

Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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Building Green

MOO-ving Milk

Calling
Cards

Land
Trust

Farm
Class

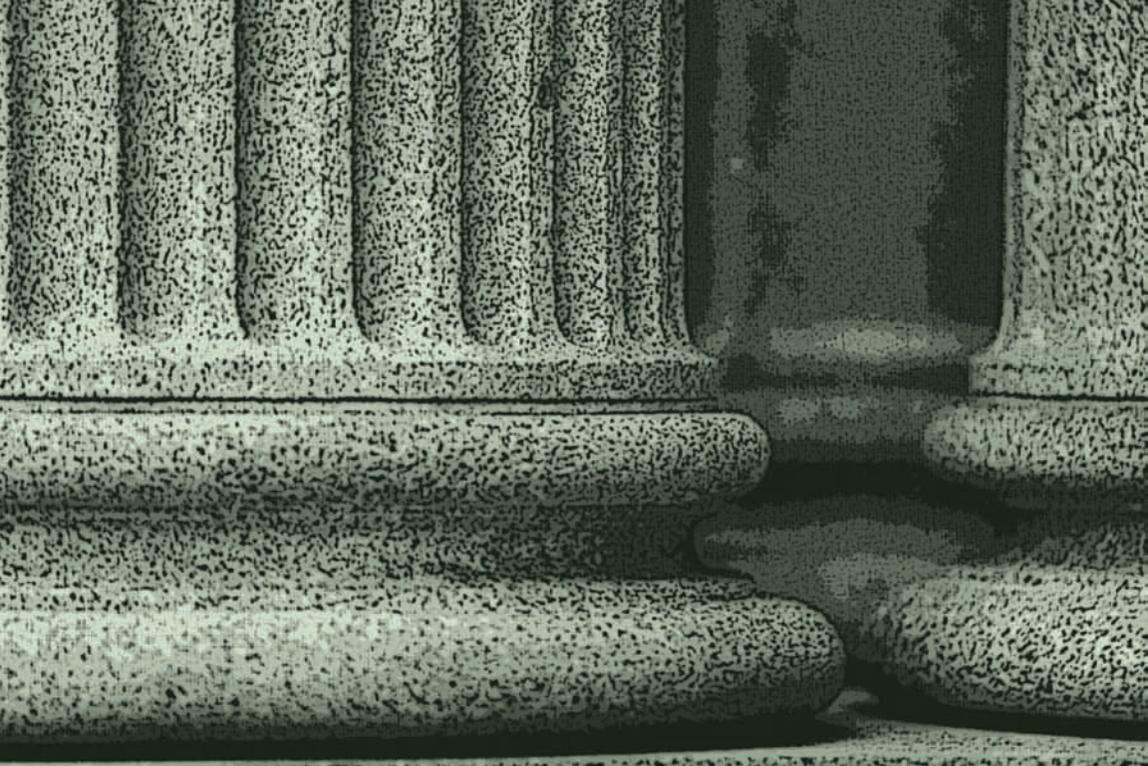
T-Shirt?



**UNION
?**

The State of the Union
Are they still viable?

Amanda Mansfield,
Roanoke Children's Theatre



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Most all banks, including Valley Bank, work hard to attract new customers or new money as we call it. But the MegaBanks offer new account incentives that exclude their longtime loyal customers.

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WELCOME to the FRONT

Amazingly, we haven't used a lot of our FRONTcover stories to tackle issues that have such an intense polarizing affect on business. Most of our stories have been solid explorations involving areas of business that pretty much anyone can get behind—particularly the industry segment that happens to be featured. Well... we stepped it on out there for the edition you're holding in your hands now (or reading online). When it comes to labor unions, as expected, we found three kinds of responses. Those who are for unions (and for them in a BIG way). And those who are against them (likewise, anti-union in a big way). The third group? There are those who are ambivalent or apathetic (and mistakenly believe the issue just has no bearing on their everyday lives). The third group—isn't included. At least not in this story.

There are, however, an awful lot of people (especially in Virginia you will find) who simply don't know how they feel or what they believe about the viability of today's union. That makes the story all the more relevant. Though it's tempting to gravitate to one position over the other—we bring you both perspectives. And that's a good way to bring in our first issue of Volume IV. Yep. We've renewed our "contract" with you and the most engaged readers throughout western Virginia. That means we'll continue to work diligently in bringing you the stories about people you know, and people you'd like to know. Thank you for being such a valuable stakeholder.



Tom Field



Dan Smith

Labor issues imminent?



From left: W. David Paxton, Diane J. Geller, Paul G. Klockenbrink, Todd A. Leeson

We're ready.

Armed with several recent labor-friendly decisions by the National Labor Relations Board, Unions are poised for an unprecedented blitz to seek to expand their declining memberships.

Gentry Locke is ready to help your company remain Union Free.

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The State of the UNION

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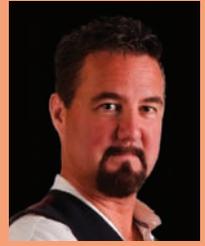
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OCTOBER



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Kili Teh



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Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 67.

Editorial Advisory Board

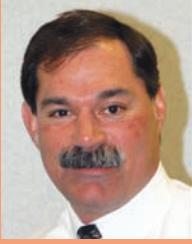
Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 16 diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the 18 month rotational term that will turn over every year and a half.

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."

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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.

“It already had the floors we needed and washable walls

— Page 34

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Greg Vaughn Photography

Amanda Mansfield, as our FRONTcover model, plays the striking worker. In reality, the professional actress, who also works for Roanoke Children's Theatre, chose never to join the Actors Equity Association, so her answer to the sign she holds is 'No.' She's convincing though—that's acting!

Fractured union >

Executive Summary:
Never significant in Virginia, are unions becoming more diminished through a combination of legislation and apathy?

By Laura Purcell

The State of the UNION



Labor unions have never played a huge role in the lives of working people in Virginia, but they are still an important part of understanding how Virginia works.

Private and public workers in Virginia are free to form and join unions. However, Virginia is one of 22 "right to work" states, which means that employees cannot be forced to join a union, whereas in states like Michigan and Ohio where union presence is strong, it is the unions that negotiate work contracts with employers.

Virginia is also one of two states, along with North Carolina, that prohibit public employees from collective bargaining. So, fewer teachers, police officers and firefighters belong to unions in Virginia than in other states.

Out of 3.4 million employed workers in Virginia, only 161,000, or 4.6 percent, are union members, according to a 2010 report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). In fact, Virginia ranks among the states with the lowest union participation. Nationwide, union membership has been declining for decades. According to the BLS, in 2010 unions represented 11.9 percent of workers, about 14.7 million people. In 1983, union membership nationwide was 20.1 percent.

"What we are witnessing in Wisconsin and elsewhere is the death knell of Big Labor," wrote Washington Post columnist Robert J. Samuelson on February 27, 2011.

But are unions poised for a comeback in non-union states like Virginia, and elsewhere?

On July 27, 2011, after three years of negotiations with the company over working conditions, employees at the IKEA Swedwood furniture plant in Danville voted 221-69 to unionize. Verizon workers from Massachusetts to Virginia, who are members of the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, elected to strike August 7 after negotiations over salary and benefits failed. In Wisconsin, protests at the



Dan Smith

Pickets have a high profile in the Verizon strike.

state capitol in Madison have been ongoing since February, when the legislature voted to eliminate the collective bargaining rights for public employees.

During four and a half months of negotiations, professional football players, who are members of the National Football League Players Association, were literally “locked out” of their facilities, weren’t paid and lost healthcare benefits. The football players demanded better health insurance coverage, increased workplace safety, and more support for retired players, citing the massive disparity between players’ salaries and revenue NFL owners receive.

No longer viable

“I had a client years ago, a manager who went out on the floor and said, ‘I am the king and you are my subjects.’ And he wondered why they wanted a union,” says Bayard Harris, a labor and employment law

Union vocabulary >

Closed shop: A business that hires only union members, either by choice or by agreement with the unions. The Labor-Management Relations Act made closed shops illegal. (Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute)

Collective bargaining: The negotiations between an employer and a group of employees to determine the conditions of employment. The result of these procedures is a collective agreement. Employees are often represented in bargaining by a union or other labor organization. Collective bargaining is governed by federal and state statutory laws, administrative agency regulations, and judicial decisions. (Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute)

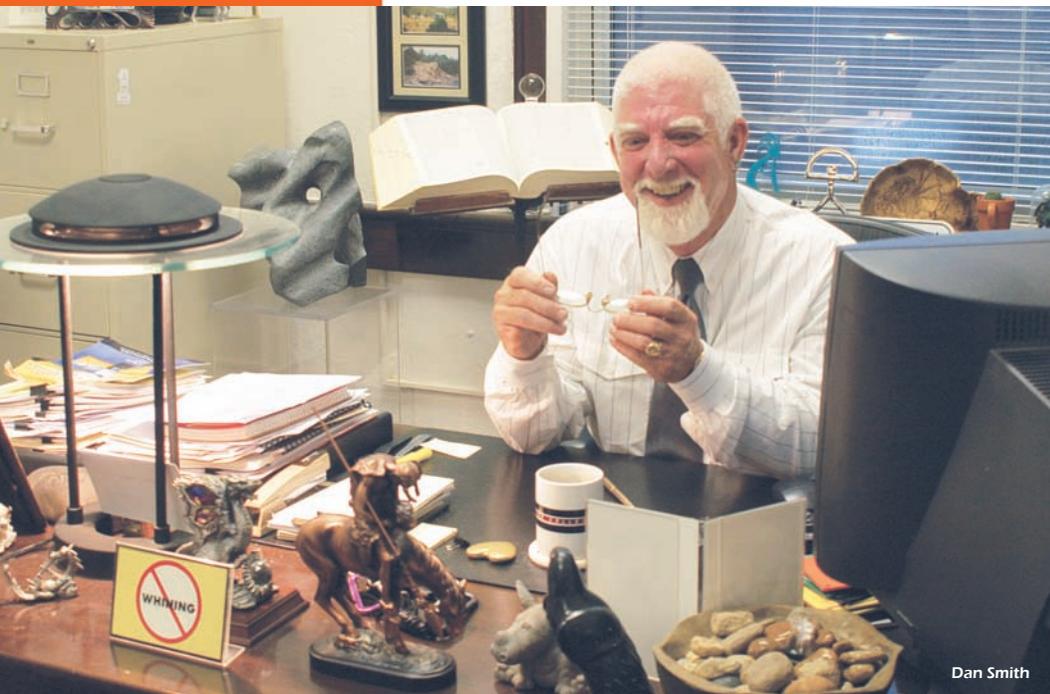
Public employee: A person who is employed by a municipal, county, state, or federal agency or state college or university. (UMBC glossary of labor relations terms)

Right to work state: A state that has a law prohibiting union security agreements

Union security agreement: A contract between an employer and a union requiring workers to make certain payments (called “agency fees”) to the union as a condition of getting or keeping a job. Although it is illegal to require an employee to join a union, workers may be required to instead pay agency fees if such an agreement is in place. Union security agreements are prohibited in right to work states.

Union shop: A business in which a majority of the workers have voted to name a union as their certified bargaining agent. Employers may hire nonunion workers, but these workers must join the union within a specified amount of time.

(Source: Nolo’s Plain-English Law Dictionary)



Lawyer Bayard Harris: "I am the king and you are my subjects."

attorney at Woods Rogers PLC and professor of labor relations, human resource management, and business law at Roanoke College.

After Harris graduated high school in the early 1960s, he got a job at a local textile mill. A union was trying to organize workers there, and one of the organizers followed him home, which scared him. Based on that experience, Harris took courses in law school to specialize in labor relations.

"Frankly, the unions were needed in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s," Harris says. "Modern unions are no longer viable and necessary. They're too expensive. Legislation that has been passed since the '60s, OSHA, other safety measures, anti-discrimination laws, FMLA, and a host of other statutes that are now in place make unions unnecessary."

Despite a decades-long legal career representing management interests, Harris does his best to "put my union hat on" when teaching labor relations at Roanoke College. He divides his class into teams to simulate a union campaign and negotiations with management.

"The labor relations course dovetails with human resource management," says Harris. "The mantra is: motivate, retain and develop your company's talent. Employees need to be treated fairly. Modern human resource management isn't just payroll. Today, human resource managers study sociology, psychology and risk management. They ensure that employees' rights and feelings are protected. Businesses can cultivate a union free environment by complying with the necessary standards of a modern human resource management."





Workers on the assembly line at Volvo in Dublin.

An image problem

"It seems like unions have become the villains. We are why companies move," says Jim Houchins, president of the United Auto Workers Local 2069 at the New River Valley Plant of Volvo Trucks, North America, in Dublin. Houchins thinks that union members are the scapegoats for companies looking to increase profits by relocating overseas. "I feel like it is CEOs: if they know how to outsource, they get a job," he says.

"We don't want our company to lose customers," says Houchins, who is fiercely proud of the trucks Volvo produces. He says that if a truck is broken down or malfunctioning, and it is difficult to obtain a missing part, union representatives and management work together to find a solution. "We'll figure out how to fix the trucks so we don't have to send them to another vendor. The union gives you a better quality product. We are here to help, and if the company isn't here, we're not here."

Volvo management provided a statement that supports Houchins' sentiments: "Every Volvo truck we sell in the U.S. is built at our New River Valley plant in Dublin. Working together with the UAW to establish agreements that promote future success is crucial in remaining competitive with other manufacturers producing trucks in lower cost environments, and keeping the kind of good paying manufacturing jobs we offer in the plant in this country. We're pleased with the new 5-year contract agreed to in





Todd Leeson: "An employer who ignores this advice acts at its peril."

New union initiatives >

A series of recent initiatives and decisions by the National Labor Relations Board of late have been especially favorable to labor unions, says Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore attorney Todd Leeson.

"In August 2011, the Obama Labor Board issued several decisions that will aid unions in their efforts to organize new members," Leeson says. "A company in [this region that] wishes to remain union-free must assess the morale of its workforce and ensure that it treats its employees with fairness, dignity and respect. An employer who ignores this advice acts at its peril."

Leeson says that three of the four members of the National Labor Relations Board "strongly support labor unions. Thus, it should be no surprise that in late August 2011, the board issued three labor-friendly decisions and announced a final rule that will lead to more union organizing."

March of this year (2011), which provides stability to help us continue to grow our business and ensures our NRV employees a great quality of life."

Looking out for the little guy

"Businesses every day negotiate for goods, services and raw materials. But to negotiate work, there's something wrong with that," says Gary Kendall, an attorney with Michie Hamlett in Charlottesville and general counsel for the Virginia AFL-CIO.

"The founding fathers of this country were wise men," says Kendall. "The key to this working is checks and balances. Without unions, and their national presence, there is nobody to act as a check or balance to big business. So many of the businesses say, 'We'll regulate ourselves.' That's like going into a prison and saying, 'We don't need a warden'."

Todd Leeson of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore in Roanoke has been counsel of record for more than 60 labor relations cases in district court. He has defended companies in more than 150 Equal Employment Opportunity charges alleging various forms of harassment, discrimination and/or retaliation and frequently advises companies on labor issues.



The new rules, in brief, according to Leeson are:

- The Board issued a final rule effective Nov. 14, 2011 that will require virtually all employers to post workplace notices informing employees of their rights to organize;
- (The board overruled Dana Corp., a 2007 NLRB decision, and held that employees who objected to an employer's decision to accept a union based on a card check would be barred from seeking a decertification election for at least six months after the parties' first bargaining session);
- The Board overruled MV Transportation, a 2002 NLRB decision, and restored the "successor bar" doctrine requiring a successor employer to recognize an incumbent union for at least six months after the parties' first bargaining session;

- The Board overruled a 20-year old precedent and held that smaller bargaining units of CNA's in non-acute health care facilities are appropriate under the law—this decision will have ramifications in all industries.

"Each of these decisions bears further scrutiny and analysis," says Leeson.

"The bottom line, however, is that these decisions, and other decisions likely to follow, will lead to more union organizing and/or make it easier for unions to add new members.

Leeson says, "A company in Southwest Virginia who wishes to remain union-free must assess the morale of its workforce and ensure that it treats its employees with fairness, dignity and respect. An employer who ignores this advice acts at its peril."

—Dan Smith

Leeson says, "The optimal relationship I can have with a corporate client embroiled in litigation is one in which there is candid dialog with top management as to the likely legal ramifications, as well as the practical 'real world' options. I view my role as providing solid, practical advice and analysis to management so that it can decide what option would be in its best interests. I will then do everything in my power to achieve a favorable final result for the company."

Dealing with labor's attorneys can be a significant challenge he says. "In my interactions with opposing counsel, it is fair to say that some counsel are more reasonable than others, and some do not appear to have much control over their clients," he says. "There are some cases that must be fully litigated. If there is a case that could be settled on mutually acceptable terms, direct negotiations by the parties, through counsel, is best. Mediation, however, has proven to be an effective tool to resolve challenging employment disputes."

Gary Kendall is quick to dismiss the idea that unions are corrupt entities: "The Jimmy Hoffa stories and things like that are great drama, but in reality, the labor unions are regulated; pension funds are regulated. Unions have a tenth of the corruption, a hundredth, of a corporation. No organization of this size is going to be perfect. I would match the record of organized labor to the record of big business any day."



They said it here ... >

"As for me, I opted out of joining the union right at the start of my career in order to allow myself greater odds for finding work."

—**Amanda Mansfield, Roanoke Children's Theatre**

There are lots of wild and wooly stories about George Meany and Mother Jones organizing the old smokestack industries. But today, a lot of unions exist simply because they were there when they were needed and became embedded.

New companies, coming online today, don't have unions unless they need one ... Companies that got unions later were poorly managed from a human resource standpoint.

—**Bayard Harris, Roanoke College**

I have witnessed union members come together to take part in all kinds of community projects from Habitat for Humanity to providing disaster relief. The union is built upon the basic principle that we are our brother's keeper and an injustice to one is an injustice to all.

Many people see unions as a top down cartel, and not as the grassroots organizations that they are. At the very basic level the union is nothing more than a majority group of workers getting together and democratically electing representatives to address their concerns ... The union provides stability for our members and we demand that everybody is dealt with in a fair manner, which improves morale.

—**Eric Angel, United Steelworkers in Roanoke**

A union negotiates for every employee, but we know about five percent are sorry individuals. You're going to get them whether it is union or non-union. And they do hurt your union. You've got to try and protect everybody, but we know those five percent on a first name basis.

—**Jim Houchins, UAW in Dublin**

The average working, middle class family needs the labor movement today more than ever, more than in the industrial revolution. It is the labor movement that can protect their interests, give them a voice with resources and have the national presence to check big business.

Unions want their employers to prosper. They want to share in the benefits of their labor. Any time there is a dollar of profit, it needs to be divided among managers, shareholders and labor. We don't want to take jobs away from people."

—**Gary Kendall, Michie Hamlett attorney, Charlottesville**

There may always be a need for right of employees to organize. I'm not advocating that they not have the right. I think that most companies are trying to do as best they can for their employees and stay competitive. In many cases, unions are not positive influences.

—**Clinton Morse, LeClair Ryan attorney**

Kendall also believes that the benefits of unions often go without consideration. "I once gave a speech to a group of small businessmen and the Chamber of Commerce," he says. "I asked the group this question: 'If the workers in this community don't earn good union wages, who's going to buy cars, appliances and furniture?' You could see in the eyes of the audience; it was something they hadn't thought about. Small businesses shouldn't be anti-union. Labor creates income that helps support businesses."

Kendall began working with unions 30 years ago, after meeting builders who had become sick due to asbestos exposure. He became interested in workplace safety issues and the labor movement and he lobbies for the AFL-CIO in Richmond and Washington. "I have never sent them a bill, I do everything pro bono," he says of his lobbying work. "I'm lobbying on behalf of working people, and the rights of people who work for a living."

As a lobbyist, Kendall believes he can advocate for those who often go unheard. "One employee can't muster enough of a voice to speak out about what's being done," he says. "Workers are terrified for their families and well-being. And they've become the ping-pong balls for everybody who says we have to make cuts."

Not all created equal

Laura Whitely, the secretary and treasurer of the American Federation of Musicians Local 123 in Richmond, has been working with the union since



Amanda Mansfield in a recent play in Roanoke.

1948, when she met her husband. "A lot of people don't think musicians have a union," Whitely says. "But there was a time you had to join or you couldn't play."

Local 123 largely covers the Richmond Symphony Orchestra, and absorbed the Roanoke AFM chapter when it could no longer support itself. "The union provides protection you can count on. Otherwise, you're on your own," Whitely says. "You can sign a contract, but that doesn't mean they will honor it."

The union also provides musicians freedom to concentrate on their craft, so they don't have to worry about their benefits, work contracts, and bargaining. "It is enough of a job to keep practicing," Whitely, who is not a musician, says.

She believes musicians should have a certain level of proficiency before joining. "If you're not very good, you're just wasting your money," she says.

But some artists' unions have restrictions that deter creative professionals. Amanda Mansfield, who works at the Roanoke Children's Theatre and is a well-known actress in the region, opted not to be a union member, partly because of where she lives. "Union actors, designers and choreographers are generally highly experienced and have worked all around the country, bringing both their talents and current trends





Dan Smith

CWA Local President Chuck Simpson explains a position.



Dan Smith

Brandle Trigg of CWA shows her sentiment.

in theatre to Roanoke Children's Theatre," she says.

"RCT typically has one equity contract per show and hires regional and local professional adults and as well as local youth to round out the cast in our four productions per year. We follow rules and regulations established by The Actors Equity Association based on the size of our theater and the price of our tickets.

"As for me, I opted out of joining the union right at the start of my career in order to allow myself greater odds for finding work. Competition is fierce, and because of where I have lived, I would have severely limited my ability to work if I'd gone on and gotten those last two Equity points. Staying non-union let me work both in Equity and Non-Equity houses—and for all kinds of other theatres—and let me enjoy the freedom to choose."

Everything on the Line

Chuck Simpson, president of the Communications Workers of America Local 2204, and an employee at Verizon Communications wants to give credit where it is due. "When starting with C&P telephone company in 1993," he says, "I realized very quickly that the great benefits, good wages, retirement and job security were there for us. [It was] not because the company had given it to us, but because our CWA Union had negotiated it for us."

"Unions paved the way for the middle class, and pioneered benefits such as paid health care and pensions along the way. One of the primary reasons why our current



Tom Field

Eric Angel

Strength in union >

"The reason many employers dislike the idea of a unionized shop is because they fear the loss of control in the way they operate their business," says Eric Angel, recording secretary for the United Steelworkers Local 1023 and an employee at Yokohama Tire Corporation in Salem. "But in reality, a good labor/management relationship can enhance problem-solving and provide a more efficient process of communicating operational problems to various levels of management.

"Strikes get a lot of publicity. However, they are infrequent and represent only a small percentage of labor/management negotiations. There is a misconception that union benefits and wages have broken companies, but the reality is that a union negotiating committee can only get what a company is willing to give, and often union members make sacrifices for their employer before the CEO and corporate boards do.

"All workers today are facing rampant disparity between incomes of the richest Americans and average Americans, and it will take a movement, not an institution, to change that. The structure of our unions today can provide the spark for such a movement, but it takes time and Americans have to feel the need to get involved—our economy was at its strongest when we were the most unionized," Angel says.

—Laura Purcell



recession endures is that workers do not have the purchasing power they need to drive our economy," says Naomi Bolden, a customer service sales representative for Verizon Communications and the Roanoke area vice president for Local 2204.

Bolden has worked both union and non-union jobs, and finds there is great disparity. "There's a huge difference," she says. Without a union, she says, "you don't have a voice. You are just at the employer's mercy."

As Verizon employees and CWA members, Bolden and Simpson participated in the strike (in late August). "We're fighting for everything we have gained over the last 50 years," Bolden says. "Bargaining rights, healthcare, retirement benefits, vacation. Basically, [it adds up to] \$20,000 a year per member lost with all the multiple concessions."

If you don't, we will

"I get along with the union representatives I deal with, but basically, the whole premise of unions and the need for unions no longer exists," says Clinton Morse, an attorney at LeClair Ryan in Roanoke. In January, Morse and his colleague Mark B. Goodwin published the book *Maintaining Non-Union Status: The Big Picture and the Nuts and Bolts*.

"The purpose of the book is two-fold," says Morse. "It has sections on good union-free management practices, things responsible companies can do to make unions unnecessary. Treat your employees fairly and involve them in meaningful ways in the business. They don't need a voice from the outside the company to represent them," says Morse, so long as the company treats its employees with respect.

Morse's book also advises business owners about how to respond to union organizing. "If a company does a good job of communicating and educating employees on the pros and cons of unions, most employees will want to



"I think that's the responsibility of every good company. They have to take good care of their employees, or unions will. Employees should always have the right to organize, if they're not getting a square deal. It is the responsibility of business to make unions unnecessary."

—Clinton Morse,
LeClairRyan



Dan Smith

Attorney Clinton Morse: "The need for unions no longer exists."

avoid it," says Morse. "The day-to-day wear and tear that unions inject into a workplace creates a needless 'us vs. them' mentality."

"Unions call themselves the voice of working people. Unions do not act in the interest of people they represent. It isn't reasonable for a union to demand the entire cost of healthcare for employees. If unions succeed in their demands, it causes companies to become uncompetitive, and the ultimate result is job losses," Morse says.

"When I was a young labor lawyer in Houston, I worked with a man named Chris Dixie," Morse continues. "He was a union labor lawyer, a wonderful lawyer and a great old gentleman. He was helping unions organize the Gulf Coast, at a time when they really were needed there.

"He was a great teacher. Every year, he would have a school at the University of Houston for managers of companies. His message was, 'Either you take care of them, or we will.' I've always remembered that.

"I think that's the responsibility of every good company. They have to take good care of their employees, or unions will. Employees should always have the right to organize, if they're not getting a square deal. It is the responsibility of business to make unions unnecessary." 



Business cards: A perspective >

Our modern day business cards are the legacy of two types of cards that were prevalent in the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries. In 17th Century England, the use of trade cards was widespread.

Merchants put advertising and maps on their cards—early marketing. During the 18th and 19th Centuries, calling cards were the norm. “Calling” was another word for visiting, and presenting these cards became a ritualized, complicated social obligation.

Until a decade or so ago, we didn’t think much about our business cards. We handed them out willy-nilly, with no thought to form and style. It took the Japanese businessman to demonstrate to us the importance of properly presenting and receiving the business card. Today, let’s examine what business cards are really all about, and what they say about us and the business we represent.

Our business cards say who we are and they represent our business or profession. We want to present ourselves with confidence and authority in all aspects of our professional life, from the way we dress to the way we conduct ourselves in a dining situation. Our business card is just one more way in which we show we know what we are doing professionally.

A good business card is one that clearly states your business and your contact information. Some professions, such as the legal profession, will have a more conservative card, perhaps white with black printing. Other professions, such as the graphic arts, can get away with a more arresting visual impact. Others might have a logo on their card to aid in branding. The important thing to remember, though, is that the printing be easily readable, and the card not too fussy.

- Never present a card that is wrinkled, stained or torn; that’s not nice.
- Carry your cards in a good quality leather card case, never plastic.
- Keep a supply of your cards handy at all times—you look foolish when you can’t produce one.
- Don’t hand out cards indiscriminately at private social events. It’s tacky.
- Don’t pass cards out like flyers—makes you look pushy.
- Present your card to the receptionist each time you visit—pays dividends.
- Junior executives should not press their card on senior executives—wait until asked.
- Present your card with the print facing the recipient—you’ve already read it.
- When receiving a card, take time to read it—give value to the giver.
- Don’t write notes on the card in the presence of the giver—very unprofessional.

Business cards are one of your smallest business expenses, but they can have a significant impact on your bottom line. 

Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:

A lesson from the Japanese gives this humble business accoutrement a little status and style.

Setting goals, standards in the relationship >

Dear Getting a Grip: My husband is going through a difficult time and it's starting to affect my own job. He was laid off nearly a year ago and after about eight months of looking for a job as if searching for a job were his job, he has given up, become slovenly and depressed, and started grumbling constantly about everything. He is showing signs of resentment that my job is going well. He has shown up at my office unannounced three times in the last month and his presence is disruptive, to say the least. How do I keep him from intruding and help him get back to the full-time job of looking for work? It is straining our marriage to the point of breaking.

Dear Keep Him, Help Him: When people can't make happen what they need and want in their lives, they naturally feel powerless and helpless. When what they need and want involves the behavior of others, and those others tantalizingly refuse to give what's needed or do what's wanted, we can feel angry, victimized and helpless. Examples: Your husband can't make the HR person value him enough to hire him for a job. You can't make your husband keep looking for a job or keep respecting you and your job. Troubled feelings abound.

We need to feel a personal sense of power over ourselves and our destinies. However, over and over again, in our personal and work lives, we are confronted with this personal power-thwarting truth: We cannot control others. We cannot make anyone do anything. Your husband and you want what can't be.

The only way to get a job in this terrible economy is to move or to retrain. Both are expensive, both are hard, both take time. Your husband will handle the realities of the job market in his own way, in his own time, or not, functionally or dysfunctionally. You have no control over what he does. You have control over what you do.

Getting a Grip: Waiting for others to change, to value us, to do the right thing, to do what we need or want, to ___ (fill in the blank) is a doomed strategy if our goal is forward motion. Sadly, regretfully, painfully, sometimes the people we want to have in our lives simply aren't, can't or won't go at the pace we need to sustain our life's dreams. Set a deadline, decide the scale and the increments upon it that will meet your needs (Never coming to your office? Coming to your office once per month?), express explicitly, specifically and minimally the behavior you need to see in your husband, and let go. The odds are he won't agree to your terms, and you'll be tempted to abandon them, but the terms of the deal will have been stated. When the deadline is up, you'll both know whether or not yours is a short-term or long-term gig. 

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



Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:

When it's not working and it's affecting work, you need to establish goals and boundaries and maybe even re-define.



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
T-shirts and undershirts have specific roles in men's dress, but they're not always worn as they should be.

Men's T-shirts >

Apparently an ongoing debate is raging as to whether undershirts are necessary under men's dress shirts, what type is appropriate and should they show?

Men wear undershirts for a variety of reasons:

- Comfort—to keep chafing down and to stay warm or cool.
- Hygiene—to keep sweat away from the dress shirt and keep the shirt clean longer.
- Modesty—to disguise body shape and bulges that are Too Much Information.
- Style—some men prefer the look of a t-shirt under an open collared dress shirt.

Undershirts come in crew neck, v-neck and tanks. Crew necks echo the shape of the dress shirt collar and are most common. They cover the chest hair and armpit area, while protecting the shirt from excessive sweating. V-necks are acceptable under dress shirts except that they may show under the shirt and often expose chest hair. Tanks fail to cover chest hair and armpits, offering no protection against excessive sweating and they are easily visible through the shirt.

Undershirts are traditionally of cotton, with new cotton/spandex blends helping t-shirts retain their shape and prolong their life. New performance fabrics excel at wicking moisture from the body and keeping the dress shirt drier.

Opinions vary on what is appropriate. Some see no reason to wear an undershirt under a dress shirt—others feel underdressed without one. As a law student, my son states strongly that “the undershirt is another essential part of the suit. It gives a clean look to your business appearance and you don’t need to clean your clothes as often. People don’t take you seriously unless you’re impeccably presented.”

Doug Kidd of Tom James in Roanoke, believes, “If you see flesh through the shirt in the chest region, wear a t-shirt, especially if chest hair is visible.”

Joyce Strimple, of J Hilburn Men's Clothiers, agrees and adds, “If a man wears a t-shirt under a dress shirt, he should wear a v-neck or keep his collar buttoned. He should not show his t-shirt—it’s just like women showing their bra. It’s unprofessional and a turnoff in business.”

Whatever your personal preference, keep in mind:

- Undershirts should be clean, crisp, and not stretched out at the neck.
- Eliminate visible t-shirt lines by wearing heavier outer shirts.
- Dark t-shirts may be worn under dark dress shirts; however, white dress shirts require white t-shirts. 

30 years later: The lessons >

Executive Summary:

Andy Hudick has been at it for three decades and has learned a few things. Here's some of it.

By Andy Hudick

The request from the FRONT was for my simplified version of what I have learned about investing after closing in on 30 years of being a fee-only financial planner. "In a nutshell" the assignment called it.

Make a plan, take the action. It sounds so simple when you write it down. It is not so simple in practice. Make a plan, take the actions required to complete the plan.

I have met with thousands of people over the years and heard their stories and seen the results of their efforts and actions. The successful people and families have a purpose, a goal and a system and they implement the actions to make the system function. The unsuccessful folks have similar goals but do not have a workable system or fail to actually make the system work.

I have seen investors become successful with their investment goals by buying real estate, by buying stocks and by buying bonds. Each form of investment has had various good and bad years but the secret to being successful in accumulating the financial resources needed to reach the goal for themselves and their family was to create a system; and then to implement the system.

There is no magic answer or magic formula. You just need a little diligence in working the plan. You first need a plan and to have the plan you need a goal. Then, with the purpose defined, you can create the set of steps you need to take to make the action a reality.

Are you a good parent? Are you good at a sport? Are you more than competent at your chosen career? None of this happened without creating some version of a plan and working toward achieving a result you found acceptable. So it is in investing.

Write down your goals for your investments. Create a system that will allow you to be successful. Follow the system.

This seems so basic but after 30 years of watching individual investors and their families succeed and fail, this is what it comes down to: Create a plan. Follow it. 



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Randolph Walker

Heman Marshall and Christine Underwood of Woods Rogers

Physician non-compete: An update >

Executive Summary:

The Stark Law is nearly 20 years old and has seen some changes, but the latest may be the most important. It gives hospitals more flexibility in recruiting physicians.

By Randolph Walker

An advisory opinion recently issued by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will affect the agreements that medical practices and hospitals are allowed to make with newly recruited doctors.

The Stark law, named after Rep. Pete Stark, its original sponsor, governs certain aspects of the relationship between physicians, medical practices and hospitals. It prohibits a physician from ordering certain services from businesses with which the physician has a financial relationship. For example,

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a physician would be prohibited from referring a patient to a hospital that the physician has a financial interest in, unless the relationship meets certain terms.

Financial interest can include payments made by hospitals to induce physicians to relocate, though there are subsidy exceptions. The payments to newly-recruited physicians are usually in the form of a loan. This gives the hospital access to a new specialist who will provide enhanced care to the community as well as order services the hospital can bill for, says Heman A. Marshall, chairman of the Health Care Group at Woods Rogers in Roanoke.

The Stark law dates from 1992, and prohibited practices from putting restraints on new doctors' ability to practice in the service area of a recruiting hospital. It banned any form of a covenant-not-to-compete.

Some practices had wanted to include restrictive covenants to protect their investment in new physicians, much as non-compete rules protect other businesses. For the practice that loses a new doctor, "the investment is there but they haven't recognized the return," says Christine Underwood of Woods Rogers' Health Care Group.

In Phase III of the Stark II regulations, issued in 2007, CMS "lifted the absolute ban, indicating that certain types of restrictive covenants may be acceptable if they do not 'unreasonably' restrict the physician's ability to continue practice," says Marshall. "The exact parameters of 'acceptable' restrictive covenants were unstated."

Advisory Opinion Ao-2011-01 issued this summer outlines the general approach CMS will use when reviewing "covenants not to compete."

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Dan Smith

Carilion Clinic's Nancy Agee: New "regulations will still give individual physicians some flexibility to practice elsewhere in the general area."

Carilion Clinic CEO Nancy Agee says, "We think the new regulations will still give individual physicians some flexibility to practice elsewhere in the general area, should they choose to do so, while protecting our ability to recruit and retain the doctors we need in the Carilion system."

"Physician recruitment has gone on since at least the 1970s, particularly in rural areas where it is hard to recruit doctors," Marshall says. "CMS understands there are good sides to physician recruitment. You can have a 'covenant not to compete,' but it has to be reasonable."

Agee says she welcomes the changes, especially in view of a shortage of physicians and specialists that is expected to get worse in the near term.

"It only makes sense for Carilion to do all it can to assure that we have a sufficient number of physicians in each specialty area to meet the needs of all patients in the region," says Agee.

In the specific case covered by the advisory opinion, a time period of one year was considered reasonable; the area covered by the covenant was restricted to a 25 mile radius of the recruiting hospital (which still allowed the physician to provide care in part of the hospital's service area); and the non-compete provision complied with state laws.

"That is why we partner with other health care providers in the region to help identify highly capable physicians and bring them here. But recruiting physicians ... is expensive. We believe some modest protection for entities like ours is necessary so that we can assure Carilion's patients that we can meet their needs on their timetable not ours." 

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Angela Reynolds

Team player at LewisGale >

Executive Summary:

CFO Angela Reynolds has seen a rapid rise through the health care organization, at least partly because of her global approach.

By Gene Marrano

The days of sitting in a corner office and counting beans, as some believe CPAs are wont to do, is a thing of the past where Angela Reynolds is concerned. Her rise through the HCA system has been marked by milestones that focus on reducing expenses, increased efficiencies, streamlining operations and high-growth strategies.

Health system CFOs are at the table

when contracts are negotiated with physicians, something that Reynolds says was unlikely even a decade ago.

Reynolds credits market president Victor Giovannetti and other high-ranking HCA officers in the LewisGale Regional Health System with working together in a highly competitive environment, one that is also being squeezed in many cases by reduced reimbursements from Medicare and commercial payers.

"We work closely ... every hour of every day," says Reynolds, who is often called upon to review Giovannetti's strategic visions through a financial lens. "We can have a lot of great ideas that from a business perspective might not make sense for us." Operating as a system, instead of as four separate hospitals, has also meant financial performance improvement: "Clearly there were benefits to that," she says.

That doesn't mean that a service sorely needed in the local community isn't implemented because it doesn't show the highest financial potential, Reynolds is quick to add. "[If] it is the right thing to do for our patients and for the community. You're just not always approaching it strictly from a pure financial perspective. It's a business that's different than anything else. You deal with people's lives every day."

Government mandates to deliver more cost effective, high-quality care mean greater standardization of practices is needed. "You've got a lot of deviation you need to get out of the system in order to accomplish that," says Reynolds.

Technology that can make efficiencies easier to achieve and improve diagnosis capability also can overwhelm people at times, but managing that balance helps a hospital system move forward, according to Reynolds. An earlier role as ethics and compliance officer helped her learn how to deal with people across the HCA spectrum, experience that helps now when trying to sell

In Brief

Name: Angela H. Reynolds, CPA

Age: 44

Title: Market Chief Financial Officer, LewisGale Regional Health System

Location: Salem

Background: Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting, minor in finance from Marshall University in West Virginia. Reynolds became a Certified Public Accountant while in Tennessee. She has worked for HCA, the parent company of LewisGale, since 1996, beginning as a senior manager for internal audits after being employed by several CPA firms in Tennessee. In 2001 Reynolds, a West Virginia native, came to Virginia as the Chief Financial Officer/Ethics & Compliance Officer for Montgomery Regional Hospital and Alleghany Regional Hospital. From there it was on to Salem in 2006 as CFO for what is now known as LewisGale Medical Center. When the four HCA hospitals in the region were more fully integrated Reynolds became the market CFO in 2008.

Business Philosophy: "In this industry relationships are important. How you manage, how you lead has to be relationship-built. It can't strictly be from a financial perspective. Its so important for a CFO, [who is] much more a strategic partner with the CEO [than in the past]."

change to system employees.

HCA is probably in the "earlier stages" of digitizing medical records, says Reynolds. When that happens HCA facilities and physicians can share information faster, leading to improved patient care. Reynolds is proud of process streamlining she helped implement, changes that have reduced the time needed for assembling the information necessary before a patient can be billed for services. "Certainly

that has a cash flow implication," she says.

The move to a market-based organization means Reynolds must view her job on a more global basis, "versus just the impact [on] LewisGale Medical Center." That includes imaging centers, the cancer center in Pulaski and employee-physician practices outside of the hospital grounds. "We've tried to do that even more in this market, to benefit each hospital," she says. There's little doubt she's a true believer in the team approach. 



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Janeson Keeley

netFRONT

PC vs. Mac II: Getting personal >

Executive Summary:

The battle rages and it sometimes it comes down to something as simple as whether the software fits or not.

By Janeson Keeley

(This is the second of two parts on this topic.)

If you want to get into a spirited discussion without mentioning politics or religion, ask

a group of people to weigh in on the pros and cons of Macs vs. PCs. I did so on Facebook and got a lot of enthusiastic responses.

John Lusher, owner of John Lusher Consulting, switched from a PC to a Mac several years ago. "I was tired of the conflicts, problems with updates and just the general less than promised results that Microsoft offered on the PC platform," reports Lusher, who adds, "I miss absolutely nothing about PCs."

Pilot/photographer Pat Richards, owner of Airshots Aerial Photography, is considering switching to the Mac on the recommendation of others in the industry. "I'm nowhere near as knowledgeable about the post-production stuff as my full-time aerial photography associates. Most, if not all, of the ones I've talked to use and highly recommend [the] Mac," he says.

"In August of last year I spilled an entire over-sized mug of coffee on two, count them, two Dell laptops. They died," relates author Brooke McGlothlin. On the recommendation of several friends, she purchased a Mac. "I was apprehensive at first, not knowing if it would be hard to take a lifetime of Windows use and translate it into Apple-speak, but I've loved every second of owning my MacBook Pro. It's very user-friendly, I don't worry about viruses anymore, and it just seems to be more intuitive than the many PCs I've had over the years.

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Can't imagine going back," she says.

"Basically, I use a PC because I always have and all of my photography software (which is horribly expensive) is for the PC version," says Lisa Upchurch of peacefulposters photography. "My husband and daughter use Macs, and I can use them, too, but to replace all my software, laptop and desktop would be just too expensive for me."

William Frost solves the Mac/PC software dilemma by using Parallels software. "Parallels is awesome," he reports, "You can actually use Windows and Mac [OSX] at the same time and dedicate resources according to your preferences. It is my experience that Windows works better on a Mac than a PC."

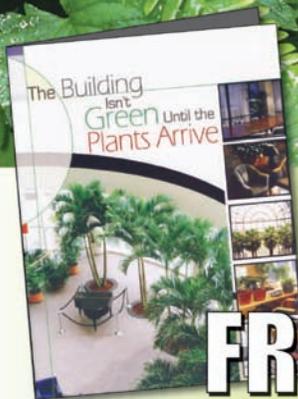
But, in the end, it's all about personal preference. Lizetta Staplefoote of Rackspace uses the Mac for work but prefers the PC

for personal use. "I think the preference is strongly influenced by what you were introduced to computers on," she asserts. "The programs that I was introduced to on Macs, I prefer to use on Macs only. The PC experience feels foreign. However, Word, which I learned on a PC, I can't get used to on the Mac. It feels backward." 

(As I have not yet figured out how to add more hours to my days (other than having switched from a PC to a Mac last year, which helped me gain an average of two hours of working computer time a week), this is my last column for Valley Business FRONT. Many thanks to Dan Smith and Tom Field for giving me the opportunity and excuse to meet so many helpful and knowledgeable people. My gratitude also to all who have so generously offered their expertise to me as I conducted my research. And, to you, the readers, I hope you learned stuff. See you online.)



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Marilyn Samuels with examples of the many products Maxx Performance works to improve.



I don't want anybody to tell me what to do. Just tell me what needs to be done and I'll figure it out myself.

—Winston Samuels

Performing at full throttle >

Executive Summary:

At Maxx Performance in Roanoke, the goal is to make whatever it is better than it was.

By Michael Miller

Remember those old BASF commercials that said, “We don’t make a lot of the products you buy. We make a lot of the products you buy better”? That could be the motto of Maxx Performance Inc., a company that recently relocated to Roanoke from New York.

Winston Samuels, a Virginia Tech alumnus who started the company, says it a different way: “What we do is increase the functionality of raw materials.” That’s possibly a less memorable tag line than BASF’s but Samuels is a Ph.D. scientist, not a PR wizard.

For Samuels, last October’s ribbon cutting ceremony for the new manufacturing plant in Roanoke was the culmination of a years-long journey back to the area that was instrumental in forming his adult and professional life. A native of Jamaica, Samuels arrived in Blacksburg in 1978 to pursue advanced degrees in nutrition

and animal science, having recently earned a bachelor’s degree in animal and poultry science from Tuskegee University.

During his stay in Blacksburg, Samuels became close to his academic mentor, Dr. Joe Fontenot in the Animal and Poultry Science department. In fact, the Fontenots would stand in for Samuels’ deceased parents at his wedding in Lynchburg. This period of Samuels life instilled in him a desire to eventually return to the area and make an impact of his own.

After receiving his degree, Samuels began working a series of jobs relating to his field, such as improving animal feed byproducts and increasing milk production in dairy cows. For much of his professional life he was associated with Monsanto Corporation, which eventually landed him in Syracuse, N.Y.

It was there in 2003 that Samuels decided to feed his entrepreneurial spirit by starting Maxx Performance, focusing on applying technology he developed to encapsulate various materials used in both animal feedstocks and food products.

“I was always very independent,” says Samuels when discussing his reasons for attempting a startup. “I don’t want anybody to tell me what to do. Just tell me what needs to be done and I’ll figure it out myself.”

Samuels has figured it out very well, apparently.

After getting Maxx Performance off the ground, he began to look for ways to bring it closer to Virginia Tech. After shopping around the area to find a suitable location, he landed in Roanoke in a facility that had previously been a milk processing plant.

"The logistics were great, with easy access to the major interstates. We needed an existing facility, and Roanoke had the milk processing plant available that was perfect for us," says Samuels.

Maxx Performance products will probably never be household names, but the products they go into already are: Tyson's chicken and Entemann's Doughnuts are just two known in the region. The encapsulants are used to protect certain ingredients so they can perform their functions better. Green Tea extract, for example, is becoming more important as a food additive because of its anti-oxidants.

But it suffers from a very bitter taste. By applying encapsulants, Maxx Performance can prevent the bitterness on the tongue while still providing the benefits of the anti-oxidants to the body.

The biggest challenge Samuels has experienced in growing his company is in finding suitable employees.

"I am looking for employees who see this as an opportunity, not just a job," says Samuels. "It's not enough anymore to just show up, put in your hours and go home. I want them to come in and spend time learning."

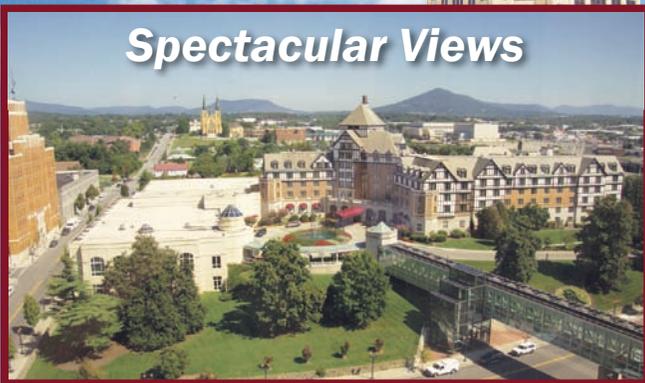
Samuels will be providing more opportunity for local employees as he completely relocates his business from New York into the Roanoke facility. And that will be another step in his plan to pay back what he received from the region many years ago. 

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Tourists from Maryland and New Jersey eat ice cream on the front porch.



Bottles of chocolate milk being filled.

Work Spaces

Milk the old way >

Executive Summary:

Homestead Creamery combines a touch of nostalgia with environmentalism and produces popular milk products.

By David Perry

Donnie Montgomery and Dave Bower started with about 160 head of dairy cattle and an idea. Today, their dairy products can be found on the shelves of national grocery chains and in college dining halls.

"I had two sons that were interested in dairy and Dave was buying his father's dairy," says Montgomery. "Milk prices were pretty depressed at that time. We were just trying to add value to our product, basically. Our goal was to process and market our own milk."

Today Homestead Creamery in the Burnt Chimney area of Franklin County employs about 30 people and produces a variety of milk products in its trademark glass bottles, as well as butter and its famous ice cream. Montgomery is president, while Bower is past president and a current board member.

Kroger carries Homestead's products, as does Whole Foods. Four local colleges offer Homestead Creamery milk on their menus. The company also runs four home delivery trucks. There's a store on Va. 122 in Burnt Chimney, whose parking lot is usually full.

While the company's cows are milked offsite at Bower's and Montgomery's nearby farms, the milk is brought by truck to the 6,000 square foot plant in Burnt Chimney, a former meat processing plant that Homestead renovated about 10 years ago.

"It already had the floors like we needed it and washable walls," says Montgomery. Milk is pumped off the trucks and into the raw milk room, where it's mixed with any number of ingredients before being pasteurized. Homestead increases the efficiency of its production line by mixing one product in the raw milk room while pasteurizing another batch elsewhere in the plant. "The pasteurizer is the main piece of equipment," says Montgomery. "If it's broken, nothing can go out the door."

Sanitation is a top priority. "All the equipment is washed every time we use it," Montgomery says. "If we have to stop production in the pasteurizer, we have to immediately follow it with water. It has to be cleaned immediately."

The operation wasn't always this smooth. "When we started, we were inefficient," says Montgomery. "Everybody needed to be trained, and then we didn't have enough product flowing through to get everybody as efficient as we should be."

When the company began production in January of 2001, it produced more products



Donnie Montgomery and the freezer.



Customers wait in line to order ice cream.

than was practical, including cupped yogurt, cheeses and dips, in addition to staples. Says Montgomery, "We soon realized that we'd have to focus on the most profitable and then come back to the other things as we became more efficient ... You build a team. As the production goes up, the efficiency goes up also, because you're making full utilization of the plant.

The glass bottles the company uses were part of the learning process. "That was a tough decision," Montgomery says. "We were looking for a niche. It requires more work, it's more trouble and it's more weight to haul. If we shut down, we have to go back and wash all the bottles because the bottles are sanitized."

Consumers like the environmental—and the

nostalgic—aspect of using glass, and it fits well with the company's "all-natural" branding. All of the milk comes from the two local farms, and the company doesn't give the cows added hormones. Montgomery says the company uses antibiotics to treat sick animals, and the milk from those cows is dumped for the following week.

Perhaps Homestead's most delicious bit of engineering is its ice cream maker, which consists of a large suspended storage tank filled with ice cream mix. Flavors are added and mixed in two machines at ground level, where the ice cream is hand-packed and stored in a large freezer nearby. Says Montgomery proudly, "As long as the mix stays cold in the tank, we can make ice cream for a week." 



Butter being packed into molds.



Ice cream mix container and mixers.



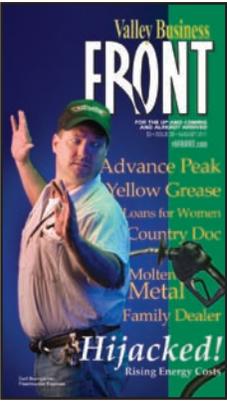
Recycled bottles going into the dishwasher.



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Kili Teh

Sandy Light: Mill Mountain easement
“was incredibly exciting for us.”

Preserving land in Western Virginia >

Executive Summary:

The Western Virginia Land Trust has, for the past 15 years, helped preserve our legacy (with a nice tax benefit).

By Kili Teh

When most people spend the weekend at places like Carvins Cove Natural Reserve or the Blue Ridge Parkway, they aren't likely to think about local conservation efforts that help keep these spaces enjoyable for generations. Since 1996, Western Virginia Land Trust has been working with landowners to conserve Western Virginia's natural resources: farms, forests, waterways and rural landscapes. The organization serves 10 counties in this region.

“The land trust does so much for our valley to preserve land and scenery,” says Sandy Light, president of WVLT. “This valley is so beautiful.” Light says that if the community

did not make conservation a priority, “we would be sorry later, and we would not be able to leave this area a better place than when we found it.”

Landowners permanently protect their land from certain types of development by using easements. An easement is a voluntary legal agreement made between a landowner and government agency or qualified nonprofit that prevents types of subdivision and commercial development. The landowner still owns the land, and the land remains private property after the easement takes effect. The limits on development are unique to each deed.

In 15 years the land trust has grown by leaps and bounds. Roger Holnback, executive director of WVLT, says when the organization started there was only one easement on 1,000 acres in the entire service area, which was held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. Now, the Land Trust holds many of its own. “Now we have 300 easements on 80,000 acres. I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish. We've done a lot of good here the last 10 years with Carvins Cove and Mill Mountain,” says Holnback.

According to its founding president, Barbara Lemon, the WVLT began when two people from Valley Beautiful Foundation, Jay Turner and Lucy Ellett, “contacted several interested citizens to determine their willingness to serve on an organizing board for a regional land trust. I was one of them. Rupert Cutler, the head of Virginia's Explore Park staff was another.” Lemon served as president for seven years.

Cutler says that WVLT has a mix of easements, some held by the WVLT, some by the VOF, and some co-held by both. Easements co-held by both organizations include Carvins Cove and Mill Mountain. “Under state law the WVLT could not hold conservation easements itself until it had been in business five years,” says Cutler, “but it contacted landowners and urged them to donate easements to the VOF during that initial period.”

Cutler says one of WVLT's first projects “was to work with Liza Field of Wytheville to save the 8,000-acre Big Survey roadless area in

Wythe County from development.”

One of the land trust’s more recent accomplishments includes getting a conservation easement on 11,363 acres of Carvins Cove in 2009 and most of Mill Mountain in 2010. “That was incredibly exciting for us,” says Light. “That was huge.”

A significant impetus has fueled this type of conservation for many years. Because the federal, and often state government, considers an easement a charitable gift, there are considerable federal, state, and estate tax benefits. This is because easement donors are giving away certain development rights to their land, decreasing its value.

According to the WVLT, the federal income tax deduction allows landowners to claim 50 percent of their adjusted gross income the year the donation is made. Any unused portion of the deduction can be carried up to an additional 15 years. Landowners who make more than 50 percent of their income from agriculture production, can deduct 100 percent of their income.

Virginia offers easement donors a tax credit worth 40 percent of their easement value. This can be applied against state income tax for up to 10 years. Since 2003, any unused tax credit can be sold.



David Hurt

Roger Holnbeck talks to Montgomery County land owner Ned Yost.

The estate tax benefit helps keep land in the family. It does this by reducing the estate by the value of the easement, lowering the estate taxes. Additionally, an extra 40 percent of the remaining value of the land may be excluded from this tax, up to \$500,000.

Holnbeck says WVLT has remained a strong influence in the community because it is a voice of moderation and its positive relationship with developers and local government. “We keep a neutral position view of the community,” he says. “We’re not too political. If we take a [stong] position, we alienate people. A neutral voice of reason is much more effective.”

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Dan Smith

Pam Berberich had a significant hand in preparing her new shop in Promenade Park in Roanoke.



Dan Smith

Pam Berberich: “Marketing, advertising, payroll—are difficult, but they are all challenges to my intellect.”

New home, same thrill >

Executive Summary:

Pam Berberich so loved the pottery business that she bought Glazed Bisque-It, but she had to learn it from scratch and her science training helped a lot.

By Kathy Surace

There’s something to be said for buying into what you like to do. Pam Berberich was a patron of Glazed Bisque-It on Roanoke City Market at the time it came on the market four years ago. She liked it so much, she bought it.

After a 14 year run on the Roanoke City Market, she ran into a dispute with the landlord and magnified parking problems recently and took the pottery-glazing business to Promenade Park on 419.

Pam, a chemist and former academic, claims no particular talent for art, but her knowledge of chemistry comes in handy when working with glazes. Like many of her customers, she says that she “can’t draw a straight line.” She typifies the scientist who finds much-needed creative outlet in the arts.

Pam admits to asking for and receiving little advice and instruction on running her new business. Two days of intense training with a kiln consultant on how to load and operate a

kiln were the total of preparation for her new venture. She laughs as she relates how one day she realized that she had been collecting state sales tax for several months and that “they probably wouldn’t let me keep that.”

Four years later and with the usual growing pains, she has earned business savvy and wisdom. Change is present in multiple facets of her life. After 20 years of marriage, she is now a single mom of two sons. Continuing problems with a leaky roof that damaged merchandise, perpetual parking problems, and a reluctance to sign a three-year lease under those circumstances led to her decision to move her business from the Roanoke City Market, a location she loved.

While she was making changes, she seriously considered changing the name to Glaze-It to simplify, but customers urged her to keep the clever turn of phrase and she listened.

The challenges leading up to her move might demoralize many business owners, but Pam saw it as an opportunity. She had plenty of new ideas she wanted to initiate in her shop, but lacked the space and layout to accommodate them. She knew, too, that her customers often found long-term parking to be difficult and this deterred potential customers. Customers, especially students, can be in the store for hours at a time.

Now Pam has a party room where she can seat groups celebrating events by painting their own pottery. She plans to expand her offerings to include a “Date Night” and a “Teen Night.”

Her popular "Ladies Night" features a "Bring Your Own Beverage" theme and will occur every third Friday of each month. These events will be closed to the public and by reservation. She also has room for more display items to give her customers ideas or to sell glazed pottery.

Pam loves her new location, seeing a shared energy with the surrounding businesses that include a children's boutique, an ice cream parlor and a wine shop.

Pam counts the unexpected changes she experienced as a blessing that pushed her into making some much-needed improvements. "That's what I love about it," she says. "Marketing, advertising, payroll—are difficult, but they are all challenges to my intellect. I study the numbers from last year and learn to plan for the next. The challenges I face are good for me—I wouldn't change a thing." 

In Brief

Name: Pam Berberich
Age: 49
Business: Glazed Bisque-It
Location: Roanoke
Background: Native of Bel Aire, Md. Her father was a designer for Buick and designed the classic 1967 Riviera. Trained as a chemist, taught organic chemistry at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. Worked three years in industry as a research and development chemist for Becton Dickinson. Spent 10 years in pharmaceutical sales. Divorced with two sons. Owner of Glazed Bisque-It for four years.

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Sarah Beth Jones

Ron Hutton: "These families entrust us to rebuild their homes and I tell folks we'll try to get them back to normal as quickly and easily as possible."

It's about more than making the sale >

Executive Summary:

Ron Hutton of Virginia Building Services sells construction services and repaired lives.

By Sarah Beth Jones

Generally speaking, when a person calls himself a salesman and claims that his gift for gab is his best source of income, it's tempting to run the other way. But Ron Hutton is no ordinary salesman.

One of eight kids with an only-child mother and home builder father, Ron was taught from an early age to do things right the first time, to put family first, and to be compassionate and helpful to others. The gab he got from his grandfather.

"He was a peddler," says Ron, who recalls his grandfather's sauerkraut as a favorite among the goods he made and sold. "My

mom said he was the only person during the depression with money."

Ron was born near his grandfather in Marion, where he lived until his family followed work to Bel Air, Md., in the 1950s. It was there that he met his wife of 39 years, Genevieve.

"We were high school sweethearts and she's still my buddy," says Ron.

It was after four years in the Navy and a couple of years of college that Ron discovered he could "make more money with my mouth," and a career in sales was born. "My mom said I could sell ice to the Eskimos and sand to the Arabs."

And though he likely could, Ron would never try. A perfect marriage of his love of construction and empathy for others, Virginia Building Services of Roanoke Inc., is "the best company I've ever worked for," says Ron. With three years at VBS under his belt, Ron has no intention of leaving until his eventual retirement.

VBS has been serving Southwest Virginia for 25 years, offering home repairs and

renovations with a focus on emergency services. Often, when Ron is meeting new clients, they've recently suffered flood or storm damage, or been through the trauma of a fire.

"It hits me hard to see someone suffering like that," says Ron. "Sometimes, they've lost everything. These families entrust us to rebuild their homes and I tell folks we'll try to get them back to normal as quickly and easily as possible."

In the midst of the heartache and fear that accompany damage to a family's most intimate refuge, Ron acts as a sort of guide; he ushers individuals and families through the minutia of recovery, decisions like selecting flooring, paints and cabinets, and navigating the often complex world of insurance claims and warranties.

Though Ron shows a personal sense of responsibility for every client, he always returns to his role as part of a team, saying everyone at VBS is "good at what we do and always tries to do right."

He gestures to the people on the other side of his office walls: the coworker who has been with VBS since its inception and whose two sons now also work for the company; the team spirit permeating the office; and the many ways that president Michael Levan works to support his employees and allow them to shape VBS by using

In Brief

Name:	Ron Hutton
Age:	58
Business:	Estimator for Virginia Building Services of Roanoke, Inc.
Location:	Roanoke
Type of Business:	Home Repairs and Restoration with a specialty in emergency services
Background:	Marion native; married to Genevieve 39 years; two adult children; two grandchildren. Loves working on his and his kids' homes; taking his grandchildren to the movies

their individual strengths and instincts.

Behind Ron's desk is a framed photograph of his late father and a piece of the tree where he would rest his rod while fishing. Even when not at work, Ron carries on his father's legacies both in construction and in caring for those he loves. Father of two and involved grandfather of two more, Ron beams with pride when he speaks of his family.

Like most people of great character, though, Ron is shy to talk about himself, nearly refusing an interview at all and instead saying, "I'm just doing my job—just one man in the team." 



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Architectural drawings of Food for Thought.

A classroom on the farm >

Executive Summary:

Students in Roanoke will get the opportunity to see exactly where their food comes from and how it gets to the table in this new class.

By Dan Smith

Sometime during the early spring planting period of 2012, you can expect to see youngsters working their plot of farmland at James Madison Junior High in Roanoke, a new part of their education.

The plot will be part of a new project that has been months in creation: Food for Thought. It is a partnership among Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke City and the city's school system. The intent is to give these city kids some idea where their food comes from, what's healthy and how it all works together environmentally.

The program will begin in the garden and wind up on the dining room table, with stops in the middle. It will look at business

relationships between farmers and schools, including distribution and production.

Cynthia Lawrence of Design Marketing in Roanoke was one of the original designers of the program, based on a similar effort in California, and she says the program will teach "the connection between nutrition and performance of the mind and body." She hopes it results in the improvement of the nutritional value of school lunches, as well.

As a business professional, Cynthia looks closely at the relationship of farmers making a living and how the supply chain works. The kids will learn to plant, cook and eat the right foods.

Todd Haymore, Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry in Virginia, says, "We find the Food for Thought project inspiring, in part because of the multidisciplinary approach used to help improve childhood nutrition, incorporate important coursework and provide a youth mentoring program. It will also connect participating schools with local farmers to help students, staff and community volunteers better understand our food supply chain and agriculture's importance to environmental and economic sustainability."

Cynthia says that with all the necessary approval in place, "we're kicking off our



fundraising in October. We expect the garden and building structures to be complete in Spring 2012, so that students can begin planting.”

Brent Cochran, director of the Local Environmental Agricultural Project, says, “It’s one thing to tell a kid to eat her greens because it’s good for her ... But when that same child germinates a seed, runs her hands through the soil, watches her plant grow, and then harvests those greens ... chances of that child becoming a healthy, conscious, and productive citizen, drastically improve. If kids can do it—and they are—maybe it will whip some adults into shape.”

Suzanne Moore of the Roanoke City School board says, the program “will enrich [students’] education by strengthening their curriculum, by emphasizing nutrition and healthy, local foods, and by connecting them with community mentors.”

Landscape architect Melissa Hodgekinson of Fiddlehead Landscape was “charged with the preparation of a garden design that would function as a supplemental educational tool and gathering space for the students, their associated schools and the community. From the very beginning, the idea was that once we formulated a solid concept for how the garden would function

for the students, it could then be replicated to any site, no matter its size or orientation.”

She describes it thusly: “Physically, the circular garden includes a centrally located gathering space with various task areas that radiate from it that include: raised garden planting beds that are irrigated, an amphitheater with stage structure for presentations and demonstrations, an outdoor classroom structure complete with work areas, restrooms and a lockable storage area, and service area complete with a greenhouse and compost bins.

“The garden space is enclosed with a dwarf fruit tree orchard and fencing to deter local wildlife. The notion of the circle format represents the ideas of cyclical change and processes, whether that be seasonal in terms of crop rotation or symbolic of the food growing process itself.”

Melissa says, “The idea of taking lessons learned in the classroom and then supplementing that with field experience that may include tasks such as preparing soils, planting seeds, nurturing plantings, harvesting fruits and vegetables and then preparing those edibles for consumption really excites children – enough to take those lessons home with them to share with their families.” 



Jonathan Roberts

Workers train at the New River Center for Energy Research and Training.

Building green: A how-to guide >

Executive Summary:

A federal program helps promote environmentally friendly building processes and create the next generation of builders in Christiansburg.

By David Perry

A local job-training program hopes to transform a federal grant into environmentally-friendly building programs that will last long after the funding is gone.

CREATES (Construction, Retrofitting, and Energy-Efficiency Assessment Training and Employment Systems) was the product of a \$3.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to Community Housing Partners in Christiansburg. Since its inception in January of 2010, the program has helped to train more than 400 job-seekers (and also the gainfully employed) in environmentally-sensitive building and alternative energy technologies.

"The goal of the program is to get people in jobs," says CREATES Employer Outreach

Specialist Jackie Pontius. "If you're a business trying to get to the next level in terms of implementing alternative and renewable energy technologies or energy efficient construction, we have workers that are definitely ready to fill those job needs."

Grant funding ends December 31. But never fear, says Pontius. "We'll no longer have \$4 million pumping into salaries and subsidizing training," but the program's sustainability plan calls for its partners to carry on the training mission once CREATES is gone. For example, area community colleges have incorporated the goals of the CREATES program into their existing construction and technology curriculums.

"With the CREATES funding, we were able to purchase new equipment at all the community colleges. That was renewable energy training equipment or energy efficient construction training equipment," says Pontius. "They're teaching the same things, but on renewable energy equipment rather than old-school equipment."

Pontius credits program partner Virginia Tech with jumpstarting CREATES: "Virginia Tech identified the funding source, and everybody came together and wrote different components of the grant."

"In 2009, there were about 700 people laid off in the transportation manufacturing

industry in southwest Virginia," Pontius says. Officials at Virginia Tech saw the job losses as an opportunity to retrain workers for green building and alternative energy jobs and fire up an industry that has exploded in other areas of the country.

CREATES funding has provided tuition or scholarships for workers who wish to either obtain an industry certification in green building or alternative energy, or for unemployed workers. One such site is the New River Center for Energy Research and Training, an initiative of Community Housing Partners.

Other program partners include Community Housing Partners, NewVA Corridor Technology Council, New River Community College, Wytheville Community College, Virginia Western Community College, New

River/Mount Rogers Workforce Investment Board, and the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board.

Pontius says the success stories are numerous. "There was a person who graduated from building construction at Virginia Tech and then couldn't find a job," she says. "He took our alternative energy program at New River Community College for two semesters and graduated with an alternative energy career studies certificate, and then got a job employed with a local alternative energy and green construction company."

Although the sun is setting on the grant funding soon, Pontius is optimistic about the effect that CREATES has had on local job training. "There are deliverables that will outlive the life of the grant." 



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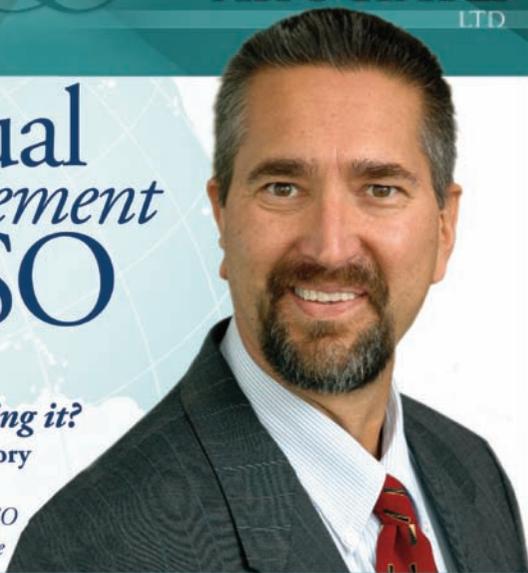
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Gene Marrano

New Artistic Director Scott Treadway

MMT makeover more than physical >

Executive Summary:

The re-opening of the main theater is still more than a year off, but progress has been steady so far.

By Gene Marrano

The \$30 million dollar makeover underway at Center in the Square in downtown Roanoke includes relatively minor changes for Mill Mountain Theatre, but that venerable institution has been busy rebuilding itself on an organizational level these days.

Cynthia Lawrence, vice president for the Mill Mountain Board of Directors, says her focus is on raising money for the operations of the business. She hopes that when Center in the Square reopens late next year more people will be drawn to the refurbished museums, the impressive new atrium, a rooftop café, the butterfly garden—and to Mill Mountain Theatre.

Changes to the Trinkle main stage include a new heating and cooling system, electrical

system work and upgraded stage lighting. The smaller “black box” space located on the Church Avenue side of Center in the Square—the Waldron Stage—is scheduled to reopen this fall (after a facelift that includes new lighting) and will help keep the Mill Mountain Theatre brand alive for the time being with more intimate productions and classes for aspiring stage actors.

“That building hasn’t been touched since it opened in 1983-84,” says Lawrence. “The sheer fact that they’re renovating and bringing it up ... to standards that are attractive to today’s art patron is a critical move for the community. It will naturally draw more traffic. Mill Mountain Theatre and Center in the Square are interdependent.”

The board of directors is espousing a more conservative, cautious approach when Mill Mountain Theatre raises the curtain again, making sure the productions mounted don’t strain the budget. It is a tough time to raise money, concedes Lawrence.

“We’re applying basic business principles to this reinvention [at Mill Mountain],” says Lawrence, who owns a small business, Design Marketing in Roanoke. “It’s a new business model based on a balance sheet and all the accounting principles we would hope to impart on a non-profit.” Large

donors, Lawrence says, are "extremely pleased with the cleanup effort," and Mill Mountain's positive cash flow position.

Lawrence says long-term debt problems have been resolved. "We may do fewer productions, but we will do them well. We're not going to overspend our budget [just] to put a lot of stuff on the stage."

Face-to-face meetings with creditors and former sponsors have been promising. The board has already secured five-figure sponsorship pledges towards Mill Mountain's re-launching; Lawrence says a capital campaign geared towards the general public will take place once all of their ducks are lined up, perhaps early next year. "Right now there's just a lot of one on one meetings."

Lawrence says the board is pleased with the efforts of new producing artistic director Scott Treadway, who has jumped right in, making his own pitch to potential sponsors and donors. Treadway came to town from the Flat Rock Playhouse (the State Theatre of North Carolina) in Western North Carolina earlier this year. The planned renovations at Mill Mountain and Center in the Square "certainly made [the position] more appealing."



Dan Smith

Cynthia Lawrence: "We're applying basic business principles to this reinvention."

Treadway is hopeful that the old Shenandoah Hotel building at the corner of Williamson Road and Campbell Avenue—owned by Center in the Square and currently for sale—is taken off the market. It now houses Mill Mountain offices on a temporary basis, but also features dorms for visiting actors and rehearsal space. "This is really a big selling point for Mill Mountain Theatre. The housing is a big deal."

Treadway is working to take care of season ticket holders that were left in the lurch when Mill Mountain shut down. "We have to make amends, that's real important to me. Those are the theatergoers in this community." He aims for a Trinkle Stage grand reopening early in 2013. 

fromtheeditr.blogspot.com

More
Dan Smith
than most can stand...



An envelope for the house >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *A realistic evaluation of your building's energy loss is the first step toward saving a lot of money and chipping in for a better environment.*

When Barry Martin told me that what I had described as my "tight little house" had the equivalent of an open 36-by-36-inch window right in the middle, I was mortified. The house is a 1,200-square-foot stucco with newish replacement windows and a solid structure that a housing inspector had pronounced healthy when I bought the house a few months ago.

Out of curiosity, as much as anything else, since I was pretty smug about how well insulated the house was, I asked Barry and his business partner Monica Rokicki-Guajardo (they own Better Building Works, www.betterbuildingworks.com) to perform a full energy survey (they call it a "home envelope assessment"). That resembles an inspection, but it is much more comprehensive and focuses on energy efficiency.

I discovered that every hole that has ever been drilled into this 60-year-old house lets air out; every door and window must be tested for air loss; insulation is rarely adequate and even the lack of a finished wall in one of my upstairs closets was resulting in loss of heated and cooled air.

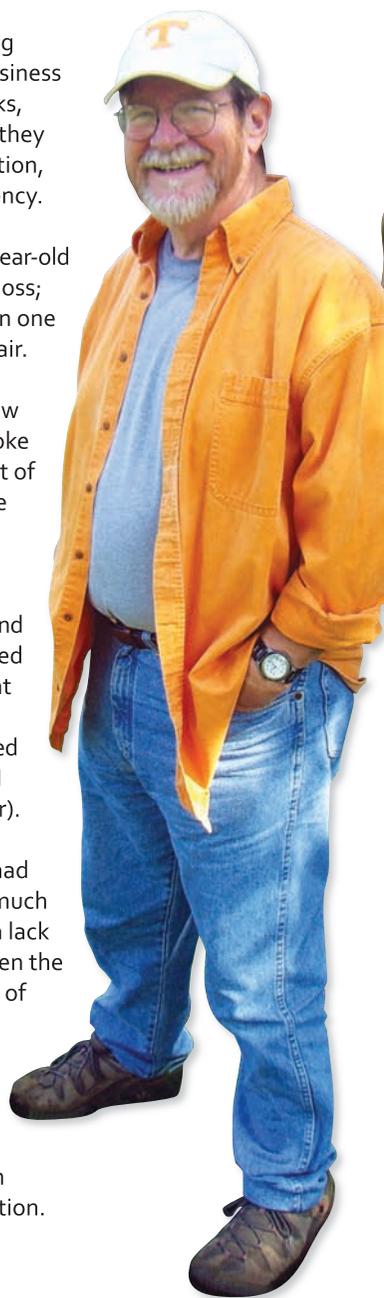
Barry is a carpenter and former special operations Marine (he blew things up) and Monica worked for Balzer and Associates in Roanoke as an architect before joining Barry in this venture. Each has a list of environmental certifications and they employ standards from the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), among others, in their work.

Their assessment is rigid and the recommended repairs, upgrades and renovations all consider the "envelope" of the house. They provided me with a detailed report, including photographs of the work that needed to be done to create a truly "tight little house" and the estimate on the work was less than \$2,000, an amount they predicted would be returned to me in about a year of normal heat/AC use (I use the AC only very rarely, so my payback could take a bit longer).

Among the problems they found were a clothes dryer vent that had elbows in several places, clogging it and making the dryer work much harder (and more expensively); appliances with no Energy Star; a lack of proper weather stripping on all the doors; no insulation between the basement and main floor; not enough insulation in the attic; lack of seals on plumbing and electrical "penetrations"; an un-insulated water heater; an oil furnace; and a lot of things that are fine for the old code, but needed updating for efficiency.

Monica and Barry estimated the savings that would result from repairing the problem areas would be a bit more than two million BTUs for the air sealing and more than 1.6 million for floor insulation.

continued on Page 52



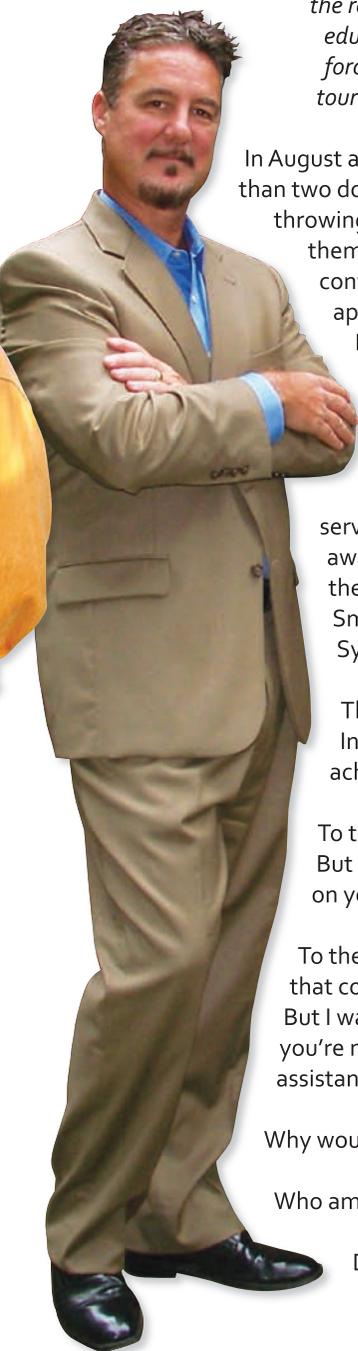
Playing to win >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

*"It's only right we ask everyone to pay their fair share. This is not class warfare. It's math."
—Barack Obama, September 19, 2011.*

"There is nobody in this country who got rich on his own. Nobody. You built a factory out there—good for you. But I want to be clear. You moved your goods to market on the roads the rest of us paid for. You hired workers the rest of us paid to educate. You were safe in your factory because of police forces and fire forces that the rest of us paid for..." —Elizabeth Warren, August talking tour on video, posted September 21, 2011.



In August and September, a group of advertising professionals reviewed more than two dozen applications from area non-profits. The organizations were throwing in their bids for free creative services; which would be provided to them from a 24-hour non-stop production session. A special board was convened to "award" the services to only a selected number of agency applicants. The program—operated by the American Advertising Federation (AAF / Roanoke) club—is called CreateAthon.

Also in August and September, a small business development center collected more than 150 applications from area small businesses. The businesses were competing for a package of over \$30,000 in publicity and various management and operational services. A special panel was formed to decide who will win the various awards, as the entrants were systematically culled to the top 20, and then the finalists. The program—operated by the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center and Lynda McNutt Foster's Synergy outfit—is called EXPAND!

There are programs and contests like these running all the time. In most cases, the rewards are based on a combination of achievement potential and need.

To the non-profits who got the free creative services, I say bravo. But I want to be clear. You didn't just become a worthy charity all on your own. You had a lot of help along the way. A lot of help.

To the small businesses who got the cash and valuable business services that could very well take your operation to the next level, I say great job. But I want to be clear. You didn't get where you are all on your own. And you're not going to get to the next step on your own either. You received assistance. A lot of assistance.

Why would I say these things?

Who am I *really* talking to?

Does anyone believe the non-profit organizations think they were

continued on Page 52

Smith / My View

from Page 50

The evaluation by itself cost a little more than \$400 on this small house (it goes up, depending on the size and age of the house, and actually averages around \$2,000, says Monica).

In addition to the envelope work they suggested, Barry stressed that the oil heat was expensive and inefficient, but would make a good backup to a ductless heat pump with a SEER rating of about 23, which means it is far more efficient than what you remember heat pumps being. The heat pump doesn't work well in very low temperatures, but the higher the SEER rating, the lower the temperature of operation. My oil heat could act as a backup for severe weather. The estimated cost of the ductless heat pump for my house is about \$6,000.

Federal rebate programs will ensure that a pretty good percentage of what is spent on the envelope and the heat pump will be returned to me. (Here's a website with information on it: <https://epm.virginiainteractive.org/HERebate/Login.aspx>)

The heat pump is the size of a suitcase and it comes with two inside outlets (another efficiency, since having the heat pump inside removes it from heat and cold) that are hung on the tops of walls. I needed five.

Monica stresses that "building science has changed with HVAC." Older houses were built to encourage air flow from bottom to top, but with air conditioning and modern heating, the house is far more efficient if it is sealed. She says that just about every building standing could use an assessment and some work.

Practically speaking, she says, "I'd suggest that some of the money you're putting into the stock market right now will have a better return if you invest it in making your home or business more energy efficient."

The goal for Better Building Works is to integrate Monica's knowledge of efficient buildings and Barry's expertise in carpentry and knowledge of these efficient systems to present a finished product.

At my little house, it's making sense. 

Field / On Tap

from Page 51

ever able to serve a community—much less survive—without any support? Does anyone believe the small businesses think they can become a success in an environment that didn't allow them to pursue goals?

With all respect to President Obama, if you're going to cite "math" as a fair application across the board, then one of two things must happen. Either everyone pays the same amount or everyone pays the same rate. That means the wealthier can't pay more. You would have to go above or below the principles of mathematics to come up with a reason to change the rules for one class over another.

And with all respect to Elizabeth Warren, if you're going to wag a finger at anyone (which is just plain impolite) at least wag it at the person who is ignorant about the issue at hand. Do you really think the wealthiest Americans and largest corporations don't understand how taxes and government subsidies work? If this group doesn't seem to write enough thank you notes to you or as you put it "the rest of us," then maybe it's because these ungrateful billionaires (make that "quarter millionaires and above") have the audacity to think they're not getting their money's worth. They may think they could do a better job with the services you cite if they were even allowed to be responsible for it. Or, perhaps they just think providing jobs, products, services, and actual economic stimulation is—in some strange way—a kind of contribution. Go figure.

The Internal Revenue Service's own data shows taxpayers earning more than \$200,000 accounted for 25 percent of the nation's adjusted gross income, but paid 50 percent of the \$866 billion in 2009 income taxes. If we're talking "fair share" here, something's wrong with the picture. It wouldn't fit well as a graph in some public school math book.

I am convinced the president and the senatorial candidate are not talking to the very recipients they claim to be speaking to. You don't tell the person who clearly proves he knows how to "make his numbers" what math is. You don't tell

Letters

Business Undressed

First let me say how much I enjoy your articles [Kathy Surace "Business Dress" column] on business dress in the FRONT. It is because of this, I would value your opinion on the photo accompanying the article "On Being a Woman".

I am certainly envious of the beauty and poise of the women shown in the photo. However, I am slightly disappointed and a little saddened that the article mentions "Roanoke area professionals" and yet shows a dress that is more appropriate for a social function.

My first thought was, "great, does this indicate women have to show some cleavage to get further in their career?" Seems as if my gender is taking a step back. A woman can be feminine and professional without showing that much of her anatomy.

Sorry, just had to vent and since I value your views I was just curious in your response.

**Anita Hines
Giles**

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

the person who runs a factory that it will burn down if the fire truck doesn't show up.

But you might just get away with saying this to people who are inclined to blame their lack of achievement on those who have achieved. Or people who are too quick to agree that the very ones performing and doing what they are supposed to do are the ones who should be forced to do more.

The trash talk is misdirected.

I want my three daughters to succeed. But not too much. Because then, I'll not

be able to talk to them about a "job well done." I'll certainly not be able to praise them. Applause? Forget about it. I'll have to "remind" them that they did not get where they are from their hard work, self-determination, entrepreneurial thinking, charitable ideals, or even what I always believed to be the real reason—the grace of God.

No. I'll be sure they are fully aware that their position is due to "the rest of us."

That's inspiring. Some would see that it's the new great American Dream. 

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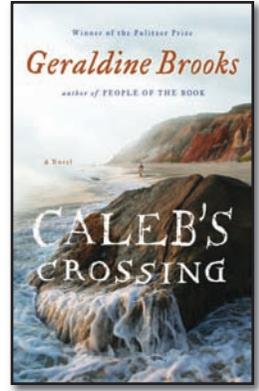
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Books @ the FRONT >

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 150-word reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to Editor Dan Smith at dsmith@vbfront.com



Familiar arguments

What was it like to be a young girl, a minister's daughter, growing up in Martha's Vineyard, about 350 years ago? Or to be the son of a native chieftain who seeks an education? While entertaining us with a lively plot and many well-researched, everyday details, Geraldine Brooks, in *Caleb's Crossing* (Viking Adult, \$26.95) explores important themes from American history in this 2011 Pulitzer Prize winner.

For anyone who has wondered about the huge cultural gaps that existed between Puritan settlers and the native inhabitants, or about the roles of women in a patriarchal, Puritanical society, this book offers fascinating insights. You'll be surprised to discover how familiar the arguments and viewpoints, as expressed in the 17th Century, are for us, in the 21st Century, as we continue to struggle over issues concerning religion, race, class, and gender.

—Ellen Brown

The Mick you didn't know

As the World Series nears, Jane Leavy's *The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood* (Harper, \$27.99) makes a good read for baseball fans, especially those of "a certain age." *The Last Boy* is more an examination of the weaknesses,

frailties, and shortcomings of the iconic Yankee centerfielder than a rah-rah reliving of his MVP seasons and World Series anecdotes.

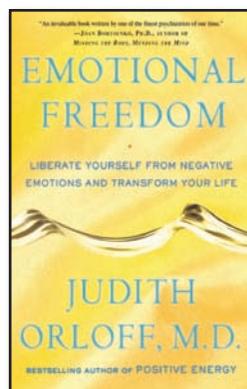
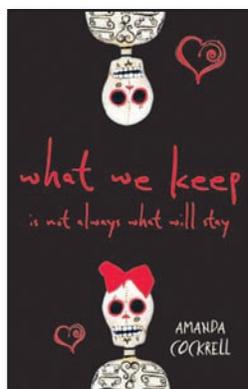
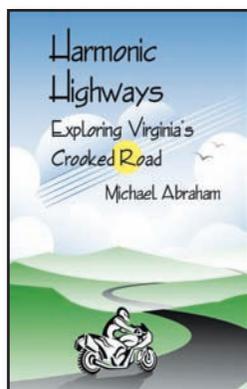
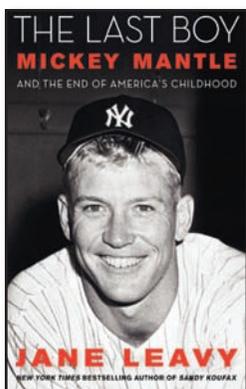
Leavy conducted hundreds of interviews to uncover new facts of a life that had been previously well documented through dozens of books about The Mick. Painfully presented, *The Last Boy* includes episodes of toxic exposures during his childhood ... both of the environmental and familial kind, a fixation with death, and the regret in his demise from liver cancer. Skillfully crafted, *The Last Boy* paints a contrast of one of America's most beloved athletes and questions of even greater things that might have been.

—Todd Marcum

Music trippin'

Michael Abraham's *Harmonic Highways: Motorcycling Virginia's Crooked Road* (Pocohantas Press, \$17.95) recounts his 2010 motorcycle journey down the path designated, in 2004. The Crooked Road ("a designated Heritage Music Trail") was anointed by the conservative Virginia General Assembly, its idea of a jobs initiative.

Riding his beloved 1981 Honda CBX, Abraham dives into the journey, starting in Rocky Mount and headed for Breaks Interstate Park, some 325 miles west.



Along the way, he talks music with seemingly anyone and everyone he finds in the wonderful assortment of dives, campgrounds, historic spots and music venues he explores. A significant part of the book is oral history on things musical, but satisfyingly interspersed with travel recap and musings on the motorcycle Mae and the geography and history of Southwest Virginia.

—Kurt Navratil

Heavy questions

Amanda Cockrell, the founding director of Hollins University's noteworthy graduate program in children's literature, has taken a step up in audience with *What We Keep Is Not Always What Will Stay* (Flux, \$9.95), a novel for young adults and one that lays out some pretty hefty questions for the young reader.

Angie is confronted with a 19-year-old returning Afghan war veteran who has lost a leg. She falls for him against the advice of St. Felix, a statue who comes down from his pedestal to advise her. She's a kid with a lot to think about and in need of somebody to help her with the process, but life is a minefield and not just for soldiers, as she discovers.

Cockrell's characters are nicely drawn, full of wit and revelation and a joy to

read, even for an old man. Nice book.

—Dan Smith

Being Human

Emotional Freedom by Judith Orloff, M.D. (Three Rivers Press, \$24.95) offers perspective about human emotions and behaviors and suggests helpful techniques for identifying and interacting with different personalities, including one's own. It suggests practical approaches to temper and "master" negativity.

The book is divided into two sections, the first revealing four components of emotions and providing a self-assessment to understanding one's own level of emotional freedom. The second section looks at different emotions and offers approaches for transforming them. I found it a good read that offered understandable perspectives of human behavior and provided insightful information for emotional growth.

—Margaret Barchine Boyes

(**The reviewers:** Ellen Apperson Brown is with Community Archives of Southwest Virginia in Roanoke. Todd Marcum is co-owner of Access in Roanoke. Kurt Navratil works in IT at Advance Auto. Margaret Boyes is a freelance writer and PR professional. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT.)

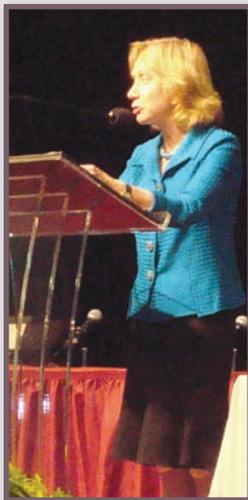
FRONT 'N ABOUT



photos: Tom Field

17 Agencies, 24-Hours >

CreateAthon, a 24-Hour non-stop advertising and marketing development and production event was held at Virginia Western Community College from 10am Saturday, Sept. 10 to 10am Sunday, Sept. 11. About 40 volunteers (designers, copywriters, multimedia developers, creative directors, account managers, etc.) from area ad agencies, marketing departments, and other organizations, gathered to produce professional materials for 17 non-profits, selected earlier from a pool of applications. The event is managed by the American Advertising Federation (AAF / Roanoke) club. Pictured above: one group in a Mac Lab at 3 a.m.; energy drinks on the table among the food and snacks.

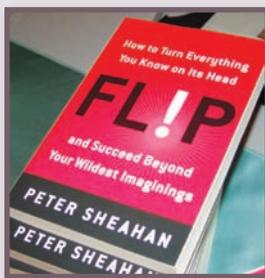


Goodwin at Roanoke College >

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian **Doris Kerns Goodwin** filled the Bast Center at Roanoke College Sept. 21 for a talk during the Henry Fowler Series. FRONT Editor **Dan Smith** chatted with Goodwin, whom he calls "one of my heroes." She was an enormous success as a speaker at the event.

FLIPping out >

The **Roanoke Regional Forum** presented **Peter Sheahan**, best-selling author and international business consultant to an eager crowd at Roanoke's Jefferson Center on Sept. 26. Sheahan said an organization's "story" can be more important than price, quality, or speed when bringing a product / service to market. A highlight of the evening was his illustration of Sony's loss to Apple, when the former company was in a much better-position to bring the iPad to market.



photos: Tom Field



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



photos: Dan Smith



Collegiate Softball in Botetourt >

Botetourt Sports Complex hosted a Women's College Softball Invitational Sept 24—25, featuring teams from Elon, Hampton, James Madison, Longwood, Radford, Tennessee, and Virginia Tech. Tournament proceeds were donated to the Military Family Support Center.



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ECONOMIC INDICATORS

It may not seem like it sometimes, but the economies in the Roanoke and New River Valleys are better than they were a year ago. Unemployment is down from a year ago and so is the number of people filing initial unemployment claims. The number of people working and the number of houses sold is up.

in the region in July was up 0.1 percent over the month, but up 0.7 percent from the same month a year ago.

EMPLOYED

July 2010	June 2011	July 2011
218,451	219,704	219,947

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Unemployment/Employment

Unemployment rates in the Blacksburg and Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Areas were down in July from both the previous month and from a year ago. The local rates—both MSAs and the combined region—fell at a faster rate than the state as a whole. Virginia's unemployment rate dropped by 10.1 percent, from 6.9 percent to 6.1 percent. The Roanoke and New River Valley region's unemployment rate fell 11.7 percent, the Blacksburg MSA, 14.3 percent and the Roanoke MSA, 10.8 percent. Initial unemployment claims filed during the week of August 19—317—were down 46.3 percent from the same week in 2010, a sharper drop than the state's 41.7 percent. Initial unemployment claims in the Roanoke MSA fell by 55.3 percent, which was the largest drop among Virginia's metro areas.

Real Estate

While the **number of homes sold** in the region jumped nearly 24 percent from July to July (higher than the U.S. average of 21 percent), the number was down slightly from June (6.8 percent). The region's average **home price** was down 3.6 percent from June, and 7.8 percent from a year ago. On the plus side, foreclosure activity in the Roanoke and New River Valleys dropped 28.6 percent from July 2010, from 133 to 95. Nationally, foreclosure activity was at a 44-month low, according to Realtytrac.

HOME PRICES

July 2010	June 2011	July 2011
\$191,202	\$182,978	\$176,289

HOMES SOLD

July 2010	June 2011	July 2011
276	367	342

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



	July 10	June 11	July 11
Blacksburg	8.3%	7.5%	7.2%
Roanoke	7.4%	6.7%	6.6%
Combined	7.7%	6.9%	6.8%

More people were working in July than in June or a year ago. The number of people **employed**

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

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Where have all the children gone? >

Executive Summary:

The number of school-aged children in our growing regional population continues to decline.

By Anne Piedmont

The children may be our future, but in an aging population, their numbers aren't increasing as fast as the overall population or as fast as the region's senior citizens. In 2000, school age children—ages 5 to 19—accounted for 19.7 percent of the population of the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas. In 2010, that number had fallen to 18.9 percent. And, while the actual number of school age children in the region grew by 2.5 percent over the past decade, the population grew by 7.3 percent. Over the same period, the number of people over 60 rose by 15.3 percent.

Virginia, as a whole, saw its percentage of school-age children fall from 20.8 percent in 2000 to 19.4 percent, though the actual number of children grew by 6.7 percent.

Why is this important? For local governments the number of actual school children affects school funding—and decisions about where to spend local money. For families looking for a new home, the presence of a larger number of school children might make a community more attractive. For businesses, the children really are their future—employees.

Montgomery County and the cities of Radford and Salem appear to have the highest percentage of school age children. However, those numbers are skewed by the large number of college students living in those three jurisdictions. The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, in its School-Age Population Estimates, has adjusted those figures to assign college students (and other institutional populations) back to where their parents or guardians live. That causes the percentages to drop to 13.9 in Montgomery, 9.3 in Radford and 17.1 in Salem.

Of the communities not influenced by higher education, the highest percentages of school-age children can be found in the suburbanized counties of Botetourt and Roanoke and rural Giles. Giles saw the only increase in the percentage of school children—0.5 percent—while Botetourt County's percentage dropped by the same amount, the smallest drop in the region.

AGE COMPARISON IN THE REGION 2000-2010

	Percentage of Population 5-19 Years Old			Over 60
	2000	2010	% Change	2010
Botetourt County	19.6%	19.5%	-0.5%	23.9%
Craig County	19.8%	18.6%	-6.1%	24.7%
Franklin County	19.5%	18.2%	-6.7%	25.3%
Roanoke County	19.7%	19.2%	-2.5%	24.3%
Roanoke City	18.2%	16.8%	-7.6%	20.0%
Salem	20.1%	19.7%	-1.9%	23.3%
Roanoke MSA	19.2%	18.4%	-4.2%	23.0%
Giles County	18.4%	18.5%	+0.5%	25.4%
Montgomery County	22.2%	20.7%	-6.7%	14.0%
Pulaski County	17.1%	16.8%	-1.7%	25.7%
Radford	24.3%	23.1%	-4.9%	11.4%
Blacksburg MSA	20.8%	19.8%	-4.8%	17.4%
Combined Region	19.7%	18.9%	-4.1%	21.1%

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Erin Pope

Melinda Cohan: “Women think of it as an either/or mentality, but you can still take care of yourself without abandoning your external responsibilities.”

Attention on women >

Executive Summary:

Melinda Cohan works exclusively with women to help them “prepare for rigorous self-examination and abrupt change.”

By Erin Pope

Melinda Cohan wasn’t nervous about her October 1 gig as a moderator for the FRONTburner Women’s Forum at Hollins University. A poised perfectionist, successful professional and confident public speaker, she was mostly excited to engage in a series of discussions with a primarily female audience. “Boundaries always erase when you get a group of women at so many varying stages in their lives together,” she says.

The theme of the panel discussion—“What You Need to Know”—comes naturally to Melinda. She began a business six years ago called The Coaching Advantage, and spends her days advising women how to improve their professional and personal lives. She

has no biases towards particular age groups or demographics, but stresses that her “zone of genius” is only awakened when she works with other women.

There are occasional pleas from men to break her staunch rule against working with them, but Melinda always politely refuses—and even her female clients have to prepare for rigorous self-examination and abrupt change, if necessary. “I do not mess around,” swears Melinda. “This is no joke.”

She believes in the pursuit of pleasure, in addition to requisite hard work. She talks of “exquisite self-care,” an “all-inclusive pampering: spiritual, emotional, and physical care—and medical care, if necessary. And adequate sleep, of course.”

Melinda says that you can’t do anything productive unless you’re taking care of yourself, yet so many women are driven by guilt to ignore their own needs. “Women think of it as an either/or mentality,” she says, “but you can still take care of yourself without abandoning your external responsibilities.”

Melinda describes how, when she was 28,

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

she realized that the “crafted, perfect, gilded, beautiful portrait” of the relationship and career she had created was far from her ideal existence. She was struck by how she wasn’t doing anything for her own pleasure, and decided to leave a stagnant past behind as she sought an “enlightened life.” She describes enlightenment as “not walking around unconscious, and not living life according to ‘shoulds.’”

She believes that most women are fully aware of what would make them happiest, but many of those same women are too fearful of failure to boldly proceed toward their goals. “I like to think of myself as a way-shower,” Melinda says. “Women do know the way, and they do know the answers, but they’ve been taught for so long to bury their desires.”

The quest to make women feel genuinely powerful, competent, intelligent and

beautiful is a cause dear to Melinda’s heart, and she’s working on two books which deal with harnessing femininity and putting it to good use. The *Total Woman* examines how most women live life compartmentalized—how women perform certain duties to certain people’s demands, and wear different masks (daughter, mother, sister, wife, aunt, etc.) according to where they are and who surrounds them.

Melinda believes that *The Total Woman* “shows up everywhere” and is boldly multifaceted. She’s either old enough to have made her own mistakes or suffered through her own experiences—or she’s young, yet wise and humble enough to listen to her forebears and learn from their hardships and advice. *Business in a Boa* will be Cohan’s second book, and will take a closer look at “melding the exterior pressures of the business world with the need for exquisite self-care.” 

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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Williams

Accounting

Joel S. Williams, chairman of JSW Financial in Roanoke and an occasional financial columnist for FRONT, is a contributing author to a new book that helps business owners develop strategies to transition their companies. The title is *Getting in Business Is a Funny Thing—Getting Out is Not: A Business Owner's Guide to Growing and Transitioning the Business*.



Shaver

Banks

SunTrust Bank, Western Virginia has named **Michael Shaver** vice president and relationship manager within its Commercial Division.

Michael D. Larowe has been named executive VP of Cardinal Bankshares Corporation and Bank of Floyd.



Larowe



Jones

National Bank in Blacksburg has named **Jane Williams** to assistant VP. **Lora Jones** has been named corporate analysis officer.



Agee

Nancy Howell Agee, president and CEO of Carilion Clinic, has been named to the boards of directors of HomeTown Bankshares Corporation and HomeTown Bank in Roanoke.

LEGAL FRONT

Law firms

Catherine J. Huff and **Daniel R. Sullivan** have joined Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore



Huff



Sullivan

as associate attorneys in the firm's Insurance practice group.

WELLNESS FRONT



Byron

Colleges

Paula Brewer Byron, former editor of Harvard Medicine magazine at Harvard Medical School, has joined the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute as director of communications.

Ed Magalhaes has been named assistant professor for the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Sciences & Academic Counselor at the Via College of



Magalhaes



Doolan

Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg. **Amy Doolan** is the newest sports medicine faculty member for VCOM.



Koirala

Hospitals

LewisGale Regional Health System has named psychiatrist **Dr. Pradip Koirala** Senior Transitions program at LewisGale Hospital Alleghany.



Leichner

Veterinarians

Lisa Leichner has

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.

joined the staff in the Office of Development and Alumni at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Wilson

Manufacturing

Schultz-Creehan Holdings in Blacksburg

has named **Stacey Wilson** controller.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Architects/Engineers

Ali Weigel, Draper Aden Associates' project administrator and community liaison for the Town of Pulaski's Brownfields Redevelopment Project,



Weigel

has been named administrator for the Blacksburg office.

Michele A. Addison, P.E. joined Wiley & Wilson in Lynchburg as



Addison

a project civil engineer in the water resources department.

Housing

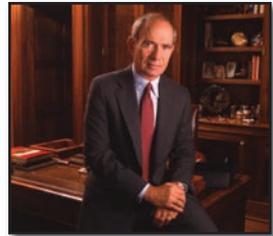
Emily Taylor, Property



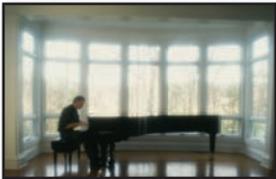
ADVANCE AUTO



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BERTRAM FIRESTONE



BRUCE HORNSBY



ROANOKE TIMES



ROWE

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Career FRONT



Taylor

Coordinator for CMG Leasing. in Blacksburg, has been named an Association Management Specialist by the National Board of Certification for Community Association Managers.

Construction

Highlander Construction & Development in Christiansburg has named **LeeAnn Francis** director of marketing and sales.



Shelton

Real Estate

Debbie Shelton of Prudential Waterfront Properties at Smith Mountain Lake, has been awarded the Certified Residential Specialist designation by the Council of Residential Specialists of the National Association of Realtors.

RETAIL FRONT

Accreditation

Tim Gardner of Inspeck in Moneta has earned a license as a mold inspector in the state.

Hair Coloring

Christine Slade of Revive Hair in Roanoke has earned the professional designation Organic Salon Systems Certified Hair Colorist.

EDUCATION FRONT

Colleges

Author and artist **Wendy Watson** has joined the faculty of Hollins University's graduate-level certificate program in children's book illustration.



Short

Susan Short, director of Outreach Program of Development at Virginia Tech, has been named associate vice president for engagement, responsible for areas reflecting outreach efforts.

OTHER FRONTS



Oakey

Consulting

Daniel "Bud" Oakey has been named chairman and managing director of Advantus Strategies, headquartered in Richmond. Oakey is from Roanoke and Advantus has a number of lobbying clients in the region.



Dooley

Government

John Dooley of Virginia Tech has been elected chairman of the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission. Also on the commission are vice chairman **Bittle W. Porterfield, III** of Rice Management; **Odell Minnix** of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, **Cynthia Lawrence** of Design Marketing and lawyer **William Gust** of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore.

Organizations

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) Greater Blue Ridge Chapter has named the following to its board of directors: **Ted Feinour**, Dixon, Hubbard, Feinour & Brown Inc.; **Jill Maddy**, Novo Nordisk Inc.; **Erin Myers**, Endocrine Care & Education Center; **Jessica Walker**, Wagner Food Equipment; **Shelly Whitaker**, Advance Auto Parts; and **Mike Wray**, Norfolk Southern Corporation.

The American Advertising Federation (AAF Roanoke) has announced the following board of directors for 2011-12: **Chris Dodd**, president; **Tom Field**, VP; **Ariel Clark**, ADDY Chair; **Stephanie Sterrett** and **Katie Gehrt**, Programs; **Mark Mast**, Membership; **Jamal Millner**, Diversity; **Matt Brown** and **Stefanie Brown**, Public Service; **Allan Mower**, Media Auction; **Taryn Anderson** and **John Cornthwait**, Communications; **Rachel DeLauder**, Social Media; **Chris McAdams**, AAF District 3 Governor.

CONTRIBUTORS

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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.

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Gene Marrano, a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, is one of the most prolific journalists in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Roanoke This Week with Gene Marrano" on Fox Radio 910).

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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.

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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.

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Rob Johnson

SEPTEMBER 2011 > Contributor of the Month

Rob Johnson's cover story "Microbrews" in the September issue of Valley Business FRONT has landed him in our spotlight again as our Contributor of the Month. This was a story we'd likely have had a fight over if our writers had found out we were going to do it ahead of time. Talk about a choice assignment. That's why it went to Rob, who is simply one of the best business reporters in this part of the country. His resume includes writing for the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal and he stays busy with other magazines, as well. Rob had fun with this one, but not at the expense of giving you a very good education in small breweries and homebrew in this region, where both are significant. Thank you Rob for your continued excellence.

“ ”
I wouldn't change a thing

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Top 20 Contestants

The **EXPAND** contest, which will select a budding business for a \$25,000 prize has selected its top 20 from the 178 businesses initially entered. The five finalists will present their business pitch at Super Synergy on Oct. 27, where the grand prize winner will be announced.

Tech-Toyota Collaborate

Toyota's Collaborative Safety Research Center (CSRC) has announced 10 new research initiatives and new partnership agreements with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, as well as six leading North American universities and research institutions. They are designed to enhance the development, testing, and implementation of new automotive safety innovations across North America.

Good new jobs

FCTech Inc., an Austrian company, has announced it is establishing a U.S. subsidiary in Botetourt County to manufacture and market specialty optical fiber, investing \$5 million in new construction and equipment and creating 25 high-tech, high-paying jobs.

FCTech Inc., a subsidiary of NBG Holding, plans to build a new facility at the Botetourt Center at Greenfield in Daleville. The company's optical fiber will be used in high-performance sensor applications for the global energy, healthcare, industrial and defense industries.

Average wages for the

new jobs will range from \$70,000-\$80,000.

LewisGale recognition

All four **LewisGale Regional Health System Hospitals** today were named as one of the nation's top performers on key quality measures by The Joint Commission, an accreditor of health care organizations in the United States. Each of the LewisGale Hospitals was recognized by The Joint Commission based on 2010 data reported about evidence-based clinical processes linked to better patient outcomes for certain medical conditions.

LewisGale Medical Center, LewisGale Hospital Alleghany, LewisGale Hospital Pulaski, and LewisGale Hospital Montgomery, were among only 405 U.S. hospitals and 12 Virginia hospitals—as well as being the only health system in Western Virginia—achieving this exemplary level of performance

Schultz-Creehan merges

Schultz-Creehan Holdings Inc. of Blacksburg has acquired Aeroprobe Corporation, an international supplier of custom aerodynamic and hydrodynamic measurement systems. Schultz-Creehan had been Aeroprobe's exclusive manufacturer of multi-hole probe instrumentation. The merger brings design and manufacturing together while enhancing Aeroprobe's mechanical, electronic, and materials capabilities.

Both companies have combined to operate as

Aeroprobe Corporation. Offices and staff have been consolidated in Schultz-Creehan Holding's facilities on Kraft Drive in Blacksburg.

Tech research center

Virginia Tech, in cooperation with L-3 Communications, Northrop Grumman, General Dynamics Advanced Information Systems, and Verisign Labs, has received a five-year continuing grant to establish a National Science Foundation (NSF) Industry/University Cooperative Research Center (I/UCRC) site for cybersecurity.

Initial topics of research for the center include secure computing architectures, cloud computing security, visualization tools for cyber defense, securing critical infrastructure, wireless security, and malware detection and mitigation. This new cybersecurity site joins the Security and Software Engineering Research Center (S2ERC), which is led by Ball State University and includes a primary site at Iowa State University and now Virginia Tech.

ChemSolv fined

Roanoke chemical distributor **ChemSolv Inc.** has agreed to pay a \$43,967 EPA fine for violations. The company also says it will spend \$200,000 for improvements to plant safety. It was cited for violations of hazardous chemical storage rules and a lack of proper fire protection, among other things.

Hall of Fame names 2

Leon P. Harris of KelTech Inc. and **John B. Williamson**, CEO of RGC Resources Inc. have been named laureates for the 21st Southwest Virginia Business Hall of Fame. They will be recognized on Nov. 14 at the Business Hall of Fame dinner at Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center. For more ticket information please e-mail betsy@ja.roacoxmail.com or call 989-6392.

Established in 1990 the Business Hall of Fame honors leaders based on their outstanding leadership and business success as well as contributions and involvement in the community.

Ferrum grant

Ferrum College has received a gift from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation for \$383,612. The funds will be applied to the Ferrum College Environmental Science and Sustainability programs. The gift will be used to purchase laboratory equipment and to establish an endowment for the Institute for Integrative Learning, which houses the College's Center for Sustainable Development.

Charging station

The **Virginia Museum of Transportation** has installed an Eaton Level 2 Pow-R-Station electric vehicle charging station at the Museum in downtown Roanoke. The charging station is part of the Museum's efforts to highlight emerging transportation technologies and their impact on community

development throughout the Commonwealth. "Alternative energies and fuels have an important place in the future of transportation," says Beverly T. Fitzpatrick, Jr., executive director of the Museum.

Weeklies sold

The eight weekly newspapers that constituted **Montgomery County Publishing and Blue Ridge Newspapers** have been purchased by the former owner of two of them, Wane and Dolores Brockenbrough, principals

of Montgomery Publishing. It was a relatively quick sale, brought about when creditor Wells Fargo ordered the papers to be sold. The Brockenbroughs are former owners of the Radford News Journal and the Montgomery County News Messenger. They picked up the Salem Times-Register, Fincastle Herald, Vinton Messenger, Cave Spring Connection and New Castle Record.

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a new Jewish center using Passivhaus energy-efficiency technology. The Malcolm Rosenberg Hillel Center for Jewish Life, now under construction across from the Virginia Tech campus, will be the first religious building and the largest commercial

building in the United States incorporating PassivStructures propriety technology and standards to achieve low-energy usage certification.

Compiled by Dan Smith

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



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