCar America** in Roanoke, pumping life back into a company that had laid off a large portion of its workforce two years ago. FreightCar employs 120 now in Roanoke, but the contract could put 200 to work at the East End Shops. The coal cars will be in production beginning May 1 with the first half of the order.

Jeweler opens

Geoff Jennings, former owner of Frank L. Moose Jeweler in Roanoke, has opened **Geoffrey LTD** in Grandin Village in Roanoke. He was with Moose for 39 years and is continuing the family tradition for a third generation with his new shop at 1919 Westover Ave.

Closing Frank L. Moose Jeweler earlier this year and opening a new smaller store, says Jennings, was "a quality of life change that enables me to service my loyal

Carilion to buy property

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CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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

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

Kathleen Harvey Harshberger is a graduate of Radford University and the Protocol School of Washington. She conducts seminars in business etiquette, international business protocol, and dining skills She has an international clientele in business, government, and higher education. She is a certified Protocol Officer. [harshberger@aol.com]

Andrew M. Hudick has a Masters in Retirement Planning, is a Certified Financial Planner and is a founding member of Fee-Only Financial Planning, a 27-year-old Roanoke-based financial advisory firm. [Andy@FeeOnlyRoanoke.com]

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

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

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

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

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

Erin Pope is a Roanoke-based freelance writer and active participant in a local farm centered around wild mushroom cultivation. She graduated with a B.A. in English and Creative Writing from Hollins University and has worked at Monticello. [eap7779@gmail.com]

Laura Purcell is a mother, wife, rat-terrier wrangler and writer living in Blacksburg. Her Web site is purcellink.squarespace.com. [lmspurcell@gmail.com]

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]

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

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

Alison Weaver is a freelance writer based in Roanoke. She contributed to and was a staff writer at the Blue Ridge Business Journal throughout the 1990s before working as a copy editor at The Roanoke Times for eight years. Her recent freelance credits include Redbook magazine. Her story on niche publications won the FRONT Story of the Year for 2009. She was the 2010 FRONT Contributor of the Year and also wrote the 2010 FRONT Story of the Year. [alison.weaver03@gmail.com]



Laura Purcell

MARCH 2011 > Contributor of the Month

Laura Purcell, who wrote the March cover story on veterinarians, did such a thorough job of reporting and writing the piece that she is our Contributor of the Month for the March issue. Laura, who lives in the New River Valley, and has some impressive writing credentials, has been an increasing force as a writer for us over the past few months and it appears that her first cover story will not be her last.

20 years and still opinionated

A significant anniversary has recently been observed for **Andy Hudick**, who has contributed to our magazines longer than any of our other writers. Andy, a financial advisor who writes an occasional column of investment advice, began with us 20 years ago during the early days of the Blue Ridge Business Journal and made the trip with us into the new venture at FRONT more than two years ago. Andy's work is always accessible, clear, opinionated and marvelous to read—even for those who have difficulty with money and numbers. This is to say "thank you" to one of our quality contributors.



Botetourt County Administrator Jerry Burgess announces Dynax expansion

purchase a piece of land it has repeatedly said it does not want, the three-acres on Reserve Avenue next to its new complex that was the subject of a court battle. Carilion will pay \$1.53 million to the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority for the land (which the authority paid \$2.2 million for) and says it plans to sell the property as soon as it can to a developer.

ADDY awards even handed

AAF / Roanoke (formerly Advertising Federation of Roanoke Valley) held its annual ADDY Awards banquet on March 5 at Center in the Square, Roanoke. Best of Show was presented to Corrugated Container Corporation; Aaron

Herrington of Modea won Ad Person of the Year; Two Robs Inc won Vendor of the Year. In one of the most evenly distributed award years in ADDY history, tba just edged out the top four agencies collecting the most awards (three gold, five silver), followed by Anstey Hodge, Modea, ND&P, and Inprint. Individual entrants with work representing Virginia Tech and Radford University collected an impressive 28 awards.

Dynax to expand

Dynax America Corporation, a manufacturer of parts for auto transmissions plans to expand its existing Botetourt County facility, adding 95 new jobs and investing \$15.66 million. Dynax will expand

into the former Johnson Controls building next to the current plant in EastPark Commerce Center. The new 80,000-square-foot facility will handle receiving and warehousing and allow Dynax to repurpose approximately 50,000 square feet in the existing building to increase production. Expansion work will begin by the second quarter of 2011. The 95 new jobs will pay an average wage of \$34,312. Of the \$15.66 million in investment, \$1.12 million will be in building and infrastructure with the balance in equipment. "Dynax America has 360 permanent employees at its Botetourt County location on Eastpark Drive. The company, which located in Botetourt in 1996, manufactures clutch discs, drive plates,

clutch packs, and torque converter pistons for automatic transmissions.

Ferrum conference

Ferrum College will be host for Forum on Critical Thought, Leadership & Innovation at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center on April 7. Registration / breakfast is at 7:30 a.m., followed by keynoters Lawrence Eagleburger, former U.S. Secretary of State; Jeffrey Lacker, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, and Ronald Smith, a founding partner in Verdant Power Inc. The event concludes with a panel discussion, along with the Ferrum College Executive in Residence program, and a VIP luncheon. For details call 540-365-4211.

Aetna, Carilion Collaborate

Aetna and Roanoke-based **Carilion Clinic**, the largest health care provider in southwest Virginia, plan to collaborate in an accountable care organization (ACO) initiative that is designed to lower costs, feature patient outreach, encompass co-branded plans, and a new payment model that rewards providers for the collective outcomes of patients and meeting quality targets.

Compiled by Dan Smith

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

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

AAF / Roanoke	71	MARS	71
Ameriprise	71	Megs Specialty Womenswear	20
Aztec Rental Center	70	Mountain Lake	47
Bartlett Tree Experts	71	Plant Culture	43
Blacksburg Partnership	48	PowerToolsForPeople.com	19
Blue Ridge Copier	32	Rife + Wood Architects	3
Blue Ridge Heating & Air	71	Roanoke Natural Foods Co-Op	29
Branch Management Corp.	27	Roanoke Regional	
Controllers, Etc.	71	Chamber of Commerce	41
Davis H. Elliot Company	71	Sherwood Memorial Park	30
Energy Healing	71	The Shires	71
Entre Computer Center	31	South Main Chiropractic	71
First Citizens Bank	58	Spectrum Design	36-37
Fit Studio 365	28	StellarOne	64
Floored	40	Sweet's Heating &	
Goodwill Industries	24	Air Conditioning	26
Hall Associates	67	Trust Company	21
Hethwood Market	38	Valley Bank	2
HomeTown Bank	BC	Greg Vaughn Photography	63
LewisGale Regional		Woods Rogers	25
Health System	4	Wordsprint	33
Lotz Funeral Homes	18		



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— Page 35

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