

NOW *that*
#WE'RE
IN CHARGE

Women in business symposium
Sat. Oct. 1, 2011

See page 21

Valley Business

FRONT

**FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED**

\$3 • ISSUE 36 • SEPTEMBER 2011

vbFRONT.com

Sister Goddesses

Forester

Blacksmith

Polymers

Microbrews

Angela Drinkard,
SoRo Chill & Grille

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WELCOME to the FRONT

Oct. 1 marks the first of our FRONTBurner series of seminars, workshops and classes on topics of specific interest to business people. The series kicks off with Now That We're In Charge: Women's Forum at Hollins University at 9 a.m.

This forum features 11 of the brightest, most accomplished women in the region talking bluntly and with years of accumulated wisdom about how to get where they are and what it will cost you. Most of the participants are long-time friends of FRONT and we know them well enough to tell you this conference will fairly crackle with electric energy.

The forum title comes from the fact that women are expected to compose more than half the United States' workforce in late October or early November.

The women represent each of the nine FRONTS, or business segments, we feature each month in the magazines—everything from finance and wellness, to education, culture, industry, technology and the like. And each is at the top of her field in this region. The emphasis here is on people you can see on any given day, local and regional people who can serve as mentors and who can be part of a strong and growing Old Girl Network of the type that creates future leaders.

This is but the first of our FRONTBurner features and we'll give you plenty of advance information as they come up.

Take a look at Page 21 for details, including registration information. We have intentionally kept the price of the seminar low to open this opportunity to all women, but we must caution you to register early because we expect a sellout.



Tom Field



Dan Smith



ALL HAIL CRAFT BEER!

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The advertisement features a central graphic of a beer glass with a blue and yellow background. To the right, there are two small inset photos: one showing a person at a microphone and another showing a beer glass. The text is arranged in a clear, bold layout with a mix of colors (blue, red, yellow, black) for emphasis.



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Cover photography of Angela Drinkard by Greg Vaughn Photography. Art direction by Tom Field.

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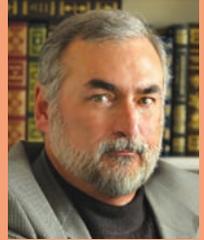
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Kili Teh

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 69.

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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Dan Smith



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Greg Vaughn

“”
There are snakes,
scorpions and lizards

— Page 46

“”
Desires bring
you joy. Goals
are something
you just cross
off a list

— Page 44

2010 / 11 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford ClaireV (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Woods Rogers (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Seniors)
Cory Donovan NCTC (Tech/Industry)
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Mary Miller IDD (Tech/Industry)
Ed Walker Regeneration Partners (Development)
John Williamson RGC (Tech/Industry)

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

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Greg Vaughn Photography

Angela Drinkard, our FRONTcover model, is owner/operator of SoRo Chill & Grille, a restaurant/bar on Franklin Road in Roanoke. Not only does her place feature microbrews, but we thought she had the perfect last name.

Homebrew >

Executive Summary:

The foodie movement has made micro-brewed beer a hot item in restaurants, and it has helped stimulate a home brewing movement that is growing exponentially and even creating competitors.

By Rob Johnson

micro BREWERS

Home brewers can't trot out teams of 2,000-pound Clydesdales to lug fancy beer wagons in parades in the proud tradition of suds giant Anheuser-Busch.

But wild horses couldn't pull Will Landry away from the dark-brown malts he and dozens of his friends create in their Roanoke area basements and garages.

"We make a range of about 80 varieties, flavors from berries to pumpkin," says Landry, a 34-year-old accountant.

Right now Landry and an estimated 700 or so other home brewers in Southwest Virginia are hobbyists who represent an industry for others. Each of them purchases from \$200 to \$2,000 worth of equipment to make beer. In addition, they typically spend about \$30 on supplies such as yeast and barley per five-gallon batch—which yields beer enough to fill 48 12-ounce bottles.

But Landry and many other home brewers share a common dream: to turn their amateur talents into a profitable business. He says, "I want this to be a career ultimately. I have the entrepreneurial spirit."

He's researching a possible startup brew pub—a restaurant with a small brewery on the premises—that would be built in Salem, perhaps in 2012. The accountant, who now works for a Roanoke-based healthcare company he did not want to identify publicly, estimates the venture's initial cost at about \$1.8 million. Landry says he's looking for investors.

Beth Durham, one of a half dozen female members of Roanoke's biggest home brewing club, the Star City Brewers Guild, also has a yearning to some day sell her concoctions: "On some level, I think many of us think about that. It's a dream."

There's certainly plenty of evidence of the commercial potential for independent brewers. While beer sales in the U.S. fell 1 percent in 2010, sales of craft brews—those made in relatively small batches—rose 11 percent, according to trade groups. To be sure, the craft, or microbrews, still represent a tiny part of the overall beer industry: about nine million barrels annually, or less than 5 percent.

COVER STORY



Will Landry plans a brewing business Dan Smith

Still, the growth of the relative no-names has caught the attention of big-time beer distributors. Short Distributing in Roanoke, a wholesaler of industry leader Anheuser-Busch to Kroger, Food Lion and many restaurants, has been steadily adding to its craft beer inventory since 2004 and now carries 17 such brands.

Microbreweries are scattered through the region with facilities in Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Blacksburg, Radford and Roanoke. Most prominent in the immediate area are Steve Davidson's Roanoke Railhouse and Barry Caldwell's Big Daddy's in Roanoke, Bull & Bones in Blacksburg and River Company Restaurant & Brewery in Radford. Blacksburg Brewing made a splash—so to speak—a year or so ago, but lost its contract with Roanoke Railhouse and has been looking to make a comeback since then.



Home brewer Beth Durham

Dan Smith



Steve Davidson of Roanoke Railhouse has one of the largest micro-breweries in the region

Dan Smith



Distributor Aden Short

Dan Smith



Blogger Jeff Dean

Dan Smith

"A lot of people thought craft beers were a fad a few years ago. But they have had staying power," says Aden Short, craft brands manager for his family's Roanoke company, P.A. Short Distributing. Why the growing popularity of microbrews? Short credits, in part, "the foodie movement" and the expanding interest of consumers in trying new wines. These adventures in tastes are spreading into beer preferences, he says.

Home brewers are at ground zero in this movement, says Jeff Dean, a retail manager at Staples in Roanoke who started writing "The Beer Road" blog (<http://thebeerroad.com/>) in early 2010. His blog focuses on information about types beer and posts links to articles elsewhere about trends in craft brewing. "There's more interest all the time, and more tastings and festivals popping up," says Dean.

He's absorbed with the creations of small brewers. "I wish I could write for the blog all the time," he says. But Dean acknowledges that despite increasing traffic from Internet readers, he hasn't sold any ads yet on his Web site.

Sales and the harsh realities of making profit are where all the foam being created by the popularity of home brewing has the potential to go flat.

At first glance, the numbers can be intoxicating. Consider Big Daddy's microbrewery, which operates within the Awful Arthur's restaurant at Towers shopping center in Roanoke. Barry Caldwell, owner of the brewery and the restaurant, says his cost of barley and other raw materials to brew beer is about \$35 per keg. His kegs sell for \$100 at

Home Brewing 101 >

Here is a glossary of terms used in brewing beer.

Barrel: Contains 31 gallons of beer.

Beer: An alcoholic beverage made by the brewing and fermentation of cereals, usually barley, and flavored with hops—an herb—which adds a preferred bitterness.

Brewing: To make beer by steeping malt and hops in water, then boiling and fermenting them, perhaps along with certain flavorings that customize the beer to certain tastes.

Brewpub: A restaurant which contains a small brewing operation and sells most of its beer on site.

Buzz: Home brewed beer often contains more alcohol than a typical store brand, such as Budweiser's 5 percent. By altering the brewing contents, some amateur beer makers produce drinkables that are 7 percent, or more, alcohol. (Wines range from 8 to 20 percent alcohol.)

Craft brewer: A small, independent beer maker whose annual production is no more than six million barrels. This category is defined by being less than 25 percent owned or controlled by a larger brewer or business entity.

Home brewer: A true hobbyist, limited by law to brewing 100 gallons a year per person in the household.

Keg: One-half barrel of beer, or 15.5 gallons. (Another common container is a "pony keg": 7 ¾ gallons.)

Microbrewery: A brewery that makes less than 15,000 barrels of beer per year with 75 percent or more sold off site.

Three-tier distribution: The government regulatory framework for beer sales that exists in Virginia and many other states. The three tiers are: brewer, wholesaler and retailer. (In Virginia a business may only participate in two of the three tiers.)

Traditonal brewer: A large beer maker with a flagship brand that may be known nationally, such as Anheuser-Busch with its Budweiser.

—Rob Johnson

Source: American Brewers Association and various brewers.



Dan Smith

**Big Daddy's owner
Barry Caldwell**

retail. More profitably, his beer sells on tap at Awful Arthur's bar for \$2.50 a pint, or a total of \$310—about nine times its cost to make.

They said it here ... >

"There are more variations in beer than there are in wines."

—**Jeff Dean, writer of "The Beer Road" blog**

"Usually, [home brew] tastes like shit."

—**Barry Caldwell, Big Daddy's microbrewery**

Home brewing is "a good outlet for creativity and learning something. It has artistic and scientific aspects,"

—**Kevin Campbell, Star City Brewers Guild**

Microbrewers who sell commercially in Virginia are protected from serious competition in craft beer centers because shipment of beer is usually "too expensive relative to its cost per unit."

—**Paul Gaza, Brewers Association**

"What home brewers really love is that it's their own beer. That they made it,"

—**Chris Arthur, Blue Ridge Hydroponics and Brewing Co.**

"I enjoy sharing it when tailgating at Virginia Tech games. And I get with other home brewers and we trade."

—**Beth Durham, Roanoke home brewer**

"A lot of people thought craft beers were a fad a few years ago. But they have had staying power."

—**Aden Short, Short Distributing in Roanoke**

On the challenge to home brewers going commercial:

"The big guys (like Anheuser Busch or Miller) can dictate terms, but the little guys can't."

—**Mike Killelea, Virginia Craft Brewers Guild**

On small brewers' flexibility in changing recipes:

"Their attitude is, 'What else can I make?'"

—**Paul Gaza, Brewers Association**

The caveat, as Caldwell points out: "Your beer has to be good."

On occasion, home brewers who are dreaming of selling their formulations bring him a few bottles to try. His reaction: "Usually, it tastes like shit. I'm not being biased. That's just telling you the way it is."

What's wrong with the home brewers' beers he has agreed to try isn't clear, he says. But he speculates that whatever the drawbacks in their process and makings, their beer probably tastes better to them because they made it.

"What home brewers really love is that it's their own beer," says Chris Arthur, co-owner of Blue Ridge Hydroponics and Brewing Co., a retail outlet for gardeners and home brewers located near Hollins University.

The home brewers' bent for the froth of their labors may make their judgment questionable when it comes to assessing the market for their product. Home brewers' risks of accurately assessing the commercial

COVER STORY



Blue Ridge Hydroponics' Chris Arthur

Dan Smith

potential of their beer is compounded by the reviews they usually seek to confirm its quality: the opinions of other home brewers.

For example, Landry's basement contains a row of trophies that proclaim his success in winning taste contests among his peers in the Star City Brewers Guild. But Arthur says the standard for good beer rises quickly when it's offered for sale. "A bad batch will lose people when they're paying for it—unlike someone the home brewer is giving it away to."

Arthur, whose store is a blended boutique with inventory for both brewers and gardeners, finds the pride of home beer makers similar to someone who's skillful at growing plump tomatoes. He cautions both types of customers: "You're probably not going to make money at this."

Still, the entrepreneurial yearning among home brewers is, for some, a thirst they fantasize about quenching. "I think a majority of the guild members would like to" turn their hobby into a business, says Kevin Campbell, the Star City Brewers Guild



Kevin Campbell of Star City Brewers

Dan Smith



Beer makings

Dan Smith

treasurer whose day job is analyzing software at an engineering software analyst. He adds, "I've definitely thought about it quite a bit."

Part of what drives such dreams is that home brewing holds an element that many guild members don't find enough of in their current vocations. Campbell, for example, says home brewing is "a good outlet for creativity and learning something. It has artistic and scientific aspects."

He may not find enough of those qualities in analyzing software, and Landry surely doesn't in accounting. Landry says, "I've never been creative. I've never been an artist by any stretch of imagination—never able to create anything. And I think that's true of a lot of people who get into home brewing."

That's true for Durham, a retired pharmaceutical sales rep who started home brewing five years ago after "my kids graduated from college. They said, "You need a dog and a hobby.""

Briefly, she says, "I dabbled in oil painting."

But in 2008, Durham, who rarely drank beer, says she sampled a craft brew that her son, David, brought home from Richmond, where he attended dental school. "It was so delicious that I grabbed the phone book and found that we had a brewer supply store."

Since then, she has brewed about 40 batches of five gallons each. "I enjoy sharing it when tailgating at Virginia Tech games. And I get with other home brewers and we trade."

Her variety of "oatmeal stout" won a first-place trophy in one of the Star City Brewers Guild's contests. Emboldened, Durham has gradually spent about \$2,000 on equipment, including some new gear ordered from Germany. "I'd like to have a small automated bottling system in my basement," she says.

Putting home beer efficiently into bottles, and keeping it there, can be a challenge. A tiny bit too much carbonation means trouble. Durham says, "I have had a few bottles explode."

But such issues seem to add excitement for most home brewers. Uncertainty and creativity often go together and making your own beer is a prime example. For instance, because home beer isn't pasteurized, there's a question about how long it will keep before spoiling. Says Landry, "Once a bottle is filled, the caps do a good job keeping air out, but there is still some that gets in over time." He adds, "The debate is with cellaring. I and others will store beers at around, say, 60 degrees, mostly for lack of cold storage space. Spoilage isn't easily timed. In general, beer is best served within three to six months."

Landry has put a sharper pencil to the financials of opening a brew pub. The accountant, a graduate of the respected business curriculum at Bentley University in Waltham, Mass.,

Will Landry's Basic Recipes >

The following recipes are, says Will Landry, "very basic."

Blond Ale

For 5 gallons:

5 lbs of Pilsner malt
5 lbs of 2-Row malt
Mash at 152 degrees F for 60 minutes

During boil add:

1 ounce Cascade hops at 60 minutes remaining
Ferment with American Ale Yeast

An IPA

For 10 gallons:

20 lbs of Maris Otter Malt
2 lbs Vienna Malt
1.5 lbs Amber malt
2 lbs of corn sugar
Mash at 152 degree for 60 minutes

During boil add:

1 oz. of Citra and Fuggles each at 60 minutes remaining
1 oz each of Centennial, Cascade and Perle at 10 min remaining
1 oz of Amarillo and Cascade at 0 min remaining
3 oz Cascade (Dry Hop)
Ferment with American Ale Yeast

Coffee Sweet Stout

For 5 gallons:

8 lbs 2-row Malt
1 lb wheat malt
.5 lbs chocolate malt
.5 lbs roasted barley
.5 lbs flaked oats
.5 lbs lactose (milk sugar)
Mash at 156 degrees F for 60 minutes

During boil add:

1 oz Cascade at 60 min. remaining
5 oz Cascade at 1 min. remaining
Ferment with English Ale Yeast
Add cold pressed coffee at bottling or keggling

—Rob Johnson



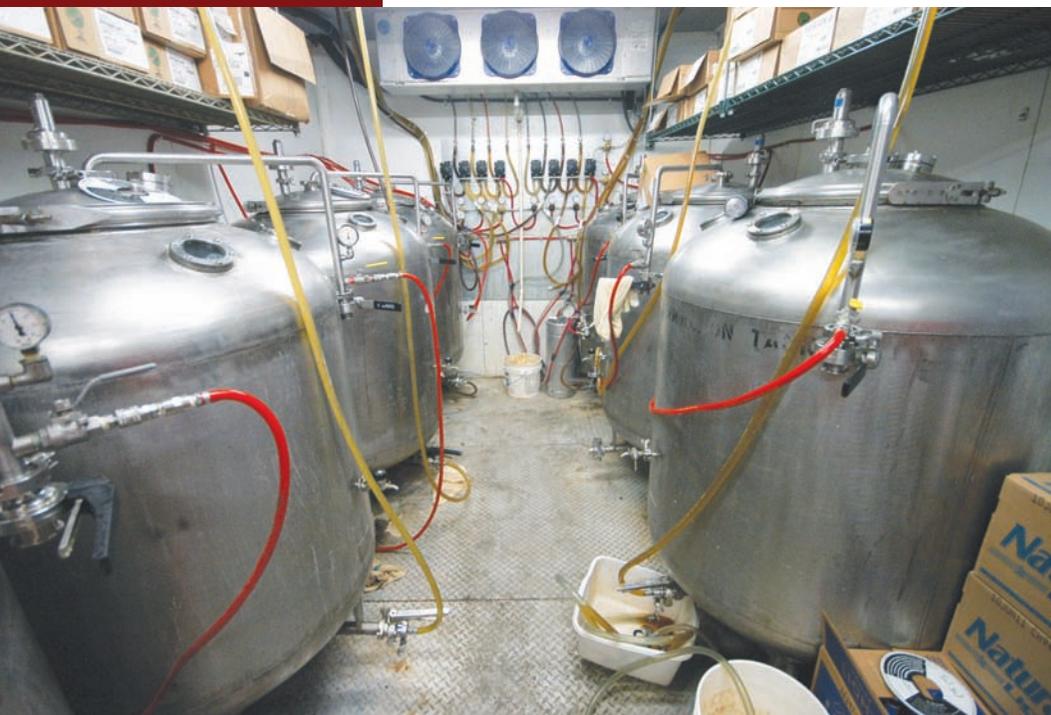
Big Daddy's brew room

Dan Smith

has incorporated, hired an attorney and had detailed discussions with a builder.

After working on a business plan after work for about three years, Landry has calculated the startup costs for his vision, to be called Barley and Chops, as follows:

- A one-acre lot in Salem: \$250,000
- Construction cost for 10,000-square-foot building: \$850,000
- Brewing equipment, mostly new: \$300,000 to \$350,000
- Kitchen equipment for the restaurant side: \$280,000



Big Daddy's storage tanks

Dan Smith

"I'll probably get little to no financing from a bank, not in this economy," says Landry. He hasn't seriously shopped around for investors but plans to start that search in early 2012.

Although he hasn't any experience in restaurant management, Landry says he has had discussions with a chef who has run a full-service eatery. Their idea is to feature "beer-food pairing dinners," similar to the more common wine varieties of such cuisine/drink matchings, where different brews are offered with each course, even dessert.

Meanwhile, to further prepare, Landry is enrolled in a 23-week distance learning course from American Brewers Guild on advance brewing techniques, at a cost of \$8,500.

Brewing and serving his own beer, he calculates, would save major money on expenses. "It would probably be exclusively my beer at first."

That's the strategy Caldwell used at the Towers Awful Arthur's. The restaurant and bar opened in 2001, and Caldwell put in Big Daddy's in an adjacent room in 2008 at a cost of about \$250,000, a relative bargain because he found used brewing equipment in St. Louis.

Then he took a bold step: removing all the taps for established brands and replacing them with Big Daddy's varieties. "We took all the Buds and Millers off tap. If someone comes in and orders a Bud Lite, we ask them to try a sample of one of ours."

If customers still insist on their favored big-name brands, Awful Arthur's keeps cans and bottles of them ready.

Landry doesn't yet have a brand name for his beer to be served at Barley and Chops. He's working on that as part of his marketing plan. Ultimately, he'll seek to have his beer distributed outside the restaurant to stores and other eateries.

But contracts with the likes of Short Distributing come at a high price for craft brewers, whose volume doesn't allow them to negotiate terms with the strength of an Anheuser-Busch. Their beer gets to ride in the same truck, maybe even on the same pallet with Bud Lite, but the distributor demands a higher profit margin.

Such complications weren't on Landry's screen back in 1998, when his home brewing hobby started with a Christmas gift from his wife: A \$150 "Mr. Beer" kit.

Looking back on the chemistry-set style Yuletide present that spawned his current seven-figure beer business plan, Landry says with a smile, "That's how it starts." 





The art of the written note >

In Victorian times, when there was no e-mailing, texting, tweeting or Facebook postings, the art of letter writing became a fine art, indeed. Victorians wrote charming, heartfelt letters and effusive notes for all occasions. The level of sentiment (and sentimentality) could be extraordinary. These scripts, written with perfect handwriting or calligraphy, were often accompanied by elaborate drawings and flourishes.

We don't go to those extravagant lengths anymore, but I must admit I am pleased when I see a hand addressed envelope appear in my mail box. When someone has sat down with pen in hand to write a letter to me, it makes me feel a whole lot more valued than when I receive a message on my computer.

In this frenetic world, some think that a quick telephone call or e-mail of thanks is enough. It is not. A written expression of appreciation is a courtesy, whether written to a friend, a family member or a business associate. I recently received a "thank you" note from my grandson, thanking me and his grandfather for his birthday presents. It occurred to me it was no accident that this boy wrote this little note. Before he was old enough to write, his mother always wrote lovely notes to thank us for his gifts, and he would sign them with a little squiggle.

The written note is a gesture of kindness and civility, and it can be as short as three sentences. The first sentence typically expresses thanks for the occasion or gift. The second acknowledges the event or gift, and the third might talk about a future meeting. It only takes a few minutes.

The written note can be a valuable tool for the professional. It demonstrates social skills in a warm, personal fashion. It can help cement a business relationship, reverse a negative situation or create a positive new one.

Try writing a note to:

- Invite a potential client to meet with you
- Thank someone for a gift or favor
- Offer condolences to a friend or associate
- Thank someone after lunch, dinner or a meeting
- Congratulate a colleague on an honor, promotion, or award
- Acknowledge a milestone of a colleague
- Thank the interviewer after a job interview or
- Offer an apology (learn to grovel)

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote. "Life is short, but there is always time for courtesy." Writing letters has become a lost art, but we can still show courtesy and civility by getting into the habit of penning a nice note on quality note cards. 

Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
*The hand-written note:
"A gesture of kindness
and civility."*

The naked emperor >

Dear Getting a Grip: *Our CEO has stayed on past retirement age. The board of directors deals with him on occasion and apparently he convinces them that he is still on top of his game, but he most certainly is not. His behavior and decisions are affecting the operations of our business. I am afraid that in the near future, our earnings will be affected. Morale is heading south and this person has become irrational and hateful to people who have been loyal employees for years. Is there anything I—a middle manager with a good bit of tenure—can do to help the situation? I know several board members, but hesitate to talk to them about this.*

Dear Middle: What does anyone do when something's wrong and everyone's pretending it's not? Who will be the one to make an objective statement of reality, the equivalent of a little boy's crying out about an invisible suit, "The emperor has no clothes!"? Who will say, "Our CEO's behavior and decisions are harming our company"?

When people are acting as if things are OK when they're not, they 1) have a vested interest in keeping things as they are because the power structure suits them; 2) fear the consequences of speaking up, usually wrath and rejection; or 3) are so used to living or working in dysfunction, they turn a blind eye because they won't, even can't, see it.

The traits of aging are well-documented and predictable, especially with regard to short-term memory. Aging isn't a personal shortcoming to hide, it's a workaround. Great CEOs with great age and great teams simply and matter-of-factly add aiding their memories to their team's to-do lists, then get on with building great companies. It's your CEO's apparent incompetence and inappropriate behavior to others that is the problem, not his aging.

A piece of what's going on, though, is probably empathy. Situations change, people change, aging happens. Everyone fears losing value in the eyes of others, regardless of the reason. Your CEO is probably kept on, in part, because all of us want to be kept on, too.

Getting a Grip: A child pointing and saying, "That guy's naked!" will receive much more tolerance than an adult pointing the finger at a CEO and saying, "That guy's incompetent!" Take a hard look at who the stakeholders are in keeping things as they are to better assess risk factors for yourself and your company. Before you talk to anyone, figure out why they haven't spoken up themselves. 

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



Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:

An increasingly dysfunctional top executive is causing problems in the company. What to do?



Blue jeans: Full circle at work >

Blue jeans, as we know them today, were a problem-solving invention of Levi Strauss during the gold rush years of the late 19th Century. Since then they have grown from a simple, useful garment to a status symbol.

Although denim was produced and used in Europe and the U.S. previously, Strauss found that gold prospectors needed rugged trousers without a bib attached at the waist. He came up with a rugged denim bib-less trouser and, in 1873, patented the incorporation of rivets into the design at stress points in the garment, making it tough and long lasting.

By the 1930s jeans were showing up in classic cowboy movies. The 1950s brought the association of jeans with pop culture and teenage rebellion when stars like James Dean and Elvis Presley sported them.

The hippie revolution of the 1960s and '70s initiated a proliferation of hip- hugging, bell-bottomed styles in jeans wear by the Baby Boomers and breathed new life into the design.

By the 1980s designers realized what a gold mine jeans were and began to brand their own jeans designs with their name and logo, making them a fashion statement and causing prices to skyrocket. European markets particularly prized Levi jeans as the perfect fitting jean. The 1990s brought the addition of lycra and other manmade fibers to enhance the fit and appeal of jeans.

Today jeans remain a staple of the modern wardrobe. They have become a fashion icon that is part of fashion history and international culture. This iconic presence in our culture leads to a "Why not?" attitude towards jeans as part of the business wardrobe.

If popular culture would have its preference, jeans would again become our official work trouser, even in the business office. However, although jeans have come a long way in our society and have risen in status, they still retain a casual cache.

If you must wear them in the workplace, try to avoid looking like a gold-digger.

- Choose a dark wash, no obvious topstitching and a classic design.
- Avoid wearing any jeans that are ripped, worn or adorned with "bling" in a business setting.
- Unless you are the CEO of a profitable company, never wear them to an event where other business people are wearing suits. 

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

If you have to wear jeans at work, here's how to do it and still be professional and fashionable. And there's a history lesson with it.

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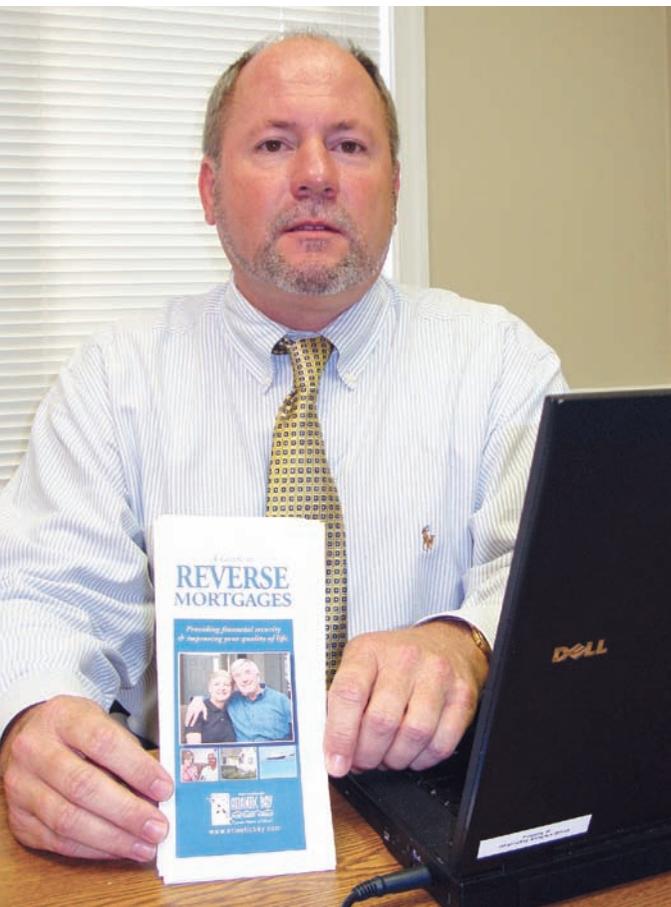
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Foster Vaught: "Some people are looking to retire and have lost money in their investments."

Susan Ayers

““”

My experience thus far is that most people opt for the lump sum fixed rate. But it's also a great way to supplement income monthly, which would be at a variable interest rate.

—Foster Vaught

all purposes. Some people are preparing for the worst and are going ahead and getting them," says Foster Vaught, Atlantic Bay Mortgage Group Branch Manager/Reverse Mortgage Specialist. "Some people are looking to retire and have lost money in their investments."

Option for the aging: The reverse mortgage >

Executive Summary:

There are some hoops to jump through, but the reverse mortgage is the right option for many retired people who want to live now and pay later.

By Susan Ayers

For many older people looking for an effective way to fund longevity, a reverse mortgage remains a helpful solution.

The majority of reverse mortgages are Home Equity Conversion Mortgages (HECM), insured by the U. S. Government and only available through a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) approved lender.

"People are getting reverse mortgages for

What are the FHA borrower eligibility requirements?

- 62 years of age or older.
- Property used as collateral must be the primary residence.
- No delinquencies on any federal debt, suspensions, debarments, or excluded participation from FHA programs.
- Completion of HECM counseling from an FHA certified counselor.

"The bank will not own your home and there is no income qualification and no monthly payment," says Larry Campbell, MetLife Home Loans Reverse Mortgage Consultant. "The funds from a reverse mortgage generally do not affect regular Social Security or Medicare benefits. Needs-based benefits, such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), may be impacted. To be on the safe side, contact a tax professional about your situation."

According to the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) Web site, there is no limit on the value of homes qualifying for a HECM. But there is a capped amount of \$625,500 that is the borrowing basis.

"If the borrower elects to take a lump sum, the interest will accrue at a fixed rate," says Vaught. "If the borrower designates monthly payments or takes funds as needed, the interest will accrue at a variable rate. My experience thus far is that most people opt for the lump sum fixed rate. But it's also a great way to supplement income monthly, which would be at a variable interest rate."

HECM counseling—a legal requirement—educates borrowers about using a HECM, including financial implications, alternatives, borrower obligations, costs of obtaining the loan and repayment conditions. All HECM counselors must have passed an FHA-approved exam and are independent from the lender.

Upon completion of the counseling, the prospective borrower is given a certificate of completion to take to the lender. A borrower cannot apply for an HECM without this certificate.

"It's good to have an extra set of eyes, is better policy and provides more of a comfort level for the borrower and relatives," says Vaught. "It's a wonderful way to use their largest asset to have quality of life and enjoy their retirement."

The borrowers continue to be responsible for paying property taxes, homeowner's insurance, and Home Owner's Association (HOA) fees and ground rents, if applicable, maintaining the property in a condition equal to when the loan was closed and continuing to live in the home as a principal residence.

The amount of money a borrower qualifies for is determined by several factors including the borrower's age, the amount of equity in the home and prevailing interest rates.

When the borrower leaves the home or dies, the home is sold, the lender receives the outstanding loan amount and the remainder goes to the heirs. If the sales proceeds are



Larry Campbell

insufficient to pay the amount owed, FHA will pay the lender the amount of the shortfall. FHA collects an insurance premium from all borrowers to provide this coverage, according to HUD's website.

According to Reverse Mortgage Daily's (RMD) post of June 22, Virginia's growth rate for reverse mortgage endorsements thus far for this year is 15.3 percent, higher than the national rate of increase of 3.1 percent. Virginia is one of five states with a double-digit increase. RMD notes that Reverse Market Insight (RMI) newsletter mentions the way states with high home values have benefited from the \$625,500 HECM loan limit set in 2009.

"We have seen an increase in the number of counseling sessions for reverse mortgages and we expect the number of sessions to increase throughout the year," says Brendan Vigorito, Director of Education & Communications at Money Management International. "There are a number of reasons for this increase. As the Baby Boomers reach 62, the number of eligible homeowners also increases. And the tightening of credit has contributed to the increase, as well." ■



Spencer Wiegard

Sarah Beth Jones

Mostly, it's about winning >

Executive Summary:

The joy in the law for Spencer Wiegard is the competition. And winning that competition.

By Sarah Beth Jones

Despite the National Rifle Association's nearby headquarters, Spencer Wiegard

says a guy from Fairfax doesn't get much chance to experience firearms. That is, unless he falls in love with a gal from Waynesboro.

"My father-in-law is a gun aficionado," he says from an elegantly outfitted conference room at Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore in Roanoke.

A member of the firm since 2004, Wiegard was named a rising star in the area of construction litigation last year. Spencer enjoys his work: his co-workers, his clients, the sense of supporting his clients' businesses.

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And then there's the competitiveness of his profession.

"I love to win," he says. "I love to be right. I enjoy the adversarial relationship in litigation but I also enjoy the challenge of negotiation, finding agreements that work for both parties."

Wiegard has no illusions about being a type-A personality. Like many professionals, he says that his greatest challenge is in balancing his tendency to overwork and his desire to be a good husband to his wife, veterinarian Dr. Courtney Wiegard, an attentive father to their two young daughters, and an active member of the community. That includes abundant pro bono hours on the board of the Military Family Support Center. Naturally, finding time to unwind is an issue.

That's where guns come back. With shooting a round of ammo taking a fraction of the time it takes to shoot a round of golf, but with the same stress-relieving results, Wiegard has become a self-proclaimed gun geek. It was his growing interest in and collection of firearms that led to his first gun-related cases, sparking a niche market that he'd like to develop along with his existing specialty in construction law and litigation.

"I've worked on both sides of the [gun] issue," he says, noting that he has never worked on a case he's had philosophical concerns about. "I believe everyone has a right to an attorney in both civil and criminal situations, assuming the claims are legitimate."

His record bears out his willingness to provide representation on a variety of issues. Without



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Perhaps Wiegard's ease with sidestepping concerns about controversy comes from being raised with and married into families of lawyers, where legal matters are discussed over beer and advice is in ready supply.

His father is a lawyer; his mom worked as a paralegal. His father-in-law is a judge and brother-in-law is a lawyer. His identical twin brother, Max, is not only a lawyer but attended the same law school and joined Gentry Locke after he did.

"Now our younger brother is in law school," he says.

Perhaps this youngest Wiegard will also find himself in Roanoke one of these days, gaining practical experience alongside his brothers. Spencer does, after all, advocate for abundant real-life experiences for law students.

"Law school tells you how to think but not how to practice," says Spencer, adding, "[the practice of law is] different than how it's presented in school—or television."

Despite the lack of glamour, he says he still enjoys being a lawyer every day, and

In Brief

Name: Spencer Wiegard
Age: 33
Business: Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore
Type of Business: Law firm
Location: Roanoke
Background: Born and raised in Fairfax and earned B.A. in history from the University of Virginia (2001); J.D. from the College of William and Mary, Marshall-Wythe School of Law (2004). Married to Dr. Courtney Wiegard, with two daughters, Elliott, 3, and Brynne, 1. Affiliations: Statewide coordinator for Pro Bono Hotlines, The Virginia Bar Association Young Lawyers Division; board of Military Family Support Centers, Inc.; William and Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review; member, The Virginia Bar Association Member, Virginia State Bar. American Bar Association, Roanoke Bar Association.

being a resident of Southwest Virginia.

"People smile here," he says, talking of the cultural adjustments he had to make when he moved away from the head-down hustle of Northern Virginia. "It's a genuinely pleasant atmosphere and a great place to raise kids." 

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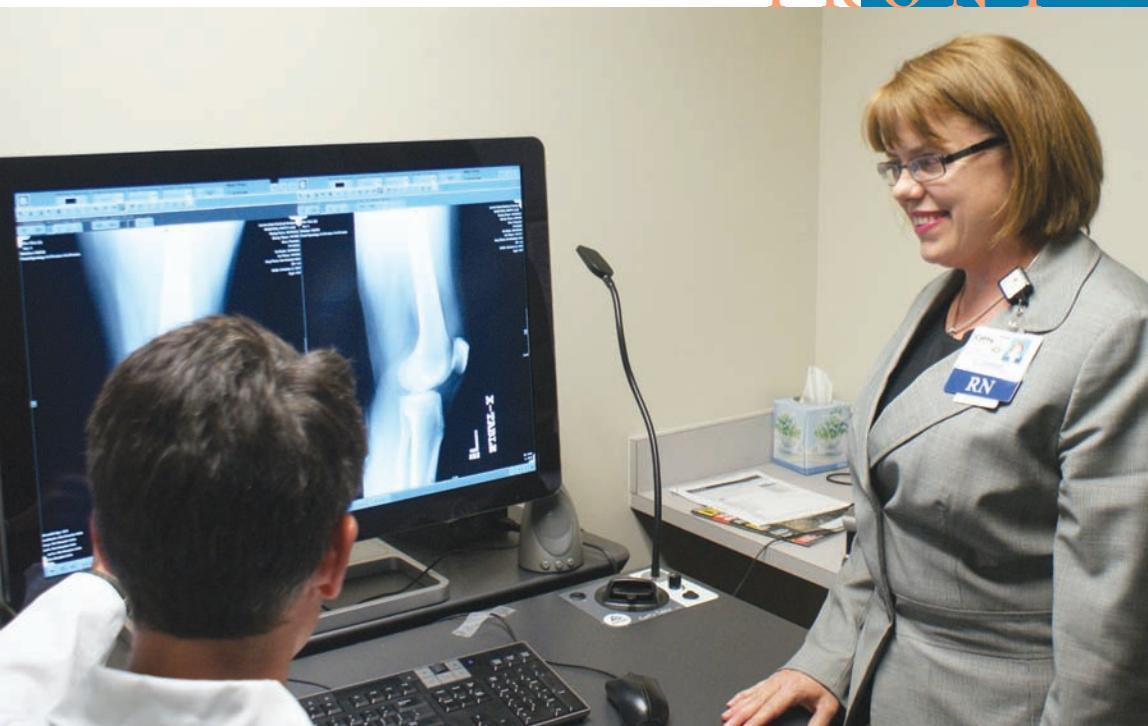
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Dr. James Farmer and Cathy McDowell: "We're going after a healthier community."

Gene Marrano

Keeping jocks in top form >

Executive Summary:

The sports medicine practice at LewisGale Health System takes on all comers in the sports world.

By Gene Marrano

The sports medicine program offered at LewisGale Health System facilities in the Roanoke Valley and elsewhere (Montgomery County, Pulaski and Alleghany County) has as much to do with prevention as it does with practice. The program is described as being suitable for everyone from the weekend warrior to the professional athlete.

Indeed, LewisGale physicians and therapists may work with pro baseball players (Salem Red Sox, Pulaski Mariners), Virginia Tech's

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Top sports injuries >

From a 2006 study by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission that includes the number and types of injuries:

- 529,837 **Basketball** - Cut hands, sprained ankles, broken legs, eye and forehead injuries.
- 490,434 **Bicycling** - Feet caught in spokes, head injuries from falls, slipping while carrying bicycles, collisions with cars.
- 460,210 **Football** - Fractured wrists, chipped teeth, neck strains, head lacerations, dislocated hips and jammed fingers.
- 275,123 **ATVs, Mopeds, Minibikes** - Riders of ATVs were frequently injured when they were thrown from vehicles. There were also fractured wrists, dislocated hands, shoulder sprains, head cuts and lumbar strains.
- 274,867 **Baseball, Softball** - Head injuries from bats and balls. Ankle injuries from running bases or sliding into them.
- 269,249 **Exercise, Exercise Equipment** - Twisted ankles and cut chins from tripping on treadmills. Head injuries from falling backward from exercise balls, ankle sprains from jumping rope.
- 186,544 **Soccer** - Twisted ankles or knees after falls, fractured arms during games.
- 164,607 **Swimming** - Head injuries from hitting the bottom of pools, and leg injuries from accidentally falling into pools.
- 96,119 **Skiing, Snowboarding** - Head injuries from falling, cut legs and faces, sprained knees or shoulders.
- 85,580 **Lacrosse, Rugby and other Ball Games** - Head and facial cuts from getting hit by balls and sticks, injured ankles from falls.

football team and basketball players at Roanoke College, but they also treat high school athletes and the average suburbanite who may have contracted tennis elbow on a public court. Some of the outpatient therapy required takes place off-campus at the Salem YMCA.

Cathy McDowell, a registered nurse and vice-president of Orthopedic and Spine Services for LewisGale, says sports medicine is a subset of the larger program. Fourteen surgeons are involved sports medicine; four physicians are affiliated with college sports at Virginia Tech, Radford and Roanoke College, treating injured athletes, often prowling the sidelines at games to offer immediate assistance. "We partner across the market with academic institutions, from Covington and Alleghany, all the way down to Pulaski," says McDowell.

The program works with recreational

youth leagues, as well. While rehabilitating sports injuries and performing necessary surgeries is one component, Harris says sports medicine is about prevention and wellness, striving to avoid medical issues related to athletics in the first place. The wide range of outdoor activities available in this region can also lead to more injuries, according to McDowell.

Wellness seminars and education outreach may cover proper running techniques, diet and nutrition, the mechanics of throwing a baseball correctly and the detection of concussions on the football field. Academic lecturers from schools like Virginia Tech are also involved as needed.

So-called "sports teams" comprised of physicians, hospital staffers and community members meet regularly at each LewisGale facility (McDowell oversees them), devising education programs that are timely

and make the most sense in that area.

McDowell says there has been a growing demand from the public for LewisGale's sports injury clinics, sessions held in the Roanoke and New River Valleys: "It keeps them out of the emergency room."

Orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Farmer covers Hokies football and Salem High School games from the sideline, looking for signs that big hits on the field may have concussed a player. LewisGale also provided more than 1,400 physicals for local school systems last year.

Then there are those weekend warriors, desk-bound people who may only lift weights, pick up a racquet or jog on Saturday and Sunday. "A lot of people predispose themselves to injury [that way]," says

McDowell, "and they get injured more frequently."

Farmer, a competitive swimmer, says sports injuries can range from bone and joint problems to infections and skin conditions, depending on the athletic pursuit. Ankle, knee and shoulder injuries are often at the top of the list, typically from "overuse and overtraining," according to Farmer, who is alarmed at a rise in the number of ACL knee injuries he is seeing in younger athletes, especially among women.

Sports medicine has long been something that LewisGale/HCA Virginia offers, even if it wasn't called that 20 years ago. "It truly has now carved out its own little niche in how we look at it and educate people," says McDowell. "We're going after a healthier community." 

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Janeson Keeley

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Mac vs. PC, business edition >

Executive Summary:

Businesses find PCs convenient and Macs safe and reliable. The choice is yours.

By Janeson Keeley

In May 2011, Electronista.com reported, "In business, Mac shipments grew about

66 percent in the first quarter of 2011 where the total PC market advanced 4.5 percent. Apple now had three percent of corporate PCs [single-user computers], a figure it hadn't seen since spring 1997."

Why have Microsoft Windows-based PCs dominated the business world? Why is the Mac making significant inroads?

Network engineer Brian Brindle of Roanoke suggests that a significant reason businesses use PCs rather than Macs is that "there are numerous [business] software packages that run only on Windows ... with no viable alternatives on the Mac."

Brindle also notes that companies such as Dell and IBM will custom-build and load software on multiple computers for a corporation so that they are identical, making set-up and maintenance easier.

In terms of corporate service, Apple falls short. According to Apple.com, the only programs that Apple will preload for business customers are iWork (a program similar to Microsoft Office) and its creative software: Aperture (a photo editing program), Final Cut Express (for video editing), and Logic Express (pro music creation software).

However, in terms of running Windows software, a virtual machine can be installed on the Mac that will allow it to run other operating systems, including Windows.

"Big business used to be the worst place to



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have a Mac, but with the ability to install Windows on a Mac, that has diminished somewhat," observes Rob Underwood, the Mac specialist at Two Robs Inc. in Roanoke. He believes that this change is a result of the popularity of the iPhone and iPad. "A lot of corporate IT departments are being forced to support these devices, and the Macs that can come with them," he says.

Macs may also be finding their way into corporate offices because they are more reliable. "Windows is a good general operating system," says Rob Miles, the PC specialist at Two Robs, "and is designed to please as many people as possible. That leads to problems with compatibility ... The user gets more freedom, but that does mean they have to sacrifice a little reliability at times."

Security is another factor. While doing research last year, Lizetta Staplefoote, senior copywriter at Rackspace Hosting in

Blacksburg, found that "Macs are thought to be safer because the user base is far smaller than PCs, so when hackers are writing viruses, they tend to focus on PC attacks." She thinks that "as Macs gain popularity, that will probably change."

Underwood believes reliability and security are related and he says that's the major advantage that Macs have over PCs. "There are very few security threats that can affect a Mac," he reports.

It seems likely that PCs will continue to dominate the workplace, even as Macs grow more popular, but Brindle advises businesses to remember: "A computer is a tool and the recommendation has to be about giving the person the right tool to do their job." 

This is the first in a two part series. Next month: PC vs. Mac: Getting personal.



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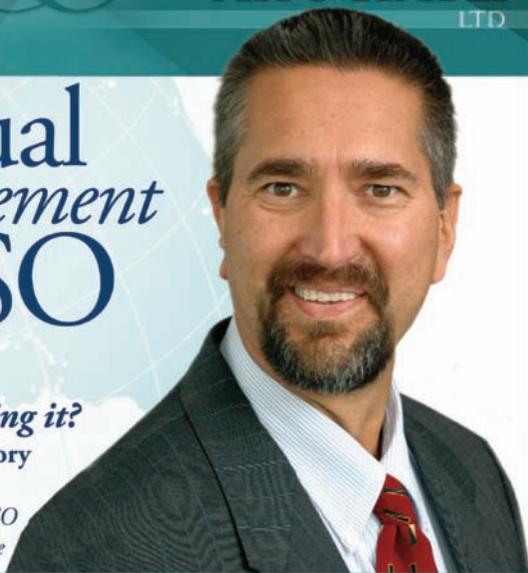
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Jim Rancourt: "There was really never any question about what I would do when I got the degree."

Michael Miller

'We solve problems' >

Executive Summary:

Polymer Solutions in Blacksburg has been around since close to the birth of the polymers industry and its stability remains the story.

By Michael Miller

In 1981, Jim Rancourt might have been headed to UMass or MIT for graduate school, but after attending a Polymers Short Course at Virginia Tech, he knew where he needed to be.

"The degree of collaboration between faculty, even in different departments, was amazing," he says. "And the area was so beautiful. I knew I had to come to Virginia Tech."

Rancourt's story is one familiar to many in the area: He attended school at Virginia Tech and decided to stay. But during the

mid-1980s there weren't many options for a polymer chemist seeking fulfilling employment in the region. "Basically, you could go to work for Poly-Scientific [now Moog], or you could leave."

Fortunately, Rancourt had gotten some work during his graduate studies as a paid consultant. In fact, he had made enough money solving problems for other companies that he was certain he could make a living at it, which would allow him to remain in Blacksburg. "There was really never any question about what I would do when I got the degree," says Rancourt.

He started Polymer Solutions Inc. in March, 1987, one month ahead of finishing his Ph.D.

The company has now grown to more than 30 employees, and continues to expand. PSI was an early tenant of the fledgling Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, maintaining office and laboratories in the Garvin Center until growth forced it to seek more space in the nearby Blacksburg Industrial Park. Since occupying the new

facility a few years ago, PSI has put much effort into renovations to improve the functionality and the atmosphere. A second expansion was recently completed, serving as the focal point for a company celebration and ribbon cutting.

A description of PSI's business model is deceptively simple.

"We solve problems," says Rancourt.

Those problems generally involve ferreting out subtle clues from samples using techniques and equipment with which viewers of "CSI: Wherever" will be familiar. PSI scientists coax information out of slivers of material using gas chromatographs and spectrometers. They pull and stretch and crush and burn and dissolve, seeking the telltale chemical signatures that will tell them what things are made of. Or what they are not.

Companies come to PSI seeking answers. It could be they have tried a new formulation of polymer which is not giving them the performance they expected and they need to find out if there is some contaminant or unexpected reaction during processing. Or, a product might be experiencing high failure rates and a quality control culprit is suspected. Sometimes they think a competitor has copied their proprietary formulations and they want some indisputable proof.

In fact, a large and growing segment of PSI's work comes from litigation. "At any given time, I will probably have about 20 active cases," says Rancourt, pointing to a wall covered with banker's boxes full of case notes.

Employee morale is a key factor in PSI's success. Rancourt prides himself on the family-oriented atmosphere, and runs the company using the FISH philosophy, whose central concepts were inspired by the work culture of the Pike's Place Fish Market in Seattle. "I can recite the principles," says Rancourt. "Be present. Choose your attitude. Have fun. Make their day."

These principles are especially important in the highly creative atmosphere required for solving unusual problems facing PSI every day. "It takes a certain kind of person to view problem solving as fun," says Rancourt. "Anything we do here is not normal."

Thinking outside the box is never more evident than when Rancourt conducts a lab tour, which requires donning protective eyewear. PSI's safety glasses resemble something found on a Hollywood movie set.

"People remember to put on safety glasses more often if the safety glasses actually make them look good," says Rancourt.

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John Wilson leans against glass windows at front of building

The married artists—she a painter and photographer, he a metal sculptor—bought the old Henri Kessler clothing store building on Campbell Avenue and reopened it as the Wilson Hughes gallery and studios. They've been in the space slightly more than three years.

The high cost of living in San Francisco, where they had a residential studio, helped them decide on Roanoke as a new home. They paid \$220,000 for the two-story building occupying about 25 feet of street frontage and about 2,000 square feet per floor of living and works pace. Suzun says she's impressed by the "authentic quaintness of downtown."

John says the building was in bad shape when they bought it, but "there were no surprises. We'd made a career out of doing real estate rehab and flips, so we can walk in and look at a building and know its general condition."

Adds Suzun, "We'd rather have something that was totally tear-down, than something that somebody had put some money into and we'd have to tear it down."

Work Spaces

Renovation as art and for art >

Executive Summary:

A couple of Roanoke artists have found a home for their business that suits their west coast roots.

By David Perry

Roanoke's downtown cultural revival arrived just in time for transplanted west coasters John Wilson and Suzun Hughes.

"I don't think we would have moved here even five years before we got here," says Suzun, referring to the recent additions of fixtures like the Taubman Museum and the new Kirk Avenue arts emphasis.

The ground floor became a gallery in the front of the building and studio space was established in the back. "We put in the finishings that you'd expect in a high-end gallery," says John. The couple left ductwork exposed and painted it black. They added lighting and the front of the building received a bright new facade.

"Now the only things that are original to this building are brick walls," the ceiling rafters and the hardwood floors on the second level, which they kept and refinished. A tree growing on the roof had allowed water to run down the rear wall of the building and damaged it. Thanks to a stream running through the basement,



Graffiti wall

dampness and termites had seriously damaged the wood floor downstairs.

They moved the mechanicals out of the basement, encapsulated the stream and poured a heated concrete floor on the ground level, which they'd had in their previous two homes. They also added new electrical service and an elevator.

John's studio features welding equipment and a fire hood, while Suzun's painting studio often features a dog lounging on a couch and a large sheet of paper taped to the wall with her brainstorming scrawled on it to inspire her.

Upstairs in their living area, John and Suzun added a balcony. Her paintings line the hallway. There's also a large living room and several unique features left over from the building's past: the hollowed-out space in a brick wall where a drain pipe used to run, and niches in an area that used to be a mezzanine, one of which is occupied by an empty bottle of port.

John estimates an expenditure about \$125 per square foot on renovations alone, about \$500,000.

While mostly showing their own work, the couple does occasional outside shows. "It's kind of like these things just happen," says Suzun of the impromptu events schedule. "We're always open to having events here."

Outside, a "graffiti wall" faces a small private parking lot, where authorized graffiti artists can leave their work after submitting a sketch for approval.

"We don't want taggers," says Suzun. "It's constantly evolving." 



John's studio



Downstairs gallery



Living room



Suzun's studio



Hallway with Suzun's paintings

Seeing the trees and the forest >

Executive Summary:

Christiansburg Forester Nathan Green takes the business into his own hands.

By Laura Purcell

Becoming a forester was a split-second decision for Nathan Green. He had intended to major in history at Virginia Tech, but as he flipped through the course catalog during his freshman orientation, classes in forestry and wildlife sciences caught his eye. A job that involved the outdoors appealed to him, and thus, his course was set.

In May 2011, Nathan, who is 34, started his own business, N R Green Resource Consulting, after working as a professional forester for

13 years—seven years as a consultant and six years for a forest products company.

As an independent consultant, Nathan works as a contractor for forest products companies, assists institutional land investors and helps private landowners with timber sales.

The work of a forester is varied. Nathan has found himself dodging alligators knee-deep in the Louisiana Bayou, as well as sitting on a mountaintop admiring a vista of the Blue Ridge Mountains. He still has mild disbelief that he can get paid to take in such a view. But spending time in forests is only a portion of his job. Green also makes estimates for clients, negotiates sales and works with loggers to oversee his clients' timber harvests.

"By using my services, land owners get more money for their timber and be sure that their forest is properly managed," he says. "Their interests are protected, and the terms of the sale contract are enforced."



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DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Nathan Green: "It bothered me that I was always dependent on someone else for my employment," Now, "at least I know what's going on, and I can make changes if need be."

Laura Purcell



Spectrum Design is proud to have put the finishing touches on Heartwood: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Gateway. The 30,000-square-foot facility in Abingdon will celebrate Appalachia's arts and crafts heritage.

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With his years as a consultant and in the timber industry, Nathan has market knowledge that eludes most landowners. "Some of the sales tactics I use will net even the most educated and timber-savvy landowner more money," he says.

While many clients need Green's help for a one-time sale, he is also interested in helping landowners maintain the long-term health and quality of their forested property. He can help manipulate forests to attract game by identifying which tree species to cut or plant.

Nathan is working toward becoming a certified applicator of commercial pesticides, so that he can use herbicide to help eradicate nuisance and invasive species from clients' forests, in addition to other tree removal methods, like girdling and cutting.

Nathan contemplated starting his own business for about eight months, but

ultimately decided that now is the best time to chart his own course. "It bothered me that I was always dependent on someone else for my employment," he says. Now, "at least I know what's going on, and I can make changes if need be."

While some of Nathan's former clients were happy to follow him in his new endeavor, he knows that he can't simply wait for work to come to him. He dedicates a portion of his time each week to making old-fashioned cold calls and connecting with potential clients. "If I'm out driving and see a farmer working in his field, I'll pull over so I can hand him my card," Nathan says.

"As is typical for most small businesses, I devote time each week to finding work, marketing my services, and I remain in constant contact with my clients. I must also be out in the woods, beating through briars and looking at timber." 

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Ann Turner sews one of her bridal gowns.

Dan Smith

Altered states >

Executive Summary:

Ann Turner began as a very good lady with a sewing machine and has evolved into a sought-after designer.

By Kathy Surace

Ann Turner never dreamed that the demand for her services would be so strong when she decided to focus fulltime on her business, Alter Plus in Roanoke. As Alterations Manager at David's Bridal for nine years, she built a reputation as a seamstress who knows her stuff.

She developed private clients who worked and traveled throughout the world, stopping along the way to purchase fine fabrics and bring them home to Roanoke, so that Ann could turn them into business apparel for them.

After retirement, Ann's business plan was to offer alterations, home décor, monogramming, and clothing construction from patterns. However, she found that everywhere she turned, women were having trouble finding exactly what they wanted in stores. They wanted outfits sewn specifically for them and were willing to pay whatever necessary to get the wardrobe they needed for special occasions and for the workplace.

This turn of events has caused Ann to begin changing the design of her basic patterns to create the designs her clients need. She searches out fabrics that meet the need of the client, be it easy care, high end and durable or delicate and chic. In addition to her skills as a seamstress, Ann has experience cost-estimating garments to determine how much time it will take to sew each piece of a garment. This is invaluable in determining a fair price for both consumer and business owner.

She loves the process of learning what

the client wants, figuring out how to create it to the client's specifications and delivering a product that lights up her face.

The brides have started employing her. "A bride told me recently that I was the first bridal wear specialist who listened to what she wanted, instead of telling her what she should want," says Ann.

Ann's simple alterations business is simple no more. It has morphed into haute couture and creative projects and she is now planning to launch two lines of clothing for women: the first line focusing on bridal wear and special occasions and another specializing in classic suits at affordable prices. She hopes to have them available in October 2011.

Ann's business began with "ladies who have a special event and they want something simple to wear that they can dress up or down according to the occasion." Many of her clients came to her with unique needs. Some had high-end clothing they spent too much on to simply discard. She updates the design and fit to give it new life. She is equally skilled in taking apart a vintage dress to recreate it for a client, a tedious and exacting process that not many professionals will tackle. For business women, Turner becomes a "mobile seamstress," traveling to their homes, fitting the garments and delivering the completed garments.

All these projects have not dimmed Ann's

In Brief

Name:	Ann Turner
Age:	Baby Boomer
Business:	Alter Plus
Type of Business:	Alterations/specialty design including clothing, home décor, monogramming and instruction
Location:	Roanoke
Title:	Owner
Background:	Ann Turner is a native of Reading, Pa. Her first training was as a cost estimator, after which she moved to Virginia in 1976. She spent eight years as a real estate appraiser in Virginia. She offered alterations services out of her home for 22 years, while raising two children. Most recently, Turner spent nine years as Alterations Manager for David's Bridal, and then took retirement in February of this year to focus fulltime on her company, Alter Plus. In October she will begin to offer a line of bridal wear and women's suits.

enthusiasm for her craft. In fact, her ideal project is specialty work, encompassing anything creative and unusual. She likes the creative part of the work, saying, "My greatest interest is to see a person enjoy apparel that is special to them." 

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Jessie Ward: "Once I was done, he came over and apologized, said he just didn't expect a woman to be able to do it ..."

Sarah Beth Jones

Pioneer woman in a Smart Car >

Executive Summary:

Blacksmith Jessie Ward continues to surprise people, and not just with the blacksmithing. There's a lot to this woman.

By Sarah Beth Jones

Jessie Ward is a pioneer woman who drives a Smart Car named Olivia. She is a third generation farrier and blacksmith whose artistic talents stretch beyond the forge and into painting, bookbinding, intaglio printmaking and more. She has lived in Martinsville, since birth—at least, when she's not traveling to Tanzania, Mexico, the United Kingdom and throughout these United States.

"I've lived a charmed life," Jessie says. Then she notes she was in a near-fatal hot air balloon crash. She watched marauding thieves attack the Tanzanian village where he was helping build a hospital. And she's thinking only of how she always manages to come out alright.

She's been teaching blacksmithing this summer at the Jacksonville Center in Floyd. It all started at her dad's forge, where, at nine years old, she began learning the skills of the trades she always knew she wanted to pursue: blacksmithing and shoeing horses as a farrier.

At 14, Jessie got her first paid shoeing job. A woman who was having a hard time finding a farrier to drive to her farm to shoe her sole horse would pick Jessie and Jessie's father's tools up after school. Thirty-eight years later, Jessie still shoes that woman's horses, now numbering 23.



In Brief

Name: Jessie Ward

Age: 52

Business: Farrier, blacksmith, muralist, printmaker, teacher of blacksmithing, book binding, marbling and flint lock gun firing, among other topics

Location: Martinsville based

Background: Martinsville native, learned blacksmithing at home. Married for 16 years to electrician Mark Wingfield. Member of World Championship Blacksmiths, Virginia Horseshoers Association, Certified by the American Farrier's Association

Being a woman in the boy's club of metal arts has not always been a welcoming affair, but it has yet to present a challenge from which Jessie has backed away.

Jessie tells a story of arriving at the farm of an older man who wouldn't believe that she was the farrier he had hired, despite two phone conversations to arrange the appointment.

"He said, 'No woman's shoeing my horse,' and I said I could make it through the day whether I shod the horse or not but this was the amount of money I could be making and he was going to pay me either way."

The man finally acquiesced to let her try her hand at his horse's shoes and not only was the horse a perfect gentleman, the client turned out to be, too.

"Once I was done, he came over and apologized, said he just didn't expect a woman to be able to do it but that his horse's feet had never looked so good ... The next time I went back, a group of five or six old guys were there to watch me work and that client was my biggest fan."

Jessie recalls the older generation of blacksmiths and farriers who once wouldn't

answer even her simplest questions and how they became the friends who began referring students and business to her once they saw her skills.

"I have broken some glass ceilings in blacksmithing," she says, "but I don't find it anything to brag about."

Despite the rough moments in her early years, she says there is no better group of people to know than lifetime blacksmiths, people who will miss a day of paid work to help a fellow blacksmith with anything. She talks with pride of the rising generation that doesn't stop to notice her gender in their pursuit of blacksmithing knowledge.

For a woman who values learning above all else (except maybe fun), this is high praise indeed.

Standing at The Jacksonville Center forge as her soot-smudged weekend students finish their projects and, in ones and pairs, head to their cars, she shakes every person's hand deliberately and invites them to call on her any time.

"I'm in the book, look me up," she says. The warmth in her eyes and grip of her handshake leave no doubt that she truly means the invitation. 



Students included: (from bottom left, clockwise) Tamea Woodward, Melinda Cohen, Pam Cox and Robin Miles.

Erin Pope

On being a woman >

Executive Summary:

Not many people go to school to learn how to be a woman, but these Roanoke area professionals did and they swear by the lessons they were taught.

By Erin Pope

Most women are taught the rules of decorum at a fairly early age by a concerned mother, aunt, or grandmother. A girl might be taught to adopt ramrod posture, to rein in a boisterous personality in solemn social situations or to avoid showing the contents of a meal to fellow tablemates while chewing.

More often than not, she will be instructed to be docile and accommodating to others without pursuing her own unique desires.

The School for Womanly Arts—which is

based in both Manhattan and South Beach and attracts multinational throngs of disparate women to its annual gatherings—might immediately conjure images of pearls and matching gloves, modest curtsies, or a finger raised daintily while holding a teacup. But that would be deceiving.

Business professionals Tamea Woodward, Pam Cox, Robin Miles, and Melinda Cohan are all good friends and enthusiastic proponents of the program, and they aren't apologizing for being raucous, attuned to their ambitions, or for having more fun than most people.

The School for Womanly Arts was founded by a Regena Thomashaur—or, as her devoted "sistergoddesses" call her, Mama Gen. Tamea, president of Global Metalfinishing and East West Dyecom in Roanoke, has read extensively about Thomashaur and has heard her speak many times in public. Woodward says that Thomashaur decided she wanted

a drastically different world for her then-newborn daughter, so she decided to try and devise one.

Mama Gena wanted to harness the positive qualities more often associated with femininity—creativity, inspiration, and a visionary outlook—while ceasing to feel guilty about pursuing her own desires. Those who have experienced The School for Womanly Arts are quick to point out how desires differ from goals. As Melinda Cohan, an executive coach who serves as a regional representative of the program, says: “Desires bring you joy. They make you smile. Goals are something you just cross off a list.”

The program is not as simple as it sounds. Tamea, Pam, Robin and Melinda swear that The School for Womanly Arts can feel like a estrogen-infused boot camp at times, and that it forces each participant to examine the darker side of her personality and her choices.

Melinda explains that “some things are better experienced than articulated,” and a large degree of secrecy surrounds Thomashauer’s methodology and philosophy. The participants sign confidentiality agreements during the course of their studies, and jokingly refer to those who haven’t gone through the program as “civilians.” Tamea emphasizes that TSFWA is hardly a sorority. There’s no cruel hazing, no struggle for power and popularity and each student “recognizes the beauty in every woman,” as Pam Cox puts it.

The Roanoke School for Womanly Arts graduates treasure their friendships with other females above most anything else, but they also say that it’s helped their relationships with the men in their lives. Tamea says becoming a happier individual has made her marriage better, and Pam Cox says that her dating life is more active now than it’s ever been. Robin Miles mentions how the program prompted her to end a toxic relationship.

All four women are quick to stress how much they value and appreciate the company of men, but they also insist that women are in dire need of a loving community of likeminded people who’ve shared similar gender-based struggles.

Robin Miles, who works as an interior designer, says, “The support of women is an amazing gift.”

Pam Cox, who is a sales representative for Usana Nutritional Products, says, “Sister goddesses help you, but they don’t try to solve you. They’re able to talk you out of any sadness.”

These women strive to be peacefully confident, rather than destructive and reactionary, and emphasize the importance of living a life of pleasure. As Tamea Woodward says: “In your wildest dreams and conjurings of who you’d like to be—whether a princess, goddess, or stay-at-home mom—you can do it with grace, elegance, and power.” 

fromtheeditr.blogspot.com

More
Dan Smith
than most can stand...





David Perry

Sandy Light: “There are snakes, scorpions and lizards and often no running water and certainly no bathrooms—really rustic conditions that my friends won’t even think about.”

A woman of the world >

Executive Summary:

Sandy Light doesn't even slow down regardless of the obstacles.

By David Perry

She's raced into burning buildings while setting fundraising records at Center in the Square and the Jefferson Center. She's also raised three children, learned to fly an airplane (and jump from one) and travels overseas in the summer to volunteer in third-world countries. And those are just the highlights.

The fundraising records may have been surpassed, but Sandy Light's still on top.

“Power To The People”

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



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Sandy Light as a rescue squad volunteer



Sandy Light with boa constrictor at the Science Museum

She arrived in the Roanoke Valley over 30 years ago. After raising three children and sending one off to study mechanical engineering at Stanford, Sandy found herself fighting fires. Her daughter was asked to design an IV starter for paramedics that would retract by itself and cost less than a half a penny per unit. She was assigned to ride along with the San Francisco fire department.

Sandy's daughter called her mom and said, "Mom, this is you! You've got to do this." So Sandy took courses and volunteered with Roanoke EMS and then Read Mountain Fire and Rescue, where she'd get to be a firefighter and a shock-trauma tech, too.

"It was awesome. I loved it," says Sandy. She also loved being sent to Istanbul, Turkey by Center in the Square to talk about economic development and adaptive reuse of buildings after downtown Roanoke's revival in the 1980s.

"I was by myself with people from all over the world," says Sandy. "And I had so much fun."

So much fun that she signed up with a Washington, D.C.-based group called Peaceworks to volunteer overseas in developing countries.

"None of my friends go with me, so I always go by myself," Sandy recalls. "The conditions are anything but sanitary. There are snakes,

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scorpions and lizards and often no running water and certainly no bathrooms—really rustic conditions that my friends won't even think about.”

She's been to Cambodia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Vietnam, South Africa, Fiji (“Not the tourist part of Fiji—the poverty-stricken part,” she clarifies) and took an especially memorable trip to Tajikistan. On a layover in Uzbekistan, she was marched out of the airport by armed guards while trying to buy a postcard and a souvenir. She arrived later at her destination, but her bags went to Ankara.

“We were there for two weeks and my luggage never came,” she says. The other women in the group were shorter than Sandy, so the men on the trip loaned her clothes and shoes.

Maybe she should have flown her own jet—she's a pilot, after all. She and her ex-husband started lessons right after their wedding. “We took back all of our wedding gifts—all our silver, china, all that stuff” to pay for it, she says. “Our parents had a fit.”

What drives someone like Sandy Light to live such a full life and still find time to volunteer all over town? It's fun.

“I can't believe the things I get to do,” she says. “Most people hate fundraising. I really love it, because I get to work

In Brief

Name: Sandy Light
Age: Won't discuss it, so don't ask
Position: Community volunteer
Location: Roanoke
Background: Columbus, Ohio, native, Skid more College grad worked for Bear Stearns, the juvenile court in Washington, D.C. and the UVa Medical Center before moving to Roanoke in the early 1980s. Raised three children (a Harvard professor, an employee of the Gates Foundation in Ghana, and a consultant). She has become one of the Roanoke Valley's most successful fundraisers and most respected board members. Travels to work in developing countries in the summer with the non-profit Peaceworks and Global Village organizations. She skis and enjoys a social life that her children (and theirs) would envy.

with some of my favorite people.”

“I've done it,” she says when asked what the rest of her life holds. “There's nothing I want to do because I'm already doing it.” 

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Learning to be an owner >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *This tech athlete is transferring some of her sports leadership lessons to what she hopes will one day be the board room.*

Courtney Dobbs was standing in front of the table at the trade show greeting visitors enthusiastically. I thought, "How cute. The owner has his kid working with him." I figured she was maybe 13 or so.

I wasn't far off, although I was way off base. Courtney Dobbs is an 18-year-old rising sophomore at Virginia who was 18 when I first saw her. She is small, lean and a distance runner who finished third in the nation in her age group this past spring and has been the marketing director for a technology company already. She is an accounting major who has almost no interest in working for somebody else when she graduates. Court wants her own business.

My guess is that she'll have it a whole lot quicker than most might imagine. This impressive young woman, who is attending school on a partial track scholarship (there are very few full scholarships in minor sports, even at this upper competitive level) and a business school merit scholarship. Her dad, Corky Dobbs, was something of an athletic legend in Clifton Forge and played ball, while earning his CPA at Emory & Henry. He owns a garage in Fredericksburg. Her mother, Susan, is a lawyer. Court's genes are refined.

Courtney is in the target audience for the Oct. 1 Women's Forum at Hollins University, an event that is the first of a series of FRONTburner seminars this magazine will sponsor. We have some good partners for this one—Carilion, Hollins University, Woods Rogers, HomeTown Bank, Brambleton Imports, EastWest DyeCom and Woodson Honda—and the enthusiasm level is high among women who aspire to leadership. The cost is \$30 and you can register at www.hollins.edu/womensforum2011.

The idea for the Women's Forum came up when Tamea Woodward of EastWest DyeCom and I were having lunch and she was talking enthusiastically about a class in the art of being a woman she had taken in New York (it is profiled in this issue). That conversation evolved into a seminar that will include a roundtable discussion and eight classes on a Saturday. I can promise you that it will crackle with excitement, interest, creativity and great information.

Courtney, though very young, is a prime candidate for the fourm. She needs mentors and instruction and

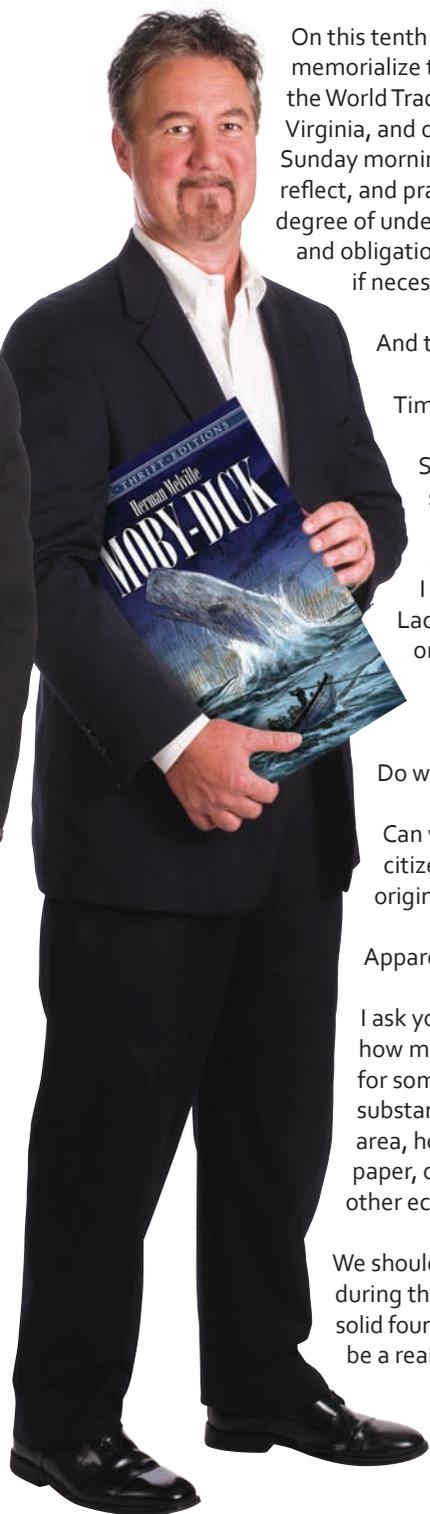
continued on Page 50



No slinking back >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub



On this tenth anniversary of 9/11 it is fitting to acknowledge and memorialize the unconscionable sacrifice of nearly 3,000 people at the World Trade Center in New York City, in the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and on a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Particularly on Sunday morning, September 11, 2001, it is appropriate to pause, reflect, and pray. Pray not so much for the possibility of any real degree of understanding—but for the smallest ounce of direction and obligation we might have to first prevent, and then combat if necessary, such terrible demonstrations of evil.

And then it's time to act.

Time to rebuild. Repair. Restore. And revive.

Sadly, our record for the past ten years has not followed such a course. It's really quite amazing that there has not been a great unification after suffering such a vicious attack. Some families fall apart after a tragedy invades, I suppose. I always thought those were the weak ones. Lacking in a solid foundation. Ill-prepared. No core beliefs or long-standing values or traditions.

Ah, therein lies the rub, perhaps.

Do we—as a nation—even have a solid foundation?

Can we agree on anything? Even the necessity of each able citizen being productive and contributing his or her part—an original and quintessential American ideal?

Apparently not.

I ask you to take a drive: just four blocks. In a residential area, how many households are receiving a taxpayer-funded check for some subsidy, where the money is depended on as a substantial if not primary source of its income? In a commercial area, how many businesses are primarily non-producers, pushing paper, or working with goods, products and materials that support other economies at the expense of our own?

We shouldn't be in this state *during the best of times*—much less during the decade after an attack on our own soil. We must have a solid foundation. And that foundation can't be a safety net. It needs to be a real platform from which to stand and reach our opportunities.

We're slinking back.

Right at the very time we should be springing forward. 



(left) Courtney Dobbs, the businesswoman. (right) Courtney Dobbs, the athlete.

photos: Dan Smith

There's more from this wunderkinder: "Do not spend months developing a product until you have carried out some type of market validation and know what need you are meeting. Many entrepreneurs see so much potential in their ideas that they try to execute too many varieties of their product at once. Get revenue quicker by focusing on one specific product first."

College most often doesn't teach students to go into business for themselves, preferring to teach them to work for others. Courtney wants that to change and says, "I meet with professors who have been working hard to add more courses in entrepreneurship, and I plan to take any that they offer in the future."

Smith / My View

from Page 48

she's a worker. Women often have depended on men for that instruction and we want that to change. Court says, "I have always been inspired by my father's and uncle's abilities to grow something out of nothing ... I get bored without a challenge, so the challenge of starting my own business seems like something I could endure in the future. My experiences with the Enetrepneur-Club and [the business she helped run] have made this challenge even more appealing to me."

Courtney understands, at least on an intellectual level, that "to start your own business, you have to beat the odds that say your idea will most likely fail. Beating those odds and growing your idea into a business takes a persistence that most people do not have. Lessons learned: Get support by reaching out and expanding your network of business professionals."

She worked at Marek Zareba's Engagn until the marketing director's job began to interfere with school and track, but she learned quite a bit, she says. Zareba had pitched his company idea to the E-Club and she started as an intern. Later, she pitched in front of angel investors at the Entrepreneur Summit. She worked the Roanoke Business Expo (where we met), and found that there is a true art to making cold calls.

"Those challenges helped me learn quickly about our market and to whom our company needed to sell in order to be sustainable," she says.

Running, says Courtney, is "a sport I do with the end goal always in mind." She's looking at business in the same way and maybe she's blazing a trail at Tech with that attitude. 

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Letters

Important coverage

The FRONT's consistent and timely coverage of energy and the environment is more important than ever. The August issue is a good example of this. It is my opinion that we now live in an age of misinformation spawned in part by the readily available biased inaccuracies rampant on the internet, blog sites and some major media.

Who can we rely on for information that is truly "fair and balanced"? The problem with all of this—particularly in the energy and environmental debate—is how do we have effective dialogue when misinformation controls the conversation? How do we solve problems or find common ground when people can be so influenced by half-truths, non-truths, fear mongering, and outright intimidation and bullying?

I have never been as concerned as I am now about our societal inability to solve problems. Problem solving on any level requires that stakeholders leave their baggage at the door, seek common ground, compromise and move forward. And if this process is to be successful it must rely heavily on truthful conversation that is based on accurate information. We can disagree based on our opinions and interpretation of the facts but if there is nothing factual on the table then the process is lost.

I appreciate the FRONT's effort to be part of the solution and not the problem. Keep up the accurate reporting, thoughtful essays, and important stories because as I have stated it is more important than ever.

Billy Weizenfeld
Association of Energy
Conservation Professionals
 aecpes.org
 Floyd

Plugging air leaks

The August Cover, 'Hijacked, Rising Energy Costs' was spot-on. In the U.S., we spend about 90 percent of our time inside of buildings that account for 70 percent of our total electricity consumption. About a third of that is wasted through air leaks. We don't need fancy technology to attain dramatic changes in our energy use—and our utility bills.

Ben Franklin's quote, "A small leak can sink a great ship" is apropos. Most leaks are hiding in the attic, basement and walls. They waste money and introduce moisture, pollutants (and stinkbugs!) indoors. These leaks can be sealed cost-effectively. A modest investment will pay back at a rate many times higher than the choicest stocks. But caveat emptor: They can also be sealed ineffectively, thus wasting money and making indoor air more unhealthy.

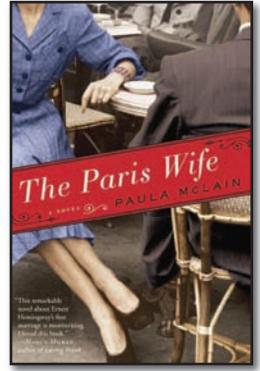
BPI-certified energy consultants can optimize your investment while improving air quality and comfort. This emerging field has the potential to provide enough savings to greatly reduce our need for foreign energy sources and expensive new energy infrastructure throughout the country.

Monica Rokicki-Guajardo
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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

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



The Hemingways

Paula McLain's *A Paris Wife* (Balentine Books, \$25) is a well researched and thoughtful, telling the story of a complicated marriage involving Hadley and Ernest Hemingway in the halcyon days of the 1920s. Even though you know the ending, you find yourself rooting for Hadley and Ernest.

Hadley was a naïve spinster when she met handsome Ernest Hemingway, home from the Great War and suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Hadley believed in Ernest's writing talent before the world came to know him and she was generous and supportive. She was a strong balance to Ernest's needy personality and a love affair blossomed. The couple lived in Paris and found company with other expats such as Scott Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein.

The novel unfolds as the couple's days fill with booze, flirtations, train trips, skiing and Spanish bullfights. The deepening love affair is offset by Ernest's growing need for acclimation. Hadley remains forgiving and fighting for her marriage while Ernest's need for attention drives him to another woman.

—Nancy Agee

The old South

Anyone who grew up in the South during the late 1950s and early 1960s will see many familiar faces in Kathryn Scott's *The Help* (Berkley Trade, \$16), which has become a major movie. I was a kid in Virginia, where a black maid came in several times a month to do the cleaning. Her name was Mildred. She was a large woman who worked hard and told of being bitten by a copperhead while

raking leaves in her back yard. I have no idea what she was thinking or what she did outside our home.

The Help tells that story. Kathryn Stockett was born and raised in Jackson, Miss., and it shows. Her book is a tale of hope and redemption, almost all revealed inside the closed doors of peoples' homes. It is told by three women – and what voices they have!

Aibileen is a matriarch; Minnie is not as diplomatic. Miss Skeeter has grown from an ugly baby to a tall, gangly college graduate. Skeeter is an aspiring writer desperate for an audience.

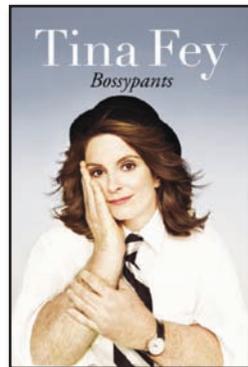
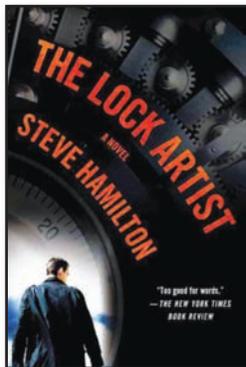
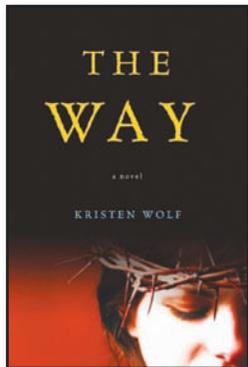
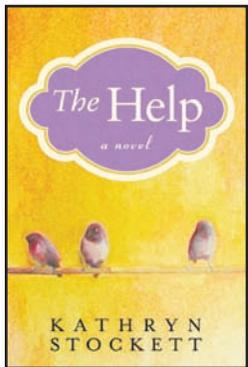
Stockett writes engagingly about a time and a place with real people in it. They are not types. And they are almost all loveable or at least likeable in some way, like members of the family who do stupid things but still deserve love. A wonderful eye for detail and a robust sense of humor make this book very hard to put down.

—Diana Christopulos

A Jesus fable

Kristen Wolf, a graduate of Hollins University's creative writing program, begins *The Way* (Crown Publishers, \$25) in 7 A.D. in a village on the outskirts of ancient Palestine. Seven-year-old Anna's baby brother is born dead, and, three years later, her mother dies. Anna's father disguises her as a boy and sells her to Solomon, the leader of a group of shepherds. She takes the name of her dead brother, Jesus. Anna eventually finds peace in her new life—and welcome freedom in her new gender.

Solomon eventually delivers Anna to a secret,



religious order of sisters where she spends many happy years, learning and living The Way. But when Peter and Judas, fellow shepherds from her earlier life, reenter Anna's world, her fate is sealed.

Despite the somewhat fantastical story line, this is an absorbing tale with—depending on your point of view—an appealing or repugnant twist.

—Lucy Lee

Pick this

Imagine meeting a person where only you can hear him talk. That's exactly what you get with "Mike" in Steve Hamilton's *The Lock Artist* (Minotaur Books; \$15). The protagonist is mute. What a clever story. First person narrative is ... well, about all you have when your hero has no voice. The lock-picking, safe-cracker doesn't utter a word but speaks volumes as he puts his guard up against unsavory characters (though not nearly high enough) and allows his heart to flutter for his first love (though not nearly deep enough).

Hamilton's characters are a bit one-dimensional, but since the main character is a teenager—and the remaining figures mimic a comic book approach, you're apt to forgive the shallowness. The flash-back and flash-forward chapters back-to-back in a span of only a few years is a bit over-staged, but you're apt to forgive that obvious dramatic technique as well, because the story is captivating enough to keep you guessing.

You don't need the creepy godfather mentor who claims safes are like women (yes, he's actually in there) to appreciate the object of affection here. But I'll never look at key locks,

padlocks, combination locks, and electronic keypads the same. Locksmiths ("boxmen")—it turns out—are cool. Make them non-talking teenagers, and they're downright heroic. Who'dda thought that combination would have worked?

—Tom Field

No laughing matter

I anticipated that Tina Fey's autobiography-of-sorts *Bossypants* (Little, Brown, \$26.99), to be pages filled with humor and laughter. Fey, it turns out, just isn't as funny without the television writers for "Saturday Night Live" and "30 Rock."

Bossypants begins with Fey's childhood in the 1970s, progresses through her learning what women are "supposed" to look like—and the "horrors" of spider veins, muffin tops and "lunch lady arms." Fey makes editorial commentaries throughout the book, examining the reality of perception, but also coming across a bit offensively.

Much is shared about her experience in television with "30 Rock" and "SNL"; as in the pages of scripts and screenshots. Some will find it interesting but others might think it redundant. Sorry Tina, I didn't laugh.

—Heather Brush

(The reviewers: Nancy Agee is CEO of Carilion Clinic. Diana Christopoulos is director of the Cool Cities Coalition. Lucy Lee is a coordinator of Roanoke Valley Reads. Heather Brush is a Rocky Mount artist. Tom Field is publisher of FRONT.)

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Darth Vader @ Red Sox >

Child actor **Max Page**, who played Mini Darth Vader on the hugely popular Super Bowl commercial showed up at the Salem Red Sox game on August 12. Before the six-year-old appeared on the national spot, he worked on "The Young and Restless" and is the nephew of local Q99 radio host David Page.



Tastes & Sounds >

photos: Tom Field

In conjunction with **VT KnowledgeWorks Global Partnership Week** (a student entrepreneurship program), a "*Taste & Sounds of the Valleys*" reception was held at Hotel Roanoke August 24. The banquet featured music and food from the Roanoke and New River Valleys, showcasing regional offerings to the global community. VT KnowledgeWorks director **Jim Flowers** (left) and Roanoke City Mayor **David Bowers** chat before the celebration.

NS christens more cars >

Announced onsite at a press conference August 22, Norfolk Southern CEO **Wick Moorman** (right) smashed a champagne bottle on one of the 1,500 new freight carts NS is buying from FreightCar America in Roanoke. Joining him was FreightCar America CEO **Ed Whalen** (left) and Virginia Secretary of Commerce **Jim Cheng** (center).



Hotel improves courtyard >

The **Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center** recently completed a \$200,000 renovation of the open air Garden Courtyard, featuring 6,270 sq. feet of multi-dimensional space, seating for up to 250 guests, a focal point gazebo, designated lounge area surrounded by garden plantings and fireplace.



Sustainable retirement center opens >

A ribbon cutting ceremony July 29 at **Brandon Oaks** signifies the region's first sustainably developed retirement residence. Pictured here from left to right are Roanoke City Manager **Chris Morrill**, Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce president **Joyce Waugh**, **Andy Dickinson**, **Paul White** and **Skip Zubrod**.



photo: Dan Smith

Wells Fargo stagecoach >

Wells Fargo Market President **Harvey Brookins** (red shirt on the stagecoach) helped usher in the transfer of Wachovia to Wells Fargo August 25 in downtown Roanoke. That is Brookins' wife **Sharisse** in the red top photographing him and Mayor **David Bowers** is in the white suit riding shotgun. A large crowd lined Campbell Avenue to watch the coach and four horses parade by with the Patrick Henry High School band.

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

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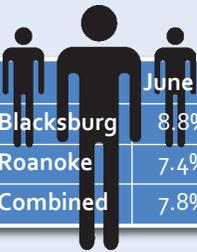
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The fragile recovery seems to be hanging on in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. Unemployment is down from a year ago and so is the number of people filing initial unemployment claims.

Unemployment/Employment

The Blacksburg and Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Areas were among the 224 (out of 372) MSAs to see a June drop in **unemployment** compared to June 2010. Both—along with Virginia—were up slightly from May. Unemployment rates in June were much lower than a year ago—the Roanoke and New River Valley region’s unemployment rate fell 11.5 percent, a slightly steeper drop than the state’s 10.0 percent. The region’s 129 initial unemployment claims filed during the week of July 22 represent an 83.8 percent drop from the same week last year—and a hopeful sign for further reductions in the unemployment rates.

(Alert readers might notice the May 2011 numbers are different from those published last month. They were adjusted by the Virginia Employment Commission.)



	UNEMPLOYMENT		
	June 10	May 11	June 11
Blacksburg	8.8%	6.9%	7.5%
Roanoke	7.4%	6.3%	6.7%
Combined	7.8%	6.4%	6.9%

The number of people **employed** in the region in June was up 0.9 percent from the same month a year ago, but down 0.6 percent from May. Drilling down, the civilian labor force (up 1.2 percent) and the number of people employed (up 0.8 percent) rose over the month in the Roanoke MSA, but fell in the New River Valley by 2.8 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.

EMPLOYED		
June 2010	May 2011	June 2011
217,638	221,099	219,704

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Airport Traffic

People and packages left the Roanoke Regional Airport in greater numbers in June than in the previous month and the same month a year ago. **Airplane passengers boarding** in June rose 0.7 percent from last month and 3.6 percent from a year ago.



	AIR TRAVEL		
	June 2010	May 2011	June 2011
Passengers	29,079	29,912	30,118
Cargo (lbs.)	843,790	750,022	875,601

Source: Roanoke Regional Airport

—By Anne Piedmont, Piedmont Research Associates

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

Also get more stories and pictures at morefront.blogspot.com

The Graying of the Region >

Executive Summary:

It is not exactly a surprise, but the region's population is getting older. The differences among localities is striking, though.

By Anne Piedmont

I've recently seen several articles about how America's suburbs are graying right along with the Baby Boomers that grew up in them. Rather than move to retirement locations, aging Boomers apparently are staying put in the homes where they raised their families, or downsizing nearby to stay close to friends and grandchildren.

Curious about how this trend translated to the Roanoke and New River Valleys,

we took a closer look at the local population 60 and older. Not surprisingly, that segment has grown at a much faster rate than the population as a whole. From 2000 to 2010, the region's overall population grew by 7.3 percent, but the over-60 population grew by 23.9 percent.

The population's age is a real business consideration. Besides the fact that young communities attract young creative people and older communities may attract retirees with plenty of disposable income—both good things—an aging population presents numerous challenges. Questions of an aging workforce, government support of seniors vs. schools and the challenges of healthcare all figure prominently.

Nearly the entire region is aging, with some areas older than others. The region is made up of urban centers, suburbs, rural counties and college towns. An examination of the chart will give you the specifics of a region in transition, but strongly demonstrating its diverse populations.

AGE COMPARISON IN THE REGION 2000-2010

	Median Age			Percentage Population Over 60		
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change
Botetourt County	40.7	44.9	+10.3%	18.3%	23.9%	+30.6%
Craig County	39.6	44.8	+13.1%	18.7%	24.7%	+32.1%
Franklin County	39.7	44.1	+11.1%	19.6%	25.3%	+29.1%
Roanoke County	40.9	43.3	+5.8%	20.6%	24.3%	+17.9%
Roanoke City	37.6	38.5	+2.4%	20.1%	20.0%	-0.5%
Salem City	39.2	40.5	+3.3%	21.4%	23.3%	+8.8%
Roanoke MSA				20.0%	23.0%	+15.0%
Giles County	40.2	43.2	+7.5%	21.6%	25.4%	+17.6%
Montgomery County	25.9	26.6	+2.7%	11.6%	14.0%	+20.7%
Pulaski County	40.3	44.1	+9.4%	20.5%	25.7%	+25.4%
Radford City	22.8	22.4	-1.7%	11.9%	11.4%	-4.2%
Blacksburg MSA				14.8%	17.4%	+17.6%
Combined Region				18.3%	21.1%	+15.3%

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Kay Dunkley: "It's a vibrant city."

Dan Smith

Building Strong Communities Through Education >

Executive Summary:

The collaboration of academic institution, business and government gives rise to thriving communities, says Virginia Tech's Kay Dunkley.

By Kili Teh

The Virginia Tech Roanoke Center is a pillar of the Roanoke Valley. The center acts as a partner with area businesses, local government and other educational institutions to build a strong workforce and community. New director Kay Dunkley is an irrepressibly upbeat force at the center of it all.

Kay, who grew up in a tiny hamlet in Wythe County and graduated from a high school whose name—Rural Retreat—reflects some basic assumptions about values, relishes the fact that she gets to

work in a city with an airport, symphony and a major art museum. "It's the whole package," she says. "Now I get to work here. It's a vibrant city."

Kay joined the Roanoke Higher Education Center Tech facility this past April. Since then, she has looked forward to working with community leaders about ways Virginia Tech can bring quality resources to the area. "I'm going to be serving on the Chamber of Commerce board," she says. "I will certainly use that group to help me determine what programs—both credit and non-credit—should be offered." Future meetings with the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau will also serve as a venue where Kay will coordinate with community leaders to determine the needs of local businesses.

How this process will translate into new programs from here is not all that simple. Kay is responsible for "meeting with the deans on the Blacksburg campus to see what the level of interest might be. I also have to make sure the market will support these new programs."

The Roanoke Center offers degree-seeking students master's and doctoral programs

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

primarily in the areas of business and education. For non degree students, the center offers individual credit and non-credit courses for those wanting to elevate themselves in their fields. Kay says the Roanoke Center is a partner with Radford University, University of Virginia and the Council of Community Services in designing a leadership training program for non-profits.

Kay, whose pace is furious and efficacious, oversees the university's Catawba Sustainability Center in addition to her work at the Higher Ed Center. The Catawba Sustainability Center "is what we call a learning, discovery, and engagement environment." The center offers hands-on learning about environmental sustainability through practice and demonstration.

Kay has been linking education and community needs for 30 years, about 20 of them at several Virginia community colleges, and she has managed five off-site locations while working for Wytheville Community College. In her previous role, she was the director of Virginia Tech's Reynolds Homestead Continuing Education Center for nearly three years.

Kay has bachelor's and master's degrees from Radford University and earned her Ph.D. in special education administration. "Now I'm running an off-site campus for Virginia Tech," she says. "Am I following off-campus sites or they following me?"

In Brief

Name: Kay Dunkley

Age: 60

Company: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Location: Roanoke

Title: Director of Virginia Tech Roanoke Center

Background: A Wythe County native (Cripple Creek), Kay Dunkley grew up on a dairy farm and began her career as a speech pathologist. Over the past 30 years, she has worked through the administrative ranks acting as a liaison linking education and community needs. She believes fostering a "learning edge" allows success to trickle down from the individual to company to community. She has one daughter who is a second grade teacher in Wythe County. Reading, walking, movies, drama, music, and art are her favorite past times.

"It's a lot of fun. I get to be an ambassador—a representative of a university to a community. I love community work and community activities, so it's a nice way for me to stay with an academic institution and link education and community needs." 

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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Banta



Barbour



Rutherford



Hancock

Accounting

Brown, Edwards & Company, which has offices in Christiansburg, Lynchburg, and Roanoke, has named **Christopher Banta**, **Jeffrey Barbour**, **Holly Rutherford** and **Kristie Hancock** directors.

Cole & Associates CPAs, has hired **Wanda Sharp** in its



Sharp

payroll and bookkeeping department.

Banks

First Bancorp, the parent company of First Bank & Trust Company, has named **Brandon Brooks** part of its management training program in Christiansburg.



Atkins

Select Bank has announced the retirement of **Donald E. Atkins Sr.** after serving more than 52 years in the Lynchburg banking industry.



Nelson

Planning

Partners in Financial Planning in Roanoke has named **Timothy Q. Nelson** an associate financial planner.

LEGAL FRONT



Beers

Law firms

The American Shakespeare Center in Staunton has named **Paul G. Beers** the law firm of Glenn Feldmann Darby & Goodlatte to serve as a member of their Board of Trustees.



Armentrout



Davenport



Carr

WELLNESS FRONT



Perdue



Piatkowski



Chrisman

Hospitals

Carilion Clinic is pleased to announce the following leadership appointments: **Melina Perdue** has been named executive vice president; **Carolyn Chrisman** has been

named senior VP; **Jeanne Armentrout** has been named senior VP with responsibility for Human Resources; **Paul Davenport** has been named VP with responsibility for the Department of Emergency Services; **Charles "Chuck" Carr** has been named vice president of administration for Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital in Lexington; and **Dr. John Piatkowski** has been named VP

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.

of administration for Carilion New River Valley Medical Center.



Patel

Medical

The Free Clinic of Franklin County has added physician assistant **Sarika Patel** to its staff.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Architects/Engineers

Obenchain, Linkous, Daniels & Sowick Inc., consulting engineers, formally known as Hurd & Obenchain Inc., has elected a new board of directors, including **J. B. Obenchain Jr.**, CEO/COB; **Benjamin C. Linkous**, president; and **Randall W. Daniels**, VP of

operations. They are all from the Roanoke office. **Michael J. Sovic**, VP design in the Richmond office, was also picked.

Construction

Blue Ridge Home Improvement in Blacksburg has named **John Risch** and **Alex Lawrence** lead carpenters. Risch has received his EPA Lead-Safe Certification

from the Environmental Protection Agency.

EDUCATION FRONT

Colleges

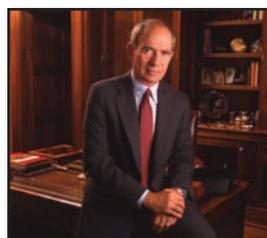
Tomalei Vess has been named the director of the newly created Office of Undergraduate Research at Virginia Tech.



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Career FRONT



Knapp

R. Benjamin Knapp, senior lecturer and leader of the Music, Sensors, and Emotion research group at Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland, has been named founding director of the new Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology, which is administered through the Center of the Arts at Virginia Tech.

Judi Billups has accepted a faculty position at Radford University, teaching critical inquiry in the personal branding/advertising subject area. Billups, who has a management degree from Virginia Tech and an MBA from Bethel University, has experience in media sales and most recently served as account executive for Valley Business FRONT.

OTHER FRONTS

Hospitality

The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, a Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, has named **Lauren Sells Walker** the director of catering at the historic property.



Walker



Quigley

Media

Lolly Quigley has been named WDBJ Television director of sales, overseeing television, digital media and commercial production.

Organizations

The Science Museum of Western Virginia has named the following new members to its board: **Stefanie Brown**, Optical Cable Corporation; **Michael J. Friedlander**, Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute; **Michele Wright**, NetVentures Corporation; **George Levicki**, Delta Dental of Virginia; **Christopher R. Rhodes**, Rhodes IP PLC; **Susan G. Magliaro**, Virginia Tech; **Geoffrey Newman**, SoftSolutions.

Peg McGuire has been named director of marketing and public relations for

the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke.

Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia has named the following officers and board members: **Scott Miller** of Birchwood Development and **Coy Renick** of The Renick Group, co-chairmen; **Kara Espinoza** of Kroger, chairwoman-elect; **Bill Stone** of BB&T, treasurer; **Alisha Starkey** of Cox, secretary; **Don Lorton** of Carilion Clinic, immediate past chairman; **Joshua Bradley** of Wells Fargo Bank and **Tony Morrison** of R.R. Donnelley, major fund drive co-chairmen. New board members include **Kathleen Duncan** of Roanoke City Schools, **Carolyn Fittz** of Elizabeth Arden; **Dean Lipscomb** of SunTrust Bank; **Robin Zehringer** of Norfolk Southern; and **Thomas Martin** of PeakLogix.

Community volunteer **Sandy Light** is the new president of the Western Virginia Land Trust. Other officers are: **Steve Claytor**, Fralin & Waldron, vice president; **F. Fulton Galer**, Cherry, Bekaert & Holland, treasurer; and **Whitney Feldmann**, community volunteer, secretary. New trustees are Bill Mason, N.B. Handy Co., David Hurt, Wordsprint, **John Parrott** of Rutherford,

Pete Fellers, a farmer and **Dan Summerlin**, Woods Rogers.

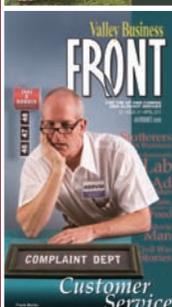
Transportation

Ray Pethtel, director of the Transportation Policy Group at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, has been appointed interim executive director of the I-81 Corridor Coalition. The coalition is a consortium of states through which I-81 runs.



Dooley

The Roanoke Regional Airport Commission's new slate of officers include **Dr. John Dooley**, chairman; **Bittle W. Porterfield**; **H. Odell "Fuzzy" Minnix**; **Cynthia Lawrence**; and **W. William Gust**.



Coming Up...

Volume IV

That's right. The FRONT is coming up on its FOURTH year! With the October edition, you'll have a chance to vote for your favorite FRONTcover of Volume III (Oct. 2010–Sep. 2011). The results will be announced in our FRONTList 2011.

October 2011 Labor Unions

We talked to people on both sides of the labor union issue. In October read our fascinating report on whether unions are still relevant.

November 2011 FRONTList

Yes! It's our annual "Best-Of" recognitions edition, featuring... well, you'll just have to wait and see!

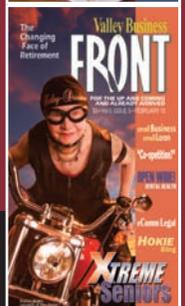
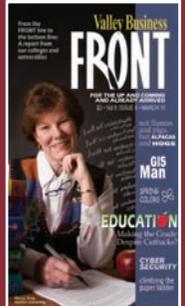
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Outsiders' boost population

More people from outside the Roanoke Region are moving here, helping to increase the region's population, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. Data suggests that the majority of population growth experienced in the region is due to migration from other regions of the state and the nation.

Weldon Cooper Center estimates show that 87.5 percent of population growth in the Roanoke Region is due to migration, compared to just 47 percent statewide. According to Internal Revenue Service data, the Roanoke Region has attracted roughly 2,800 households each year from out of state. Nearly 55 percent of these households come from the South, 18.5 percent of these households from the Northeast, 15.7 percent from the Midwest, and 10.9 percent from the West Coast.

Though the region's rate of annualized growth averaged a mere 0.3 percent between 2000 and 2003, its growth rate more than doubled by the end of the decade. Annualized growth rates for the region averaged 0.8 percent between 2007 and 2010, according to Weldon Cooper Center data. Compared with the rest of Virginia, the Roanoke Region's growth rate was a full percentage point below the state between 2000-2003 but now trails the Commonwealth's rate by only four-tenths of a

percentage point in the last three years, signaling improvement.

Big order from NS

FrieghtCar America announced in August that here will be 200 more jobs in Roanoke because of its order from Norfolk Southern for 1,500 more of its coal cars. Virginia Secretary of Commerce Jim Cheng put the cost estimate for 1,500 cars at \$100 million. The cars are large capacity, lightweight (good for NS fuel consumption), strong and durable (good for NS long-term expenses).

TREAD expands in Botetourt

TREAD Corp., a manufacturer of bulk handling equipment for the explosives industry will invest \$5 million to expand its operations in Botetourt County, creating 100 new jobs. The expansion will take place at the EastPark Commerce Center.

TREAD plans to begin its expansion by the third quarter of 2011 and create at least 100 jobs within 36 months. The average wage for the new jobs will be \$17.50 per hour plus benefits. The project's investment will be a minimum of \$5 million, of which approximately \$4.75 million will be in building and infrastructure with the balance in machinery and tools within 36 months. Square footage of the expansion, including manufacturing space, staging area and parking, has yet to be determined. The new jobs

are primarily production oriented with skills focused on but not limited to welding and mechatronics. TREAD, a privately held company founded in 1957, has operated from its current facility since 2004. The company, with 170 current employees, has added about 65 jobs since June 2010.

Weekly papers 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.

According to a story in the current issue of the newspapers, Brockenbrough is quoted as saying employees will retain their jobs and there will be no disruption in the publishing schedule. In addition to the newspapers, the printing operation in Salem was also purchased.

The newspaper group had been owned for a number of years by investors from Birmingham, Ala. The sale returns them to local ownership.

TMEIC takes GE

Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Systems Corporation (TMEIC) and General Electric Company (GE) have reached an amicable agreement to separate their industrial drive systems joint venture—TM GE Automation Systems LLC (TMEIC GE)—to reflect changes in business strategies within both organizations. As a result, TMEIC has purchased GE Energy's ownership interest in TMEIC GE. Effective today, TMEIC GE will become TMEIC Corporation, headquartered in Roanoke.

TMEIC Corporation is a wholly owned U.S. subsidiary of Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Systems Corporation (TMEIC), a manufacturer of large industrial motors and drives automation headquartered in Tokyo.

Access awards

Access Advertising & Public Relations in Roanoke has been awarded two bronze 2011 Telly Awards by the international Telly Awards and Silver Telly Council for television spots produced on behalf of clients LewisGale Regional Health System and Carpet Factory Outlet.

Designation

The design build team of **Shelter Alternatives** in

Blacksburg, has completed the first home renovation in this region to be certified by the EarthCraft Virginia Renovation program. The pilot program, a south-east-regional certification process similar to LEED certification, requires at least a 30 percent improvement in energy efficiency.

Freedom First award

Freedom First Credit Union has been awarded \$850,000 by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund) to establish a Micro Branch in the Hurt Park

neighborhood, the most economically distressed community in Roanoke.

Freedom First Credit Union is the only local award recipient, and one of only 155 nationwide. "This award will assist in providing the necessary funding to continue our extensive community and economic development initiatives in the local community," says Paul Phillips, President/CEO of Freedom First Credit Union.

Carilion 'most wired'

Roanoke's **Carilion Clinic** has been selected as a 2011 "Most Wired"

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

hospital system according to the Most Wired Survey and Benchmarking Study. Hospitals are named to the list based on a detailed scoring process. The survey evaluated hospitals on four factors: infrastructure; business and administrative management; clinical quality and safety; and

care continuum, which assess IT in the health system's ambulatory centers and physician practices.

Becher selected

Roanoke's **The Becher Agency (tba)**, a public relations and advertising

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- > TREAD To Expand in Botetourt County
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- > Maxx Performance To Open Roanoke Research & Development Facility
- > Roanoke Strong Nationally in Outdoor Activities

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

FRONT Notes

agency, has been selected to help Roanoke County residents reduce energy consumption. The Save a Ton campaign, now under development, will debut this fall. The multi-media campaign is being designed to help County residents and others throughout the Roanoke Valley understand the many little things people can do every day to save money while reducing the region's energy consumption.

More operating space

Carilion Clinic in Roanoke has filed an application with the Virginia Department of Health requesting permission to add three outpatient operating rooms on the third floor of Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital.

Lovely campus

Roanoke College has one of the most beautiful campuses in the country, according to students surveyed by The Princeton Review. The annual guidebook also lists Roanoke among the nation's great schools for majors in business and finance, computer science and computer engineering and psychology.

Liberty law

Liberty University School of Law in Lynchburg has launched

the new Law Prosecution Clinic, giving students an opportunity to actively engage in the criminal justice system. From initial arraignments to motion hearings, trials and appeals, the students' experiences went beyond mere observation as each student prosecuted actual cases.

In a partnership with the Bedford Commonwealth Attorney, the clinic exposes students to the real-life, real-time work of a prosecutor. Students are challenged to think critically about the role of the prosecutor in the criminal justice system while learning what it means to balance morality with power.

Hospitals recognized

Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Carilion New River Valley Medical Center and Carilion Giles Community Hospital have been recognized for quality of care by Professional Research Consultants, Inc. (PRC), a nationally known health care marketing research company. PRC conducts nationwide confidential surveys asking patients' opinions and perceptions regarding their care.

VWCC course

Virginia Western Community College in Roanoke is the first college in the state to

offer certification as a Siemens Certified Mechatronic Systems Assistant. Beginning this fall, students will be able to begin the coursework that will teach them efficient operation of complex mechatronic systems and how to identify problems and troubleshoot.

"Manufacturers throughout the Roanoke Valley and the region are relying more upon select skilled operators and automated processes than ever before," says Dan Horine, a faculty member in the School of Business, Engineering and Technology. "This kind of education in mechatronic systems is critical in order to develop a skilled workforce that keeps businesses thriving in the area."

LG addition

Construction is underway on the 5th floor of **LewisGale Hospital Alleghany** in Low Moor to transform the space into a 15-bed inpatient specialty unit designed to meet the behavioral health needs of seniors. This will be the new home of the Senior Transitions program, the first-of-its-kind for Southwest Virginia which will serve patients throughout LewisGale Regional Health System's service area.

Program director Bruce Melosh says, "There is

currently a shortage of resources in the area to serve the senior population. Opening this program will help to fill that gap and serve as a regional center for the treatment of seniors with behavioral or emotional issues."

ND&P wins awards

Neathawk Dubuque & Packett (ND&P), which has a major presence in Roanoke, won seven awards at this year's International Aster Awards and Virginia Society for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations (VSHMPR) Measure of Excellence Awards.

Bank profit

HomeTown Bankshares Corporation, the parent company of HomeTown Bank, has reported a net profit of \$590,000 for the second quarter of 2011 compared to a net loss of \$2.67 million for the second quarter of 2010. A net profit of \$852,000 was realized for the six month period ended June 30, versus a net loss \$2.42 million during the same period last year. HomeTown Bankshares had a net profit available to common shareholders of 17 cents per share for the six month period ended June 30, 2011, compared to a net loss of 84 cents per share in 2010.

Compiled by Dan Smith

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

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

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Sarah Beth Jones

AUGUST 2011 >
Contributor of the Month

Sarah Beth Jones' stories on Susan Osborne, the physician whose values don't often include money, and the Jacksonville Center in Floyd sang loudly enough in August to send her out of the box and into the Contributor of the Month chair. Sarah Beth, who owns NO B.S., a small business advisory business in Floyd, and who used to be a columnist for the Greensboro News and Record, is new with us, but she set it on fire from the start with the outstanding story on Dr. Osborne and the inner workings of the Jacksonville Center, something of an artist commune. Sarah Beth is a fine writer whose images resonate clearly and who shows a strong affinity for her subjects. We hope she's with us for a long time.

“
People
smile
here

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There is always time for courtesy

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