

Valley Business

FRONT  
50  
Sales  
Pros

# FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING  
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

Some of us were mightily encouraged recently when the City of Roanoke picked a 64-year-old veteran of city government to be its new economic development director. It took two full years to come up with Wayne Bowers, who had retired from his last posting in Greenville, N.C., and toured the country to visit with his family. It was sheer serendipity that he was turned up by the headhunting group upon a trip to Blacksburg to visit some of that family. What we're looking at here, though, is perhaps a change in attitude. Is 64 the new 40 or the old 64 with new glasses?

A new survey from Adecco tells us HR is more likely to hire workers 50 or older by a margin of 60 percent to 20 percent. Those hiring believe older workers to be reliable (91 percent) and professional (88 percent). Older workers don't do so well in high tech fields because of *the belief* they don't do that well. Those hiring also think codgers might be resistant to taking orders from kids. Some attitudes die hard. Some are based on very real experience.

Young workers face obstacles, as well: their writing skills aren't all that hot, say hiring managers. They don't dress properly, they've posted pictures of themselves drunk on Facebook and they often demonstrate a lack of interest by not doing homework before the interview.

It's difficult getting a job these days, but it's nice to see some of the old barriers falling, especially since the largest group of people in the history of the planet is moving into retirement years without the possibility of retiring. Congratulations Roanoke and congratulations Wayne Bowers. You've both struck a blow for intelligence.



Tom Field



Dan Smith

“ Become genuinely interested  
in other people. ”

- Dale Carnegie Human Relations Principle #4

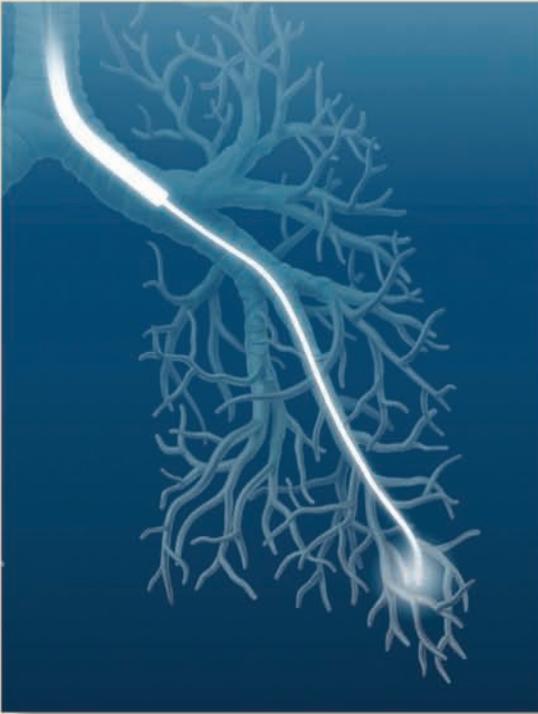
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## The Philosophy of Sales



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 the... way... Page 60



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Art direction and cover photography  
 of Libby Mansfield by Tom Field.

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Michael Abraham



Anne Giles Clelland



Michael Miller



Anne Piedmont



Randolph Walker

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 58.

**Editorial Advisory Board**

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

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

# CONTRIBUTORS



Colin Dwyer



Tom Field



Kathleen Harshberger



Gene Marrano



Laura Purcell



Dan Smith



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen



These occasions are also wonderful opportunities to ruin your reputation

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## 2012 Members

**Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)  
**Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)  
**Nicholas C. Conte** Woods Rogers (Legal)  
**Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Seniors)  
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**Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)  
**Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)  
**Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)  
**Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)

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



I call this a down-home-cooking kind of area

— Page 44

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# The Philosophy of Sales



## FRONT<sup>15</sup> Sales Pros >

### Executive Summary:

*What's it take to be a great sales person? It depends on whom you ask.*

By Tom Field

Profile information  
compiled by  
Dan Smith

Dana Ackley, an executive coach and expert in the field of emotional intelligence, says even the most high level, successful people eventually get stuck at some point. In an article entitled *Glass Walls: Breaking Assumptions*, the Ph.D and CEO of Roanoke-based EQ Leader ([www.eqleader.net](http://www.eqleader.net)) says the very thing that blocks performance is what helped that person succeed in the first place. It's a paradox.

"Here's how it works," Ackley says. "Behaviors that help you get what you want get repeated. With enough success and repetition, these behaviors become habits. When a behavior becomes habitual, it falls out of your awareness. You do it automatically, without thinking whether you should or not. You assume it's the right thing to do."

Ackley illustrates how this works in real life. A guy who is struggling assumes the solution is to work harder. As noble as that is, and as hard as he may have worked in the past to get where he is today, it wasn't the answer. The better action turned out to be when the manager developed the talent that reported to him. Not only did the new course of action pay off, but the new trust placed in the person who stepped up increased the overall enthusiasm and effectiveness in the business.

"Your past success doesn't guarantee your future success," says Ackley. An important lesson, particularly for seasoned sales people.

Hugh Ballou ([www.hughballou.com](http://www.hughballou.com)) calls himself a "transformational leadership strategist." The chief of SynerVision International in Blacksburg transformed his

own experience as a conductor of orchestras to an executive coach and facilitator, serving clients on four continents.

"The leaders are the ones who convey value to people in a way they can understand it," says Ballou. "We really need to be able to say what's good about what we do. We rarely think about the power of our words."

As he talks, Ballou sprinkles in the ideas and philosophies of others with generous frequency (he's particularly fond of Napoleon Hill).

"My sense of what Hill teaches is that intellectual capital comes first. He constantly talks about definiteness of purpose in his writings. He also goes on to say that the purpose must bring value to people.

"Next, he defines how each leader interviewed created and maintained effective relationships with a mastermind group. We need good minds around us, and need to establish the context for collaborative thinking.

"Finally, Hill points out that we must visualize the end result in full detail. Even though his first book is called *Think and Grow Rich*, it's not solely about money. He identifies money as a defined goal, but it's not the only objective. Money is important. It's not the only thing, however, there is a basic understanding that businesses must be profitable. Yes!

"Notice the order of these principles – first, intellectual capital, next, relationship capital, finally, the result is financial capital."

For this edition of FRONT, we went out to the FRONTLines. We wanted to hear from the very people who put their feet on the street, who work as professional sales people day

in and day out. We put a call out to readers and stakeholders, and asked for the names of people you like who sell goods and services. For this report, it's not about sheer volume of sales, but simply an observation of 15 individuals you like to work with and who you are very familiar with as people who sell for a living.

Our collection is random. Of the 15 we profiled, 9 are male, 6 are female. A clear majority are in their 40s. The industry FRONTS are diverse (financial, real estate, health/wellness, technical, hospitality, consultation). We also provide a list of FRONT50 sales people, whose names were submitted. It's the bigger picture.

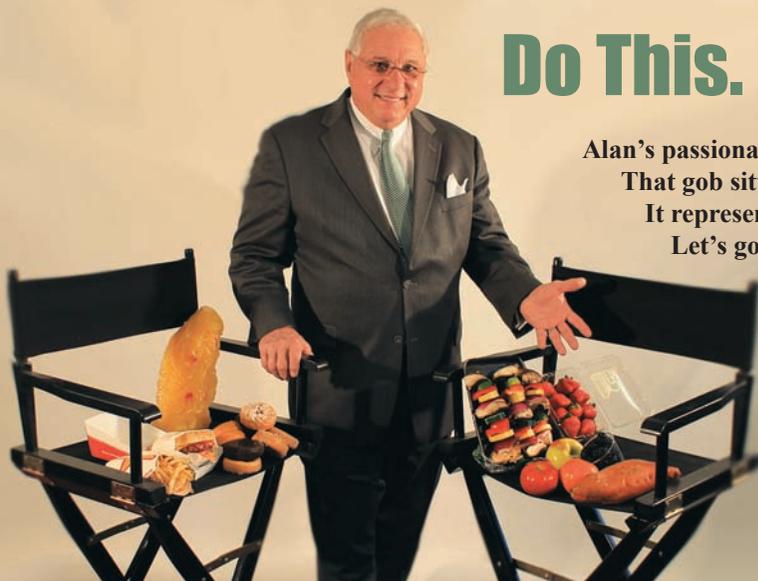
You'll read the secrets to success as the FRONT15 reveal them. But what we noticed about them was two strikingly obvious common traits. First, each of our candidates exhibited what can best be described as a "positive vibe." They smiled a lot. Second, he or she is "all yours." We were reminded that the good sales person is completely attentive. Constant eye contact. Completely focused on you. Listening.

But you can judge for yourself. And if you need to buy something, we know where you can get it.



## Do This. Not That.

Alan's passionate about employee wellness. That gob sitting in the chair on the left? It represents 5 pounds of fat. Ewww... Let's go with the chair on the right.



# Alan

### Curtis Burchett

**Age:** 49

**Years selling:** More than 10 in real estate and 10 in television sales at WFXR Fox 21/27 and WSLs 10

**Company:** MKB Realtors

**Product:** Residential Real Estate

**Location:** Roanoke and surrounding counties

**Background:** Born in Pulaski. Graduated from Pulaski County High School and Emory and Henry College. Former financial planner and sports writer (Southwest Times). Wife Laura and three children: Cody 18, Kelsey 15 and Ryan 12. MKB's top Realtor since 2007, Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors

Rookie of the Year in 2003; No. 1 Realtor in Roanoke Valley, 2004. Member Cave Spring Jaycees, Roanoke Kiwanis, AD2, Adult Care Center of Roanoke Valley. Colleague calls Burchett "a sales machine."

**Sales Philosophy:** "My sales philosophy is to put the client's needs first. If you work hard to satisfy your clients and do what is right for them, success will follow. I was told early on that we were given two ears and one mouth and we should use them in proportion. As a sales person, if you listen to your clients, they will tell you how to best help them. I also believe that a sales person should know their product. As a Realtor, my product is the Roanoke Valley, and I find it very easy to study, learn and know my product because I am firmly convinced that Roanoke is the greatest place in the world to live."

## Treat Others as Yourself.

Burman flips through a book and knows how employees feel when they study those company handbooks—especially the employee benefits section. He's a well-read man on the subject.



# Burman

## Alan Bayse

**Age:** 64

**Years Selling:** 36 years

**Company:** Bayse & Company

**Product:** Primarily I sell consultant services in healthcare and related benefits.

**Location:** Roanoke

**Background:** Roanoke native worked in Roanoke with the exception of the time spent in the United States Army (stationed in D.C.) and a stint working for a Fortune 500 Company in Richmond and Philadelphia. I have a degree in business from Radford University with additional course work

at Virginia Tech, the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and American University. I am a Chartered Benefit Consultant, Registered Health Underwriter and a Member of the Self-Funding Academy.

**Notable Accomplishment:** Nominated for Regional Chamber's Small Business of the Year in 2009; Board Member-Citizens Coalition for Responsible Healthcare

**Sales Philosophy:** Place yourself in the position of your client and determine his concerns, needs and what he wishes to accomplish. Provide and design solutions that will meet those needs. Last, but certainly not least, do what is best for the client regardless of whether you gain or lose money, in the long run everyone wins.

## Two Ears. One Mouth.

**You see a lot of MKB signs with the name Curtis Burchett on them. He keeps numerous listings in the Roanoke Valley, particular in the median family income range. We think he's rather fond of that distinctive blue sign.**

# Curtis



## Burman Clark

**Age:** 46

**Years Selling:** 27 ("I sold vacuum cleaners door to door in college. Got the sales bug at an early age.")

**Company:** Muneris Benefits

**Products:** Providing insurance services helping employers manage their employee benefits, helping employees understand and maximize their employee benefits, and helping seniors navigate through a difficult Medicare maze.

**Locations:** Roanoke and the New River Valley  
Hometown: Native of Narrows and graduate of

Randolph-Macon College. Certified Health Underwriter (RHU) and Certified Senior Advisor (CSA). Speaker regarding healthcare reform and Medicare, volunteer basketball coach, RAM Inter Faith Hospitality Volunteer for 7 years, former chairman of Jefferson Center Foundation.

**Sales Philosophy:** It's simple and often spoken but rarely exhibited, "Treat your customer as if he was your grandparent." I had the privilege of knowing my grandparents and great grandparents for most of my young adulthood and honesty, doing a good days work, and treating folks the way you would want to be treated resonate with me each and every day. They, along with my parents, were great examples of how to live your life each and every day with a goal of humble service.

## Vickie Clarke

Age: 60

Years selling: 7

Company: Long and Foster Realtors

Location: Roanoke

**Background:** A native and life-long resident of the Roanoke Valley. Graduate of Jefferson Senior High School, Virginia Western Community College and attended Hollins University. Married to Joe Clarke; 2 children, Sarah Clarke, Knoxville, TN (Gifted & Talented coach for Knox Co Schools); John Clarke, completing master's degree at JMU. Accredited Buyer Representative, Graduate Realtor Institute; member Roanoke Valley

Association of Realtors and National Association of Realtors. Among top sales agents in Southwest Virginia region of Long & Foster for six years, and Rookie of the Year during my first year.

**Sales Philosophy:** "If I always do what is best for my client, my business success will take care of itself." When clients allow me to be their Realtor, I expect to provide them with great results as quickly as possible. If, however, it is in the best interest of my client to wait for an even better opportunity, that will always be my advice. I also try to remember that real estate transactions are major financial events for my clients and can be very stressful for them. I want to be as patient and supportive for them as I would want someone to be for me. Ultimately, my professional philosophy is much the same as my personal one: to be friendly, enthusiastic, reliable, and helpful as possible.

# Provide a Solution.

**Jamey fits the part of the fast-paced media rep. It was all we could do to get him to slow down for a picture. We don't think it's just a vocation for him—he's in it for the game.**

# Jamey



## Nicole Haskins

Age: 35

Years selling: 12

Company: TWI

**Product:** Summation360, utility billing and payment software for municipal utilities.

**Location:** Blacksburg (lives in Pearisburg)

**Background:** Norfolk native grew up in Giles County. Married with one son (3) to Adam Harman. Attended New River Community College, Radford University and Virginia Tech. Member of the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council sales forum and AA-ISP. With TWI has built a streamlined inside/outside sales model that has reduced the

go-to-market timeframe for products as well as produced a 20 percent increase in bookings and 40 percent growth in new customer acquisition. Prior to TWI, worked in Federal Sales at RedHat, eCivis, a financial software company, and worked with top utility companies.

**Sales Philosophy:** "I need to provide value through the entire sales process. Holding their hands as we travel through the obstacles together. I need to educate, recommend, provide assistance, and steer the ship but always be the behind the scenes person so my customer is prepared and armed with any and all information in order to procure, properly utilize and feel confident in their purchase. I am only as good as my last customer feels at the end of the sale. In a time of mass amounts of information weeding through this for your customer creates trust before the sale and thus provides the credibility and knowledge you must have to make the sale."



## Do What's Best.

Vickie says “being friendly” is her ultimate sales philosophy. We suspect people believe that about her. She’s always smiling, always lights up a room, and sure seems to genuinely enjoy her job.

# Vickie

### Jamey Hansbrough

Age: 48

**Years selling:** 12 in sales, 25 in Television (director for the first 13 years).

**Company:** WDBJ7, Schurz Communications  
Product: Advertising

**Location:** Roanoke/Lynchburg TV DMA, business office in Roanoke

**Background:** Native of Shenandoah. Married to Jenny, a physician liaison with a health care group, and two children, daughter Avery is 11; son Brock is 10. Communications grad from Virginia Tech Member of Roanoke American Advertising Federation. Worked at WDBJ7 87-95 as a director.

“I think most everyone in sales has their name on a plaque somewhere but I’m most proud of completing five marathons. I can tell you about every mile in every race. I identify with the dedication, pushing beyond what you think you can do, and finishing.”

**Sales Philosophy:** “For advertising, it’s really about being able to provide a marketing solution to our business partner’s problems or opportunities. If I can help them grow first, then our business can grow as a result. Job 1 is making yourself relevant to time-starved business owners. The real magic in converting sales happens on the front end by asking more than just standard questions. Presentations that close, write themselves because Page 2 becomes, ‘I heard you say (blank) and here is our solution.’ Once we are working together, then the conversation never ends. Have the constant drive to really understand the client.”

## Provide value.

Oh, the theatrics. Nicole’s not just a sales representative—she’s a romantic (in love with her work). What else can you do when you’re full of that much passion, but grab some of your own product props and fan yourself?

# Nicole





## Give the very best advice.

**Mr. Money.** Courtney has no problem playing that role. He'll dig right in, manage, handle and make those bills work for you and your investments. He's attentive, too (we noticed he didn't leave the cash behind for us after the picture).

# Courtney

### Doug Kidd

**Age:** 41

**Years selling:** 16

**Company:** Tom James Company

**Product:** Custom Made and Ready Made Apparel

**Location:** Roanoke, Southern West Virginia, Southwest Virginia, and surrounding areas..... We Come to You

**Background:** Born in North Carolina. Grew up in Virginia Beach. Biology Major from JMU. Taught High School and Middle School Science. Married with 3 girls. Coach Girls Soccer and Lacrosse, Chamber of Commerce. Board of Directors for the Red Cross.

**Notable Accomplishments:** Top 25 Profit offices in all of Tom James for 5 out of past 8 years have made President's Club, Cabinet or Exec Cabinet for most of the past 15 years (top 20 percent of our international sales force) top 50 leaders in Tom James.

**Sales Philosophy:** My job is to figure out how I can best serve people with all of their clothing needs so that they are properly attired for any situation that they might come into contact. My sales philosophy therefore revolves around this premise by asking my clients or prospects lots of questions. I find out what their needs are, what their frustrations are with what they are currently doing, and how I can help them meet their image goals with the product mix that I perceive to be in their best interest whether it be in a business, casual, social or formal situation.



## Exceed expectations.

We started to ask Tim to wear a trench coat, open it up sheepishly, and show off a bunch of shiny medical devices... but that's definitely not him. He's solid and believes in his product. Heck, we wanted the mini-defibrillators and we didn't even need them. That's who you want selling for you.

# Timothy

# COVER STORY

## F. Courtney Hoge

**Age:** No response

**Years selling:** 47 years in insurance and financial planning.

**Company:** New York Life Insurance Company

**Product:** Life insurance

**Location:** Roanoke

**Background:** Moved to Roanoke from Marion in 1968. Attended University of Cincinnati. Past president of several professional organizations and Hidden Valley Country Club. Life member of the Million Dollar Round Table with 46 years of qualification.

He and wife Anne have two children and five grandchildren. Member of Covenant Presbyterian Church and served as an elder.

**Sales Philosophy:** "My market is working with business owners, professionals, and families utilizing life insurance, disability insurance, annuities, long-term care insurance and mutual funds. Also I work in the benefits area for small and medium locally owned businesses. I have clients in many parts of the country but I primarily work within a 150 mile radius of Roanoke. I have been blessed to have had the opportunity of helping and working with my clients in their financial planning. I believe my mission is to give the very best advice and counsel giving my clients the opportunity of making sound and informed decision that best meets their needs."



## Ask lots of questions.

If you can make a pig look good...Doug met us on the side of the road at a local barbecue pit. We waved at the passing cars honking at us, and the pig enjoyed the upgrade.

# Doug

## Timothy A. Malone

**Age:** 42

**Years selling:** 13 years in the field of Cardiac Electrophysiology, 2 years specific to Cardiac Rhythm Management

**Company:** St. Jude Medical

**Product:** Pacemakers, defibrillators, and cardiac resynchronization therapy devices (CRM). Cardiac electrophysiology diagnostic and therapeutic catheters EnSite Velocity 3-Dimensional Electroanatomic Mapping System EP Work Mate Recording System.

**Location:** Roanoke Valley and environs (from Blacksburg to Farmville, South Boston to Monita and all cities in-between)

**Background:** Grew up in Smyrna, Tenn. Married for seven years and has five-year-old twins named Timothy and Jasmine, and a two-year-old son named Thomas. Bachelors in Emergency Medical Administration (is a registered nurse/critical care paramedic). Notable Accomplishments: Father (most important to him); private pilot; NAUI dive master. Biosense Webster Inc. (a Johnson and Johnson Company) Presidents Round Table Winner (2004, 2007, 2008).

**Sales Philosophy:** "I strive to personally know and become familiar with my customers and their individual needs. Our goal is to establish ourselves as a trusted advisor, instead of just being that of a vendor. This requires we constantly push ourselves. The courage to speak must be matched by the wisdom to listen. When we listen and provide support and solutions that exceed our customer expectations, we win every time."

# Sales advice



**When fate hands you a lemon, make lemonade.** —Dale Carnegie

**Give a lot, expect a lot, and if you don't get it, prune.** —Tom Peters

**Often greater risk is in postponement than in making a wrong decision.** —H.A. Hopf

**The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will.** —Vincent T. Lombardi

**We tend to get what we expect.** —Norman Vincent Peale

**Eighty percent of success is showing up.** —Woody Allen

**Good is the enemy of great.** —Jim Collins

**A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline.** —Harvey MacKay

**You don't earn loyalty in a day. You earn loyalty day-by-day.** —Jeffrey Gitomer

**Focus on making a difference, not making a sale.** —Jill Konrath

**Talent is a myth, effort is what makes salespeople successful.** —The Sales Giant

**You get out in front - you stay out in front.**

—A.J. Foyt

**A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm.** —Charles Schwab

**To do anything truly worth doing, I must not stand back shivering and thinking of the cold and danger, but jump in with gusto and scramble through as well as I can.** —Og Mandino

**Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others; it is the only means.** —Albert Einstein

**What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight - it's the size of the fight in the dog.** —Dwight D. Eisenhower

**The difference between try and triumph is just a little umph!** —Marvin Phillips

**And this just in... If you can dream it, then you can achieve it.** —Zig Zigler

Zigler, 86, died the day this went to press

# The FRONT50: sales people we like

We asked. You responded. Here are 50 men and women who sell for a living and you said should be on our list. Give them a call. I'm sure they won't mind.

**Lois Baker**

Star Country

**Alan Bayse**

Bayse & Co

**Jimmie Blanchard**

FLOORED

**Anne Booze**

Wheeler Broadcasting

**Brian Boush**

WDBJ

**Fran Boyd**

Thompson Tire

**Shireen Buckley**

Corrugated Container Corporation

**Curtis Burchett**

MKB Realtors

**Burman Clark**

Muneris

**Vickie Clark**

Long & Foster Realtors

**Callie Dalton**

Long & Foster Realtors

**Greg Dunn**

Comcast Spotlight

**Mary Dykestra**

MKB Realtors (and VAR president)

**Steven Evans**

TPS Displays

**Amanda Forrester**

Cross Fit

**Stephanie Frost**

Star Country

**Jane B. Goode**

Fleet Feet Sports

**Murray Hammond**

Electronic Systems Inc

**Jamey Hansbrough**

WDBJ

**Nicole Haskins**

TWI

**Anita Hines**

Mountain Lake

**Courtney Hoge**

NewYork Life

**Tom Honer**

WSET

**Mickey Johnson**

FOX

**Cheryl Jones**

Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center

**Eddy Jones**

Blue Ridge Copier

**Kendall Keffer**

BB&T Insurance

**Doug Kidd**

Tom James

**Jason Kiser**

Chas. Lunsford

**Bill Kite**

D&S Agency Inc

**Tammy Lee**

Holiday Inn Tanglewood-Roanoke

**Tim Malone**

St. Jude

**Libby Mansfield**

Holiday Inn Christiansburg

**Brad Martin**

WSLS

**Melissa Mason**

HomeTown Bank

**Anne Millehan**

Sanofi

**Katherine Morris**

The Glebe

**Allan Mower**

WSLS

**Jo Parker**

Target

**Dayna Patrick**

Re/Max All Stars Realty

**Jim Patterson**

Greystone Financial Group

**Shawn Penn**

Medtronic

**Becky Pollard**

Business Solutions

**Robert Preddy**

ProTemps

**Lolly Quigley**

WDBJ

**Cindy Smith**

Blue Ridge Copier

**Donnie Stanley**

Woods Service Center

**Charles Webb**

Benefits Group

**JJ White**

Dale Carnegie

**Sonny Widener**

First Team Auto Mall

## Libby Mansfield

Age: 26

**Years selling:** 5 years in the sales industry - 3 years in hotel sales

**Company:** Brand New Holiday Inn Christiansburg - NRV Mall

**Product:** Hotel/Events

**Location:** Christiansburg

**Background:** Native of Stafford. Graduated from Radford University, first person in immediate family to graduate from college. Professional Affiliations: Member & Chamber Ambassador of

Montgomery Chamber of Commerce, Charter Board Member of NRV Wedding & Event Network

**Sales Philosophy:** Being involved in the community is very important for me on a personal and business level. I fully believe in the saying, "You get what you give" and if you don't show businesses in your community support, you can't expect it in return. I try to create long lasting honest relationships with clients; loyal and repeat customers are gems! I might be speaking with a guest on how I can help them that particular day with a business room block or company meeting space, but to see them come back to me with needs in other aspects of their life, like a future wedding, means I made an impact. I am very honest with clients and I not only sell the hotel by myself about how I can help them better than anyone else.

## Everyone matters.

**You notice something about Anne right away—she's concerned. She wants to know what you're up to, what's going on, what's happening. That level of empathy, coupled with good eye contact and friendly demeanor has to account for a lot. It worked for us... even without free drug samples.**

# Anne

Dayna Patrick

Age: 45

**Years selling:** 8 years full time in real estate, licensed for 22 yrs

**Company:** RE/MAX All Stars Realty

**Product:** Sale of homes, homes farms and unique properties

**Location:** Roanoke Valley (office in Daleville)

**Background:** Both parents were real estate brokers in Nevada, and in the Roanoke Valley, where the family moved in 1974. Graduated from Radford University with political science major. Earth Advantage Broker, member of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce. Advisor to the Leadership Roanoke

Valley program, member of The Jefferson Club business network and a regular volunteer at the League for Animal Protection in Fincastle. Mother, Micki Patrick, is my business partner. Unmarried. The Patrick Team has received the REMAX Platinum producer award for several years running. Dayna graduated Leadership Roanoke Valley in 2003 and was chamber ambassador of the year 2000. 2012 has been a record year in sales.

**Sales Philosophy:** "I help people get from where they are to where they want to be. By putting people first, understanding their needs and dreams, handling the details and being committed to their goals, our clients can gracefully move into their future. We maintain a vast set of reliable resources to help buyers and sellers throughout the whole process. By providing this holistic service, along with a touch of humor, we create a highly valuable experience which tends to result in many referrals, repeat business and the ultimate: happy clients."

# Be involved.

Libby acts like a hostess. That's perfect—not just when you're in the hospitality business—but when you want to be successful in sales.

Have you ever bought from someone you didn't want to be around? Yuck.

Libby's way is much better.

## Libby

### Anne Millehan

Age: 48

Years selling: 20 years

Company: Sanofi Pharmaceuticals

Product: Lantus, Apidra and IBG Star

Location: Roanoke region

**Background:** Roanoke native; bachelor of Science, Psychology from Ferrum College. HSPA (Healthcare Sales Professional Association of Southwest Virginia). Husband, Tom (24 years of marriage) and there are two sons, Chris, (19) student at Virginia Tech, Patrick (13) student at Cave Spring Middle School. Founder, former president, acting vice president of HSPA (Healthcare Sales Professional

Association of Southwest Virginia). HSPA has been partnering with Project Access of Roanoke Valley to start their medication hotline for patient assistance, and support of their fundraisers with Roanoke Academy of Medicine Gala and a community event "Music for Medicine." Active in my local church, supporting mission outreach in the community. National Award Winner with Sanofi, 2011.

**Sales Philosophy:** "My sales philosophy is driven by how I can provide value to those customers I serve. If I don't have the relationship, trust and a level of commitment that my customers can count on, then I provide no value. If you ask anyone in the offices I visit, they will tell you everyone matters to me. It is good to check in with your customers to understand how they view you and how you can improve what you bring to the table."

# Put people first.

Was Dayna voted "most likely to have fun" in school? Well that would have made an accurate prediction. She's cordial and one of the first people you can count on to make you feel welcomed. She makes you smile, laugh, and comfortable. We can all use more of that.

## Dayna



# It's personal.



A woman with a chainsaw—now that's a statement. Becky cuts through the confusion of health insurance, but in similar fashion as a sales pro what we noticed is she's not pretentious. What you saw is what you got (couldn't resist that one).

# Becky

## Charles A. Webb

Age: 46

Years selling: 25

Company: Benefits Group Inc.

Product: Insurance

Location: Roanoke

**Background:** Notable Accomplishments: Leading Producer Round Table President's Council 1995, '99, '01, '02 and Eagle Club 2003-2007 Awarded Lifetime Status 2008; Million Dollar Round Table 2001, '02; PAHM Designation earned 2002; Group Millionaire Principal Financial Group 1995; American Medical Security, President's Advisory Council, 2002-'03; Anthem, Regional Broker Advisory Panel, 2003-2006,

Statewide Advisory Panel, 2004-'05. National Association of Health Underwriters, Local Legislative Chair 1996, State Legislative Chair 1997, Local President 1998; International Association of Financial Planning, Events and meetings chairman 1992, president 1993. Considerable community involvement.

**Sales Philosophy:** Because I have always done all I could to enrich the lives of those that I come in contact with, the persons in my community, my business, my family and my circle of friends have lived healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives. I will live my life with the philosophy "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?" I will stay focused on the things in life that really count. I will never forget to recognize the deeds and efforts of those who helped me in life. I will always think about myself in others shoes. I will embrace others efforts with the same passion and energy that I bring to mine.

# Be transparent.

Let's work out. The first thing we observe in JJ is that he is driven. If you need motivation, this man knows where to find it. His energy is contagious and even the professionals seek him out. The salesman's salesman (or woman, of course).



# JJ

**Rebecca (Becky) Pollard****Age:** 61**Years selling:** 30**Company:** Business Solutions, Inc.**Product:** Health Insurance Agency**Location:** Salem

**Background:** Born in Salem, 2 children Kelly Paxton and Drew Pollard....three grandchildren (Liam, Ava and Owen), past Board Member of Salem-Roanoke County Chamber, past board member of Family Services of Roanoke Valley, and Mill Mt. Theatre. Member of the National Association of Health Underwriters, named Broker of Choice for the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber and the Botetourt Chamber. Proud sponsor of many local events

such as Just Us Girls, Bethany Hall, Military Families of the Roanoke Valley, Scrooge, Kite Festival, Wine and Unwind, etc.

**Notable Accomplishments:** Won the 2007 Small Business of the Year Award thru the Roanoke Regional Chamber, named Family Oriented Employer of the Year from Family Services of the Roanoke Valley, I was recently nominated for the DePaul Family Service Award for Women of Achievement Award. We have been named by Anthem, Aetna and Southern Health as one of their Premier agencies in the State of Virginia.

**Sales Philosophy:** It's not just Business...it's personal. Our office lives by that business theory. We thrive on hard work and treating each client as if they were our only client. I learned years ago to surround myself with successful and passionate people and that would make my business a success.

# Stay focused.

**Charlie's the man of the hour when it comes to working your way to a solution. A get-down-to-business kind of guy, it seems like his brain is always ticking to find some better way, to seek improvement. That's never a bad idea.**



# Charles

**JJ White****Age:** 38**Years selling:** 38 (12 professionally)**Company:** Dale Carnegie**Product:** Leadership, Sales Training**Location:** Southwest and Central Virginia; Central West Virginia (based in Roanoke)

**Background:** Roanoke native. Roanoke College, Class of 1997. Rotarian; Virginia Council for CEOs, Member; president of International Dale Carnegie Franchisee Association. Sold the largest project in the 100 year history of Dale Carnegie worldwide in 2009: Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) providing one-day customer service training for 19,000

employees in a two month period. (661 seminars delivered by 119 trainers worldwide). Married to Samantha, and two children: Isaac (3) and Amelia (six months).

**Sales Philosophy:** Be transparent, brutally honest and start helping your prospect right away. If the client has a problem, start to solve it. If he wants to create something, start helping him create it. He will pay you to keep going. If not, you'll build a personal brand that will attract paying customers. Instead of trying to be a great salesperson, be a great person skilled at selling (an altered quote from Quitillion). Be a constant learner. Listen to know more, not to know what to say next. Include value in every communication (article, quote, idea, referral, etc.). Be Relentless in your followup, remember it's the client's job to tell you no. Don't do his job for him. When someone does tell you no, someone else wants your help, go find him.



## Holiday parties: A time to behave >

The holiday season is a season of good cheer and good feelings towards others. The corporate world usually spends time and money on holiday parties to promote businesses, and thank employees and clients. These events are wonderful opportunities to advance your career or business. They are also nice opportunities to meet high level executives or clients with whom you would normally not interact. Savvy professionals use this to their advantage.

These occasions are also wonderful opportunities to ruin your reputation. We've all heard about the person who over-served himself with alcohol, told off the boss, or passed out (horror!) at the table. Keep in mind that the annual holiday event is a business function, and an extension of the work day. It may be wrapped around a celebration of the season, but it is still a business event. It is always more "business" than "party".

- Don't ignore the invitation: your absence will be noted.
- Do be sure you know exactly who is invited to the party. Spouses or partners may not be included on the guest list for business events.
- Do inquire about the dress code.
- Do realize that the business holiday party is a business event, so conservative party clothes are a good choice.
- Don't wear anything too revealing or too flashy.
- Do make sure you greet your host(s).
- Do stay for at least 30 minutes.
- Do act professionally at all times.
- Don't drink too much.
- Don't use this occasion to let your hair down.
- Do keep your right hand free so that you can shake hands.
- Do keep your drink in your left hand, so you are not offering a cold wet handshake.
- Do mingle and introduce yourself to someone you don't know.
- Don't spend all evening talking business, or monopolizing the host.
- Don't overstay your welcome.
- Don't forget to thank those who planned and coordinated the party—often a thankless task.
- Do say goodbye to your host(s)—it is bad form to sneak away.
- Offer to be the designated driver, and need I say it, don't drink and drive.

All that said, decide ahead of time that you are going to enjoy this occasion—since it's important that you attend anyway. And the smart professional always sends a thank you note to the person hosting the party. 

## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey  
Harshberger

**Executive Summary:**  
*Keep in mind that the annual holiday event is a business function, and an extension of the work day.*

## Work: An exercise in conflict >

*Dear Anne: I don't like what that person at work is doing. I don't like what this person at work is doing to me. What do I do?*

**Dear Do:** Most personal problems at work begin when we don't like the way others do their jobs, the way they treat others, or the way they treat us. We try to make them change and no matter what we say or do, directly or indirectly, they won't or don't. We feel angry, hurt, frustrated, upset. That's the time to pause and ask what could be going on with us about them.

The possibilities of what is triggered in us by others are varied, but at work, it's usually about freedom and power.

Human nature urges us to do whatever we want whenever we want however we want. The human condition requires that we work doing what others want on their schedules in their way. Work compromises our freedom. Add to that the hierarchy of authority at work which creates a relative power structure—some have more power than we do and we have more power than others. We value equality enough to put it in our laws, but we're not equal at work. As much as we might love our work, the people we work with, and the companies for which we work, the workplace is inherently a conflicted place and going to work is inherently a conflicted act.

Conflicted feelings about others will, therefore, happen at work. If we train ourselves to become aware of this conflicted state, we give ourselves the chance to pause and think rather than react thoughtlessly. During that pause, we can ask ourselves how much what we're feeling is due to the un-free, unequal nature of relationships at work themselves. Asking "Does this person and what she's doing really matter, or is this because it's happening at work?" can transform what looks like an inches-away, face-to-face conflict into a vista of unrecognizable strangers who happen to be in the same place at the same time.

Human nature and the human condition are impersonal forces at work in everyone's lives in the workplace. The question isn't if we'll not like what our co-workers are doing, but when. If the person matters, during the time we give ourselves to think about things, we can decide what to do. If they don't, we can take a deep breath, perhaps swear a bit—silently, because we're at work—and get on with the work for which we're paid that funds our time off to be more free and have more authority over our choices. 

*(Anne Giles Clelland has written the workplace advice column for the FRONT since December 2008. She will be on a sabbatical from the column since taking work personally has resulted in expanded opportunities for her company. You can still read Anne's advice in the collection of her FRONT columns, Work: It's Personal. Those of us at the FRONT are deeply grateful to Ann for the impressive quality of her columns over the past four years. Her work has made us better. We look forward to her appearing within our pages in other capacities, including coverage of her growing business Handshake2.o.)*



## Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

### Executive Summary:

*The workplace is inherently a conflicted place and going to work is inherently a conflicted act.*



## Science, power and the art of dressing well >

The advent of e-companies in the 1990s opened the door to ultra-casual work wardrobes. Once computer programmers realized they had influence and could demand the perks of high salaries and a very casual dress code, business dress seemed doomed.

However, as Heidi Schumann of The New York Times recently reported, the tech community may now be bringing back dressing well in the office. As women become more successful in the tech field and prove their worth in the boardroom, they feel more confident about wearing what they prefer, instead of the tech uniform – jeans, T-shirts, hoodies, and sneakers.

Women are flooding the tech field and finding success at executive levels. Surprisingly, they're also realizing that dressing in fashionable, high quality clothing gives them an extra shot of confidence. Since they have already proven themselves valuable to the company and capable of meeting any challenges, it works.

They compare their penchant for quality clothing to techie men smoking expensive cigars and owning high performance cars. Most of their male counterparts continue to cling to their jeans, turtlenecks or hoodies, eschewing business suits as unnecessary.

Experienced executives like Marissa Mayer, 37, the CEO of Yahoo, and Leila Janah, 29, a tech entrepreneur who worked in New York before moving to the Bay area are examples of this trend toward dressing well.

"The perception in Silicon Valley is that if you dress well, you couldn't possibly be smart," says Janah. To blend in, women dress like a young tech geek, and that "just wasn't me," says Ms. Janah, the founder and chief executive of Samasource.

In our own region, Mary Miller of IDD and Nanci Hardwick of Aeroprobe in Blacksburg, have set a standard of style and grace that belies the image of their technology industries.

When Marissa Mayer became chief executive of Yahoo, she was interviewed by Glamour and Vogue about her love of good clothing. She says, "My willingness to talk about it is because I believe the way we'll get more people into computer science, and ultimately more women into computer science, is by making it really clear that you can be yourself and don't need to give up parts of yourself to succeed," she says. "You can be into fashion and you don't have to be the pasty white programmer with a pocket protector staying up all night."

What a relief to hear that 'being yourself' can mean not just being comfortable—as in sweats and sneakers—but comfortable as in fashionable and business-like. Thank you, Techie girls. 

## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**  
*Are women bringing back dress-up to technology offices?*

# Holiday Memories

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Laura Purcell

**Jeremy Hart of Nest Realty in Blacksburg: "It is bothersome that we have much longer turnaround times, but the program is still there."**

## A dream realized ... slowly >

### Executive Summary:

*Federally backed home loans are important in rural Southwest Virginia, although the bureaucracy of big government means payout is slow, especially in Virginia.*

By **Laura Purcell**

The Federal National Mortgage Association, also known as Fannie Mae, and the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, sometimes called Freddie Mac, got a lot of bad press a few years ago as the housing bubble popped and sent the country's teetering economy into a tailspin.

But they aren't the only Federal agencies that provide assistance to homebuyers. The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Department offers mortgage loans and guaranteed loans to



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people in rural communities. USDA loans also offer 100 percent financing to income-qualified individuals, as well as a safe, low, fixed interest rate and payments. The loans are even forgiving of bad credit ratings. It can be an ideal situation for someone looking to purchase a home in rural areas.

One pressing complication, however, is red tape. The financing process for USDA loans can take more than a month, which can be a very long time to wait in the world of buying and selling. In fact, processing times in Virginia are markedly slower than just over the mountains in West Virginia.

"Rural housing loans are very important in our area," Jeremy Hart, a Realtor with Nest Realty in Blacksburg, says. "Nearly 11 percent of the [home] sales in Christiansburg have used USDA financing. Many households

would not be able to realize home ownership without favorable loan terms like the ones offered by the USDA."

Brian Lyerly and his wife are going through the slow USDA process. "We went with USDA on the recommendation of the counselors at Community Housing Partners," Lyerly says. "We had some financial difficulty early in our marriage and have spent years rebuilding our credit. As we explored our options further, it became clear that the USDA program would allow us to buy a house that might have been harder to finance if we had gone with a traditional mortgage."

Home ownership for the Lyerlys has long been a dream that they are finally able to realize. They know that the end result is worth the wait. "We're first time home



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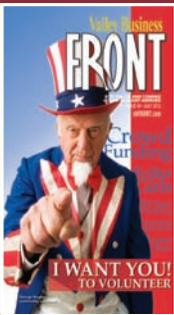
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# Coming Up..

## January 2013

### Airports and Flight

What's happening in our FRONTregion when it comes to airports? Better yet, when's the last time you got a good report from this important segment that affects the economy, and most of us personally? The FRONT taxis out to the runway and brings it back to you in January.

## February 2013

### Meeting Places

Where are you going to host that next conference? Where do you hope the next tradeshow will be? Got a favorite hotel? Banquet facility? Workshop venue? Showcase place with breakout rooms for your next out-of-town group? In February we visit the places where business happens. The spots in our region where people meet to network, learn, report, strategize, and perhaps experience a little R-n-R. Get your room key and join us. We'll meet you in the FRONT lobby.

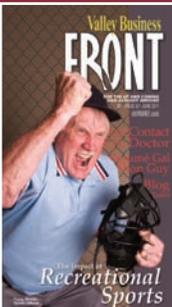
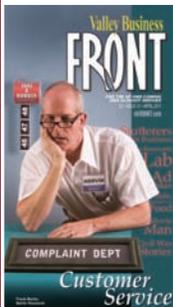
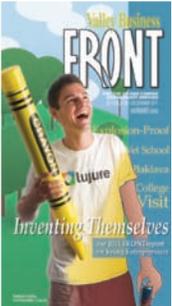
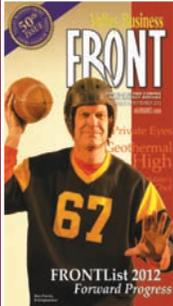
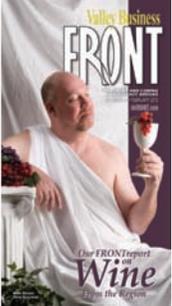
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“ ”

It would be nice to have an answer sooner, but this delay gives us the chance to make preparations and take our time pre-packing. I imagine we'd be in a bind if we were moving to the area and needed something quick.

—Brian Lyerly



For Brian and Samantha Lyerly, home ownership with USDA financing was worth the wait.

buyers. We've tried to do it smart, and this is a great time to buy," Lyerly says.

"It would be nice to have an answer sooner, but this delay gives us the chance to make preparations and take our time pre-packing. I imagine we'd be in a bind if we were moving to the area and needed something quick," Lyerly says.

"It is bothersome that we have much longer turnaround times, but the program is still there," Hart says. "The terms offered by USDA allow a broader section of the buyer pool to afford a home with traditional financing terms, and not high interest.

It just requires a little more advanced planning, and navigation of the transaction process, in order to put the pieces together," Hart says.

Both Lyerly and Hart agree that the good deal offered by the USDA makes some of the slow and complicated aspects of the program worth dealing with.

"Taking USDA financing out of the market would have a significant negative impact on real estate values in Christiansburg," Hart says. "If 100 percent financing wasn't available, sellers would lose a large part of their buyer pool." 

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## What you can say about your employer >

### Executive Summary:

*Social media has made post employment griping and criticizing epidemic. But what's legal to write and what's not?*

### By Randolph Walker

Fired employees have been griping about employers since Nebuchadnezzar pink-slipped a foreman on the Hanging Gardens project. It's not a new thing, but now there's a forum for gripes that Nebuchadnezzar didn't have to contend with.

What should employers do when ex-employees lambaste the firm on Facebook or other social media sites?

"The best practice for an employer is either to obtain a confidentiality or separation agreement, paying some type of severance pay in exchange for getting an agreement to keep the whole matter confidential, or if the company decides not to do that, to refrain from getting drawn into a public

debate about the decision," says King Tower, who practices labor and employment law with Spilman Thomas & Battle, PLLC in Roanoke.

"There are statutory protections for trade secrets. But unless there is a confidentiality agreement in place, the employee is free to comment on the termination and the employer can choose whether or not it's in his best interest to respond.

"If a former employee is misrepresenting facts in a public forum, there's a line where the employer may feel the need to respond and set the record straight. But my opinion is unless there is truly some type of harm to the business that would require that kind of response, commenting on terminations or personnel issues in general just gives more oxygen to the story."

The issue of fired employees is just one aspect of the broader, evolving picture of work-related speech in the age of social media. Should employers have social media policies? What those policies should be? Can and should employees be fired or reprimanded for unflattering postings?

Many employers don't realize the National Labor Relations Act doesn't just apply to unionized employees, says Tower. "It also

applies to what's known as protected concerted activity. That is where any two or more employees are acting for their mutual aid and protection with regard to wages or working conditions.

"Employees who have been terminated for a variety of statements or online postings that the employer has been unhappy with, have legally challenged their terminations. The entity that's been at the forefront of this has been the NLRB," the National Labor Relations Board.

The board's acting general counsel has found social media policies are unlawful if they can reasonably be interpreted as chilling the employees' rights under the act to discuss wages and working conditions, Tower says.

"There are a lot reasons you want to have a social media policy—preventing harassment and truly threatening-type behavior by employees and serious misconduct. You should have a social media policy that protects against those threats but doesn't cross the line into chilling legitimate employee speech."

Policies vary from company to company, says David Tenzer, a partner at Glenn, Feldmann, Darby & Goodlatte who specializes in business and technology matters. "Most of them are targeted toward preventing unauthorized commentary. They're never going to tell people they can't go on social media. They tend to be consistent in the fact in that they want employees not to do anything through social media they would not do through other means.



Randolph Walker

David Tenzer of GFD&G

"You're talking about expanding upon policies people already have. This is just one more new method of communication that some companies will want to address. It's not that you have dramatically different rules, it's bringing people's attention to existing norms of business communication. Even though they're engaging in a more informal form of communication, there are still rules they need to be mindful of—not saying anything that is defamatory or obscene. Having a social media policy brings it all into focus." 

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Gene Marrano

LewisGale CMO Dr. Gary Winfield

## Quality control as a benefit >

### Executive Summary:

*LewisGale's new Chief Medical Officer will be in charge of saving money through improving quality and making patients happy.*

### By Gene Marrano

LewisGale Regional Health System had never employed a true Chief Medical Officer until it hired Gary Winfield in September. His role? "Look at best practices [while]

standardizing the level of care." Consider it as quality control, providing "more certainty," for patients once they check into a LewisGale facility.

There's a dollars and cents aspect to what Winfield is doing, as well: health care reform now means that hospitals who readmit patients for certain conditions that brought them there in the first place may soon lose up to 9 percent of the reimbursements normally received from Medicare. In the future says Winfield, individual physicians may also be penalized for failing to take care of certain heart conditions, pneumonia and surgical procedures the first time around. The government is measuring patient satisfaction as well.

"Improving quality ... pays dividends [and] saves money," notes

Winfield, who got an early look at how the LewisGale staff reacts to a medical crisis when patients who had possibly received those tainted steroid injections started showing up. He pronounces himself impressed. Winfield wants to "move a vision," forward, working with that medical staff, collaborating rather than dictating: "punitive doesn't work in many things ... certainly in health care." Several departments answer directly to Winfield at LewisGale.

There are often "huge variations in medical care," across the country and even within the same medical system, according to Winfield. His task is to make sure that care is standardized and at its highest level. A best practice found at one LewisGale hospital will be communicated throughout

the system with his help. "Its not an onerous type position[but] one that can identify and then move a vision," says Winfield.

Many physicians remain unaware of the coming direction (subject to political changes in Washington) that health care may take, unless certain metrics are met. "That data is being acquired by the government," he says. Winfield is talking about those changes to physicians right now. Hospitals may be able to reap bonuses for providing exemplary care. "I think [that's] a good step, the natural progression of any market, in essence."

Winfield envisions the Chief Medical Officer position becoming an imperative, with Medicare reimbursements being one driving factor. In any case, improving the level of care, making it more efficient, "pays dividends," for hospitals and patients, he says. Working for Anthem, again focusing on quality and efficiency, gave Winfield valuable insight "into the forces that drive the payer side too. It's just not the bad guy, the [insurer] that doesn't want to pay you. They're under a lot of pressure."

Winfield sees health care insurance companies acting more as partners in the future, trying to provide the best service with the resources at hand. He also predicts a consolidation of hospitals in the future as they seek the type of management "to withstand these pressures." 

## In Brief

- Name:** Dr. Gary Winfield
- Age:** 55
- Business:** Chief Medical Officer for LewisGale Regional Health System
- Location:** Salem
- Background:** A family physician by trade who received his medical degree at the University of Oklahoma, Winfield has worked full time for HCA Inc., LewisGale's parent company, for eight years and has been involved with the health care giant since 2000. He had been CMO for the South Atlantic Division in Northern Florida and coastal South Carolina. Winfield also was medical director for Anthem Health-Southeast U.S. at one time, giving him a unique view point from several sides of the health care equation. He is married with one son (his wife is a UVa law school graduate).
- Philosophy:** It's all about collaboration and best practices for Winfield, who wants doctors, nurses and other medical staffers at the four-hospital LewisGale system to see him as a resource.

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## Tech Scoop

### The creepy world of invention >

#### Executive Summary:

*Dennis Wong's world at Virginia is filled with robots that do fascinating things and some normal things.*

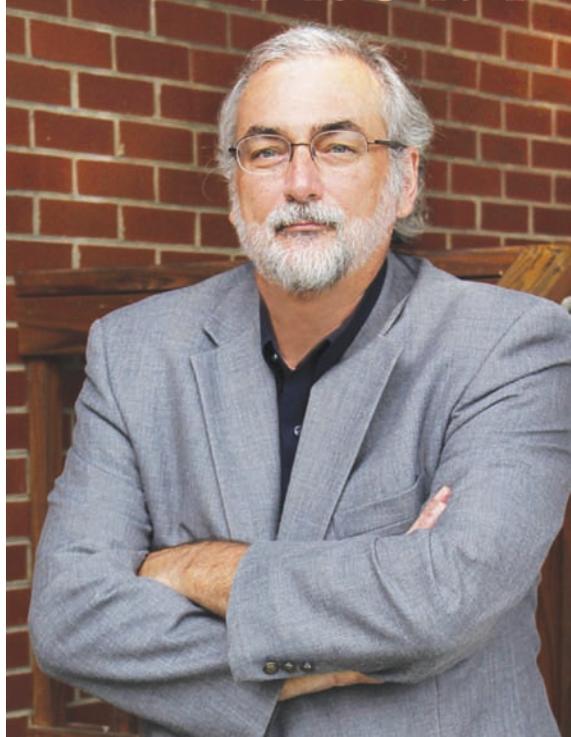
#### By Michael Miller

Do you know Dennis Hong? If not, you will soon. That's because Dennis just got funding from the Department of Defense to design a robot that can rescue you from a burning building or pull you from a collapsed mine.

Dennis is a faculty member at Virginia Tech whose expertise is in designing and building creepy robotic things. For example, he once built a three-legged spider-like walker that moved by flipping itself upside down as it walked. Imagine a three-legged stool that walked around your kitchen. He also built a worm-like robot that wrapped itself around poles and then climbed to the top by twisting itself. Yes, I think creepy is the word.

On the other hand, Hong has made some more normal looking robots. He was part of the DARPA Urban Challenge team that built a self-driving automobile long before the Google car was on the road in California. Similar principles were applied to the Blind Driver Challenge program funded by the National Federation for the Blind and built through collaboration between Hong's robotics lab (RoMeLa) and local autonomous vehicle maker, TORC Technologies. Mark Riccobono, an executive director for the NFB who is blind himself, actually drove the vehicle on the Daytona Speedway to demonstrate the technology.

Hong's anthropomorphic robots are his most ambitious undertakings. His lab's walking robot CHARLI won the international robotic soccer challenge two years in a row, and it's



Michael Miller

really strange to see a robot playing soccer. (I understand robotic soccer players' salaries are generally lower, and they don't get red cards as often.)

CHARLI was actually the model for Hong's latest project for the DoD. RoMeLa is teamed with the University of Pennsylvania and ROBOTIS, a Korean company whose engineer for this project was one of Hong's students. The project is another 'grand challenge' competition between seven international teams including two from NASA. For their part, RoMeLa will receive \$4 million to build the robot, which has been named THOR (Tactical Hazardous Operations Robot).

The DoD program was devised as an answer to the failure of the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. The nuclear environment in that plant was too hazardous for humans to enter and perform necessary shutdown and safety operations. By developing a robot capable of autonomous (but supervised) operation and the ability to use normal tools, the DoD hopes to be able to address any such hazardous situations in the future. 



Michael Miller

Daniel Notestein and Donna Mitchell in their office.

## 'We can do it better than that' >

### Executive Summary:

*Blacksburg's SynaptiCad figured out how to make your music sing to you and created a bustling business.*

### By Michael Miller

When Daniel Notestein enrolled as a freshman at Virginia Tech at the age of 16 he never imagined that he would be back in town one day as president of a tech startup.

This story, aside from the 16-year-old freshman aspect, is a familiar one in the region. VT grads often find a way to leverage the local entrepreneurial ecosystem to remain engaged in the technology community long after graduation. But back in 1992 when Notestein and his co-founder and VP of Marketing Donna Mitchell started SynaptiCad, things weren't so easy.

Notestein and Mitchell knew each other when they were in classes together at VT,

but after graduation they hurried off to different jobs in other states. Eventually they ended up working together at a company called Burr Brown, designing integrated circuits. An important step in such circuit design is to create a timing diagram of how the digital signals come and go on various points within the circuitry.

As a simple illustration of the problems, let's look at a digital music player. Inside a program like iTunes, there is another program that can convert an audio file into a digital file so it can be stored in memory. The computer essentially "plays" the audio file into a circuit that samples the audio stream really fast and generates a rather large digital number (like 10110010100111) for each sample. This digital number is then stored for each tiny sample point in the song track. It takes several million of these numbers to fully store the whole track. Then when you want to play it back, a reverse program in the computer or in your iPod rebuilds the audio and pushes it out through the earphones, and you hear reconstituted music instead of a bunch of static that would result if you tried to play the digital file.

Now, imagine if the circuit that has one input (audio) and multiple outputs (the digits of the sample) was not in sync. If all the digits

didn't make it to the output side at the same time, the stored data would be wrong. Then when you used the other circuit to reconstitute the song, it would be full of noise. Steve Jobs would roll over in his grave.

In designing chips Notestein and Mitchell, as well as every other digital designer, had to draw timing diagrams for every part of their circuits. And since it was only the 1980s, they were doing it by hand. Every time they had to make a change in the circuit, they had to redraw the timing diagram. "We thought there had to be a better way," says Mitchell. They did try a couple of early programs to generate the diagrams automatically, but they didn't work very well. "We said, 'We can do better than that,'" says Notestein.

And so they set about to create their own program to generate the diagrams. It worked very well, and so they left the company in 1992 and set up SynaptiCad to focus on providing the tool to designers.

Blacksburg was their choice of venue for the company because of the low cost of living and especially because of the ready availability of students to help them develop the software. "We discovered that we could

get really good product from students while they were still working on their degrees at Tech," says Notestein. "Everybody knows that now, but back then it was not so obvious."

SynaptiCad was also an early beneficiary of "the most wired town in America." It received a \$300 grant from the Blacksburg Electronic Village which was used to generate its first company web page. At that time all product sales were made by shipping floppy discs, and later CDs, but now, the company employs web-based downloads of its nearly two dozen products almost exclusively.

While the 2008 recession has hurt business, the company remains profitable and the future looks bright as the world economy recovers and new products are designed. The U.S. market is still dominant but SynaptiCad is now making almost 25 percent of its sales in Japan. "The entire Asian market is really starting to grow," says Mitchell.

So, the next time you grab your smartphone and play Angry Birds, you should realize that it was probably made possible by the vision of Dan and Donna. 



Michael Miller

**Jae Chong works on new software as co-founder Eric Frias and SynaptiCad founders Donna Mitchell and Daniel Notestein review products on another station.**



all photos: Tom Field

## Work Spaces

### Piece o' Cake >

#### Executive Summary:

*It's no easy piece of cake working at South Roanoke's Bubblecake; but it's fun when customers walk in like they're entering a wonderland.*

By Tom Field

"Ask our employees about what it's like working here," says Lisa Lusk.

"They'll give you the real scoop."

Lusk and her husband Robert are the owner/operators of the little dollhouse bakery / confectionery shop in the Crystal Spring neighborhood that so many sweet teeth crave. The shop, now three and a half years old, is called Bubblecake, and it's home to fancy cupcakes and more, including the new Chillypop frozen custard offerings.

Today, while Robert and Lisa scurry about, doing some kind of business work, Molly Lovell works behind the glorious display case (the very first place new and loyal customers gravitate to upon entering), while Sean McConnell (baker/icer) is working on a tray of creations in a back room.

"It's harder than most people think,"



Molly Lovell brings fresh brewed coffee out to customers.



**Sean McConnell sprinkles the ever popular red velvets.**



says Sean, when describing his work. "A lot more goes into this than people think." He likes his job here and says his sister worked here before he was hired. "Customers come from all over the place." When asked about the "regulars" he laughs and says there are some who come by like clockwork to get their "cupcake fix."

The cakes are popular because they look good and taste good. The combination continues to please, and Sean believes Bubblecake is successful because the customer this shop attracts is very "particular" as he puts it.

As a Work Space, Bubblecake is a pretty place that produces a lot of smiles. To make all that happen each day, it may not be a piece of cake—but at least you can get one here. 





Examples of posters for the “I Believe” campaign at Medeco.

## Locking in on belief >

### Executive Summary:

*A new marketing campaign at Medeco in Salem concentrates in belief in the product, the customer and the worker.*

### By Colin Dwyer

Medeco sells more than locks and locking systems to its customers. It sells those customers security and peace of mind, according to the company philosophy. But what's behind what Medeco sells? Why is it that the company sells what it sells?

Since the 1960s Medeco has offered locks and locking systems to customers with a wide array of different needs. Whether a bank, government institution, hospital, or home, the Medeco brand is recognized worldwide.

From mechanical locks to patented eCylinder technology, the company's goal is to offer products that stand out from traditional security. New technologies give customers the ability to regulate who has access to what and when. Because of a series of “security centers” around the country—exclusively authorized key dealers—Medeco guarantees security with its key control.

Brad Smith, director of marketing at Medeco in Salem, describes the company's “I Believe” campaign as an effort to show what the company and its employees believe. Customers and employees were put in front of a camera and asked to talk about why they admire Medeco.

The campaign is intended not only to market product, but to create a feeling of involvement among employees and show them that their voice is important, says Smith. It is an effort to showcase not only the integrity Medeco locks and security systems but also the quality of the workers who make those products possible.



# RETAIL / SERVICE FRONT

This is all done on a wide range of fronts. The recorded statements of employees and customers are available to the public via the company website and social media, as well as internally with posters.

"I Believe" is intended to be more than a simple campaign, says Smith. Smith says the company cares about more than sales. Medeco concentrates on its "customers, from the distributor to the dealer, all the way down to the end user," he insists. Smith says he is a proponent of the personal side of companies. While marketing is often too focused on product, he believes that employees are equally as important.

Smith emphasizes that the "I Believe" campaign is an opportunity to experience what it's like, and how it feels to be a part of Medeco, and it is equally about making connections with those people. 



**Brad Smith, director of marketing at Medeco in Salem**

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Michael Abraham

**Rik and Melissa Obiso of Attmo Winery in Montgomery County.**

## Serious business >

### Executive Summary:

*Wine-making is no longer a hobby for Rik Obisio of Attmo Winery in Montgomery County.*

**By Michael Abraham**

Rik Obiso, who with his wife Melissa co-owns Attmo Winery in southwestern Montgomery County, is an admitted challenge seeker. "I am motivated when people tell me I can't do something," he says. "I have always been a self-starter."

That persistence led him to a PhD in Anaerobic Microbiology at Virginia Tech. After he got his doctorate and Melissa got her architecture

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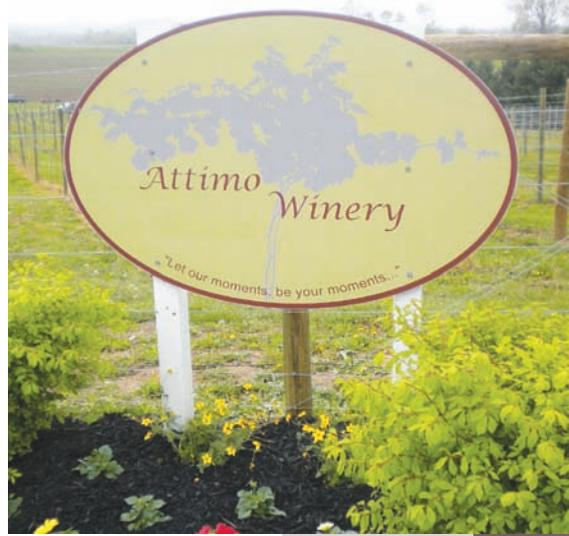
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degree, they pursued careers in New Mexico, East Tennessee, and Maryland, "But we always thought the area around Blacksburg would be a good place for us to retire," Rik says.

They met each other in middle school and dated through high school and college in New Jersey, getting married while he was in grad school and she was working on her master's degree in construction.

"I was always making wine as a hobby," says Rik. "When I was growing up, I watched Granddad making wine. My family is from Sicily. Granddad couldn't find a job so he made wine for his neighbors in Manhattan. He sold wine to make ends meet. Wine making has always been in the family."

While in New Mexico, Rik and Melissa started hanging around commercial wineries, tasting, helping and learning



the trade. Meticulous people, they took copious notes regarding all aspects of the business. In 2001 they began looking to buy a winery. "We went to literally hundreds of wineries all the way from Pennsylvania through Virginia and into North Carolina,"

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**Attimo tasting room.**

he says. Failing to find a suitable ongoing winery, they decided to start their own. Their psychic compasses swung back to Southwest Virginia. "We decided to jump off the cliff one day and just do it. 'Attimo' is Italian for 'the right moment in time,'" he says

"We wanted a dry place because grapes don't like wet roots. Amazingly, this part of Montgomery County is one of the driest places in the state. We sold our house in Maryland, bought this property in 2006, and started planting grape vines."

Rik still works a full-time job from home, one of those "if I told you, I'd have to kill you," Defense Department jobs. "We do health research around the world, monitoring public health in developing countries."

On a map of Virginia, its wineries are clustered in two places, around Charlottesville and to the north between Warrenton and Leesville. Attimo looks like a bullet hole that missed the target. Rik says, "There is a growing zone for grapes that runs from that area through here

into North Carolina. Most of the vineyards are closer to the population centers of northern Virginia. We're in a region of ideal temperatures, rainfall, soils, and lack of grape diseases.

"Our specialty is Vidal Blanc. We grow Vidal wines as good here as anywhere in the world. It comes out perfect every year and we grow it like nobody's business. We also do a great job with Cabernet Franc. Vidal Blanc is a hybrid white grape. It makes a floral wine which is either dry or super, super sweet.

"We're running three businesses: a restaurant, a vineyard, and a bottling plant. The vineyard as a business never makes money. We buy and sell grapes from and to other bottlers. We have over 11,000 vines and over 5000 blackberry and raspberry plants on 17 acres. We harvested over 30 tons of grapes last year."

Outside on a crystalline day, Rik and Melissa (who are 41 and 40) walk a row of vines where Mylar strips sparkled in the wind, scaring away the crows and other pests. "We use natural pesticides, as little as possible," he says. "We are interested in maintaining the health of our plants, our grapes, and the environment."

"We have a passion for the people we meet here," says Melissa. "We enjoy being around people who are having a good time."

"We love it here," Rik agreed. "I call this a down-home-cooking kind of area. People are humble. The unpretentious, family aspect of the culture is very appealing to us." 

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## The master calls at the Higher Ed Center >

### Executive Summary:

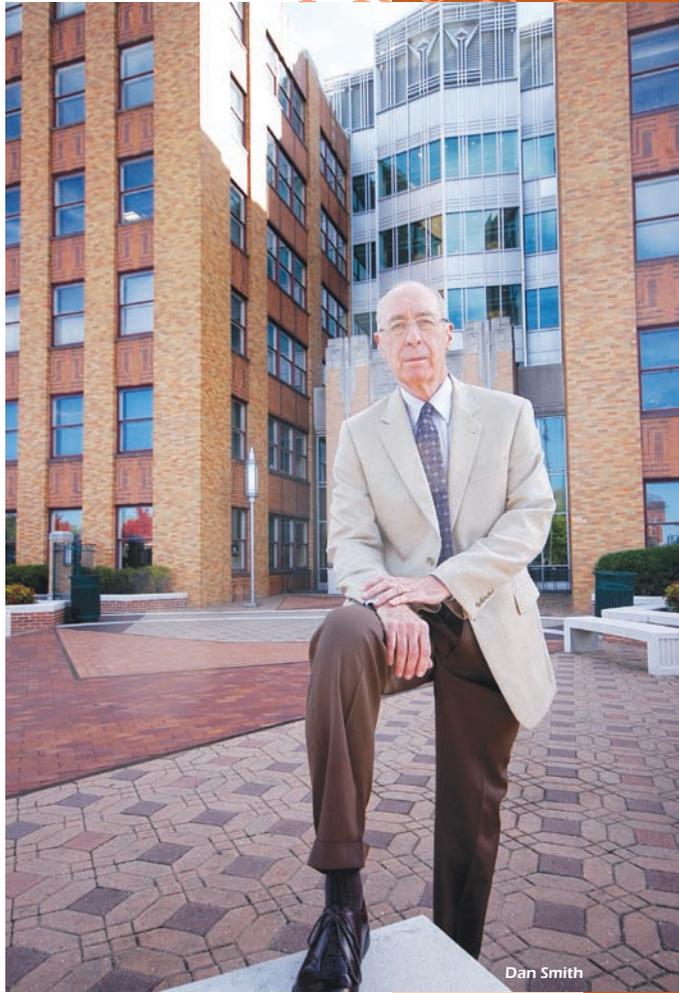
*The demand for a broader range of master's degrees at the Roanoke Higher Education Center is being met with enthusiasm.*

By Gene Marrano

The Roanoke Higher Education Center became an ideal way for working adults to further their careers when it opened in 2000. Based in what was formerly a Norfolk & Western office building, state funding helped the RHEC become a reality. Now 12 colleges and two workforce development organizations call the North Jefferson Street campus home. There had been a smaller Graduate Center for Master's programs elsewhere in downtown Roanoke but pent up demand made the high-visibility RHEC a success.

Tom McKeon, who has been executive director of the Roanoke Higher Education Center since it opened, recently announced the results of a needs assessment survey that showed

demand for more master's and bachelor's degrees. People may think of the RHEC first for finishing that bachelor's they started years ago, but in fact 49 percent



Dan Smith

**Director Tom McKeon at the Higher Education Center: "We try to get out there and listen to what people are telling us."**



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**Students in class at the RHEC.**

of the students who attend school there are pursuing a Master's. Around 2,100 students are enrolled in bachelor's and master's program every semester.

"High Demand Opportunities" for future master's courses, as the survey of working adults was labeled, included everything from accounting to educational psychology and public health. There were also calls for master's in leadership studies, library science and biomedical engineering. "We went through the process of looking at demand," says McKeon, who employed a consulting firm to conduct the involved survey.

In the Roanoke MSA 377 companies were queried, as well, stratified by size and type of industry. The question: What types of employees will they be looking for in the next few years? What type of educational pedigree will give candidates a leg up? Craig, Botetourt, Franklin and Roanoke Counties, along with the cities of Roanoke and Salem, are part of the Metropolitan Statistical Area.

More than 2,100 people agreed to sit through a phone survey and 400 said they were interested in pursuing higher education degrees within the next two years. "That became our target [for a more extensive survey]," says McKeon. RHEC's member institutions are now analyzing

the data, trying to determine where it is feasible to add more master's post-graduate programs. They usually will take at least 2-3 years to complete.

McKeon expects decisions about additional degrees to be announced within the next several months; an entirely new program could take a year or so to put in place. Organizations like the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Technology Council also provided insight on what knowledge base local employers will need from workers.

Radford, Virginia Tech, Hollins, Virginia, James Madison, Averett and Old Dominion are among the schools offering 44 master's degrees through the RHEC now. "They kind of come and go," says McKeon of the degree offerings. MBA's and education post-graduate degrees are typically the most called for, he says.

Catering to working adults, RHEC master's programs usually meet in the evenings, in many cases just one night a week, and normally do not require time to be spent on the school's home campus. "They can all be done completely here," says McKeon.

On-line sessions augment the classroom time in some programs and in the case of Virginia

Tech's professional MBA program; the Internet is used to bring classmates together from Roanoke, Northern Virginia and Richmond. In that program as well, RHEC students go to Richmond once a month. Tech's engineering Masters also ties students together from across the Commonwealth via the web. A Virginia Commonwealth University nursing post-grad degree uses live, interactive on-line presentations with a faculty member based in Richmond.

The extensive needs assessment survey is not something the RHEC can do every year, notes McKeon. Thrice-yearly open houses and other inquiries from potential students also provide feedback on what Master's and Bachelor's degrees are in demand. It's all centered on what businesses in the MSA are looking for. "We try to get out there and listen to what people are telling us," says McKeon. 



Teacher-student interact at higher ed center.

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Ginger Poole, Jack Avis, Cynthia Lawrence outside Center in the Square

## Lean, mean theatrical machine >

### Executive Summary:

*A "conservative business approach" turns around financially troubled Mill Mountain Theatre.*

### By Randolph Walker

As you might expect, it's all very theatrical.

The story of Mill Mountain Theatre took a dramatic turn in 2009. Facing some \$750,000 in debt, the theater closed its main stage and reduced staff to one employee, managing director Ginger Poole.

Now the theater is debt-free, in the midst of a holiday production on its Waldron Stage, and planning to reopen its main stage in the renovated Center in the Square. While other Western Virginia theaters have struggled or closed, Mill Mountain has turned itself around by applying business principles to the arts.

"We stepped back and looked at the entire business model and therefore decided to embrace this more conservative business approach," says Cynthia Lawrence, vice president of the board, and a small business owner herself. "We are running a business."

The board attacked the debt, cut expenses

and formed a plan to identify profitable types of shows.

Part of the debt was paid off, while part was negotiated, according to board president Jack Avis, president of Avis Construction in Roanoke. "It was resolved to the satisfaction of all debt holders including vendors." Avis said he couldn't spell out the details.

The new Mill Mountain will have a dramatically reduced payroll. "When we temporarily ceased producing professional theatre in 2009 we had 25, 26 employees," says Avis, who is married to Poole. "We've got a model now for six employees at full staff." The services of set designers and carpenters, choreographers, music directors, light and sound technicians, and costumers will be contracted out.

The budget for actors will be lower, as well. A new contract with Actors Equity Association specifies two Equity actors per show, while the previous contract required six actors and an Equity stage manager.

Box office staff will no longer be needed, with Center in the Square taking over ticket sales. "It's going to reduce staff to the tune of \$70,000 a year," says Avis.

Further savings will come from collaborating with other theaters—for example, sharing revenue when Big Lick Conspiracy uses Mill Mountain's space, and borrowing props and costumes for the spring production of "The Marvelous Wonderettes."

Mill Mountain will collaborate with college

drama departments to bring in smaller-scale musicals that won't compete with touring productions at the Roanoke Civic Center, says Lawrence.

Shows will have shorter runs, but, the board members hope, sell the same number of tickets. "A musical will probably run for three weeks, a straight show will run for two," says Poole. In March these timelines were applied to "Greater Tuna," a comedy on the Waldron Stage. "We sold all but three tickets," Avis says.

Shows will be budgeted individually instead of being merged into the entire season. This

younger and less affluent, which didn't help. It's difficult, then, to compare us to MMT."

Since cash-strapped Star City Playhouse lost its building on Williamson Road, director Marlow Ferguson has looked for new venues, without success. Ferguson says he has taken a job as a restaurant host but still hopes to revive Star City.

In September, executive director Tony Russell announced the closing of the Theater at Lime Kiln, only to have the board reverse the decision. "We continue on our rescue mission to see if we can stay afloat," says board chairwoman Amy Giannini. "We've



We truly think we're on the cutting edge of this. Nobody else is really doing it yet. We've got a model that other theaters are going to eventually look towards.

—Jack Avis, Mill Mountain Theatre board

will help identify "what shows does Roanoke support, what shows does Roanoke want to see?" Avis says.

While Mill Mountain is standing on firmer ground, other theatres have fallen. Kenley Smith's Studio Roanoke folded in July after a three-year run. "I wanted to put up work that challenged the audience, pushed boundaries and perhaps even redefined what local theatre could be," says Smith. "I think that new-works programming can be difficult to sell, period. Our biggest potential demographic skewed

given ourselves an extension of Dec. 31."

GAMUT and Showtimers seem to be doing well, bad economy or not. Showtimers' recent "Dracula" was a smash.

Mill Mountain's turnaround is largely due to the business expertise of the board members, says Avis. "We truly think we're on the cutting edge of this. Nobody else is really doing it yet. We've got a model that other theaters are going to eventually look towards." 

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# Sudden surprises >

## My View

By Dan Smith  
Editor

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

**Excutive Summary:** *It's the unexpected that can often cause the most damage.*

A break-in at my house in early November left me without a few electronic gadgets and minus the kind of peace of mind one has when he trusts that all is OK. I didn't so much bemoan losing the TVs, camera rig and laptop (I have great insurance, the agent assured me) as I did the feeling of being so safe that I didn't have to batten down all the hatches all the time.

False security, the investigating officer called it. Just because it hasn't happened, doesn't mean it won't. So, what results is a much more acute and urgent awareness of all that can go wrong and likely will at some point. In business, especially in an economy not designed for new businesses or novel ideas, we have to expect the looming disaster, plan for it and slide through it the best we can.

There's Key Man Insurance (or whatever the gender-neutral people are calling it these days) wherein we bet the insurance company that either my partner Tom Field nor I will be smacked down and put out of action permanently or for a period of time that would have a negative effect on the business.

I was out with the recent knee surgery, but the good fortune there is that I have a strong constitution and was back much quicker than either of us expected. No loss there. Potential loss? You bet. Key Man didn't kick in, but it's still good to have.

Following the break-in, I heard a lot of "you should" this and "you shouldn't" that, got detailed advice on security systems (I was actually in a voting line trying to order one when I was cut off) and gizmos that keep your door shut, turn on blaring alarms and blinking lights when somebody gets close to the house and do everything but place an armed guard on the front porch. Guess I could do that too if I had the money.

Not much will keep the disasters away if they're intent on being there. Those problems are many and varied in business. I've known a number of people in the restaurant business, for example, who closed up shop because they couldn't find people who'd show up for work, because the price of food became such that their offerings were too expensive for their customers, that certain types of foods they specialized in became hard to get. Those are not challenges that would immediately occur to me if that were my business.

I've seen newspapers I worked for face a crisis when newsprint became so expensive or in such short supply that closing shop would be an alternative. For a time a few years ago, car dealers couldn't get cars because steel wasn't being made in quantity.

It's all interrelated and it comes at us quickly and with such a variety of tricky elements that none of us can be experts at

continued on Page 52



## And how does that make you feel? >

By Tom Field  
Publisher

## On Tap from the Pub

We've all seen the classic psychiatrist bit. You know the one. The one where the "patient" lies on the couch, describing all his problems, this woe and that woe. The shrink scribbles on his notepad (usually playing solo tic-tac-toe) and merely grunts or murmurs "hmmmm" with the occasional interjection of: "go on."

Then, one of two things happen. An alarm goes off and the therapist says, "we're out of time; let's pick this up on our next session." Or, the patient, in all his babbling, suddenly stumbles on the root of his serious dilemma, figuring out his own solution. The amazing part is when he springs off the couch, exclaiming "Why you're exactly right, doc! Thanks for the help!"

The doctor is the hero. He does nothing but listen. Oh, but he does get paid.

I saw this happen in a business environment just yesterday. It was just as amazing to watch.

Jim had given a pretty solid presentation. He shared a lot of facts. It wasn't flashy, but it was very informative and most importantly, relevant to the audience, with practical application.

The event concluded, and as he packed up, he was approached by an attendee who disputed one of the major points.

The protestor challenged Jim. "Where did you come up with that? That can't be right." He even had a sidekick with him, who chimed in, "Yeah, that's not how we see it."

Now, Jim could have easily reiterated his point. He could have defended his information. He could have challenged the protestor's point of view. In fact, he could have just as easily retracted that one dispute, and simply claimed it might not be accurate, he might need to go back and check it, or that what was stated referred to something a little differently. (He had no obligation to prove anything at this point, and was ready to hit the road.)

Instead, Jim acknowledge the comment, then took a sip of his drink (letting a few seconds of silence slip in). In calm and cool fashion, he then repeated the protest. "That's not how you see it?"

The challenger then had to go through his own presentation. Make his own claims and determinations and perspectives. Jim let him. And at the end of the "session" our protestor simply walked off. But not until he thanked Jim for his really good presentation.

Our presenter listened. Just like the doctor sitting beside the couch. The only difference I saw was that he wasn't scribbling tic-tac-toe. That's a shame. I think he would have won. 



Smith / My View  
from Page 50

all the possibilities. We just have to keep pushing along the best we can, anticipating what we can, guarding against the unknown

and hoping that we've made the right decisions in our protections.

I might add that if you're dropping by my house, call first. The guy on the front porch has instructions to shoot first, ask questions Thursday. 

“ ”

You would not think that a crippling stroke, teen angst, drug addiction and a dead baby buried beneath a backyard tree would make for a rollicking good read — Page 55



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## Letters

### Local emphasis

I was pleased to see such an intelligent piece recently on manufacturing — I should say local manufacturing — in Valley Business FRONT. I agree with the sentiment, “What is the strength of a country if it gives up its ability to make things?”

“Local” these days may apply to such things as my wife’s locavore restaurant and our lovely farmer’s markets downtown and off Grandin Road, but in manufacturing it is a global environment in which we must compete. I don’t believe those who write the regulations that affect not just manufacturing, but construction, banking, you name it, are always able to take a global view; their focus is often quite narrow.

Having said that, I think the most important thing government — certainly both local and state — can do for local business is make sure we are providing a proper learning environment for the education of the upcoming workforce. Second, keeping Virginia a right-to-work state will help avoid the kinds of labor conflicts that drive manufacturing to look for greener pastures — and that’s a topic for a future issue of the FRONT.

**Bill Elliot**  
**Davis H. Elliot**  
**Roanoke**

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

“”  
Fired employees have been griping about employers since Nebuchadnezzar pink-slipped a foreman on the Hanging Gardens project — Page 30

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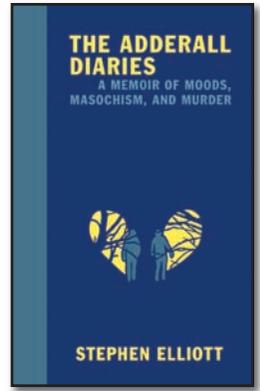
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## Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our publishers and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Readers are invited to submit 150-word reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to Editor Dan Smith at [editrdan@msn.com](mailto:editrdan@msn.com)



### *True drugs*

Two recent books with drug use at the center are quite good. Herewith a look at them:

With a title that includes Adderall, the drug derived from the "mother's little helper" of years back, and prescribed to millions, *The Adderall Diaries: A Memoir of Moods, Masochism and Murder* (Graywolf Press, \$23) by Stephen Elliott was guaranteed at least an initial glance. But that one glance is all that's needed to discover this is no self help book for those held under Adderall's sway.

Loosely framed around a real life seedy San Francisco murder trial the author is covering for a nationwide TV network, this book emerges as a brave, unsettling, bizarre, sad and honest memoir of a type that you have likely never encountered before, and may never want to again. What you are reading is true and that does it.

Elliott's truth is of a person spinning in space, of being a young teen without a safety net, of a young man clinging to objects, people, and situations that can only slip away

Elliott uses Adderall throughout, but in quantities that do not shock. The book is paced and organized in a stimulant-induced flavor which sometimes contributes, sometimes detracts, from this brave man's quest to understand himself. A thrilling read, thrillingly written, but not for the faint of heart.

In a year when doctors, scientists and the

leader of the National Institute on Drug Abuse are declaring that substance abuse is a disease, it couldn't be a more useful time to read *The Fix* by Damian Thompson (Collins, \$15.99), himself a former alcohol and substance abuser.

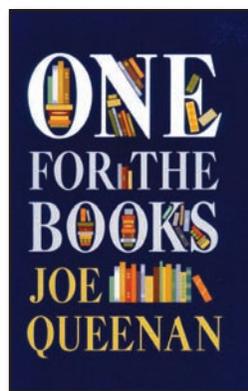
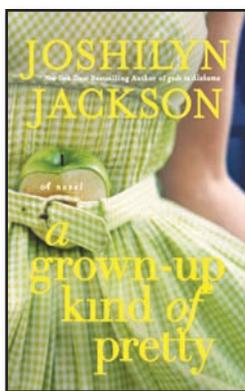
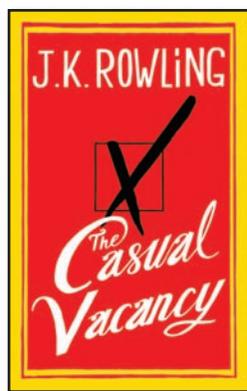
Thompson is a writer for the Daily Telegraph in Britain, and when *The Fix* was published, he was not a popular man. It is a book that refuses to bow to the disease model, instead reminding us of the power of choice. Thompson argues, in a manner that echoes the dark proposition of the film "The Addiction," that we are all addicts waiting for the appropriate lure. The central theme and cautionary message of this book is that our capitalistic culture is increasingly applying what is being learned in the addiction field to entice consumers to return to the marketplace for our pleasure fix.

His claim is that addiction is rooted in our various decisions to turn from the messiness and unpredictability of human relationships to objects, substances and repetitive gaming motions, for nourishment, companionship, pleasure and excitement.

—River Laker

### *Harry Potter, it ain't*

Adult in content and vulgarity, *Casual Vacancy* (Little, Brown & Company, \$35) differs from JK Rowling's popular Harry Potter series, but it also differs in that nothing very exciting happens. In a small town in England, a man dies of a brain aneurism. He leaves an empty place on town council and vultures of the village



circle to take it over. The veils of the townspeople are removed. Politics prevail, with age old conflicts of rich versus poor.

Nonchalant instances of rape, drug use, self-abuse, physical and mental abuse, suicide, and mental illness, are interwoven into sordid tales of neighbors despising neighbors, or lusting after them. Darkness lurks around every corner of town, but isn't in the form of a dark wizard, only the darker side of humans. There is no hero to balance it out. What results is pedantic and disappointing.

—Heather Brush

## 'Rollicking good read'

You would not think that a crippling stroke, teen angst, drug addiction and a dead baby buried beneath a backyard tree would make for a rollicking good read. But such elements are masterpiece material in the hands of Joshilyn Jackson. In her first novel, *Gods in Alabama*, she trained her readers to expect witty voices, eccentric characters and first-rate heroines. And, always, belly laughs.

Now, in *A Grown-Up Kind of Pretty* (Grand Central, \$14.99), three generations of women, born 15 years apart, seem destined for heartache as the 45-year-old grandma vows to break the cycle of single motherhood. Forces including near-poverty and ostracism conspire against each of the three, naturally in the small-town backdrop that Jackson so deftly portrays.

Sex, power, mystery and family secrets are reasons to not just recommend this

book to friends but also to nominate it for inclusion in a time capsule.

—Andrea Brunais

## Queenan again

I've said before that Joe Queenan is one of the funniest people on the planet and his new book *One for the Books* (Viking Adult, \$24.95) does absolutely nothing to dispel that notion. I like Queenan best when he's reading or talking, but the "voice" on the page will do, since it's soooo him: droll, sarcastic, cutting and aimed at everybody and everything with a weak spot.

Queenan's been around the block as a writer (two or three times) and he knows his audience. His latest work is a series of book-related stories that lend great discomfort to the fools he sees everywhere. He is a lover of books, good bad and indifferent books, those in print and those out (preferably those that have lost some of their pop with the public) and he reads like a librarian. This is a simple premise for a book: Joe Queenan reading and commenting. Sit in a comfortable place, pick up the book and loosen your laugh muscles. You're gonna use them.

—Dan Smith

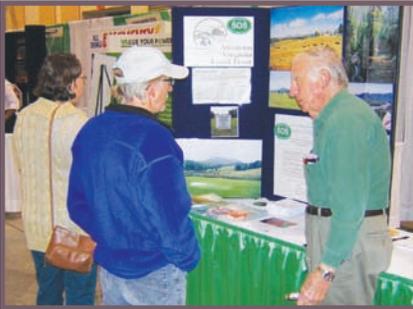
**(The reviewers:** River Laker is a Roanoke writer and promoter. Heather Brush is a Rocky Mount-based writer and artist. Andrea Brunais, a former journalist, is Communications Manager for Outreach & International Affairs at Virginia Tech. Dan Smith is editor of Valley Business FRONT.)



Tom Field

## Renewanation Ringer >

The week before the presidential election, Renewanation (a Roanoke-based national Christian education operation) called in its own heavy hitter, as retired Lt. Col. Oliver North addressed the large crowd for the annual benefit banquet Nov. 1 at Hotel Roanoke. (top left) Renewanation founder and **CEO Jeff Keaton** animates the crowd before (top right) **Oliver North** speaks.



Christina Koomen



## Energetic Expo >

Nov. 3's Clean Energy Expo at the Roanoke Civic Center brought together energy vendors and consumers to talk about the latest developments. In left photo, Clean Valley Council Executive Director **Cristina Siegel** and Environmental Educator **Daniel Harrison** use wildlife puppets to tell the story of how litter and pollution affect the environment. In photo above, the New River Center for Energy Research and Training (NRCERT), a division of Christiansburg-based Community Housing Partners, set up a display that offered examples of energy technology throughout the house. At top left, **George Kegley**, who serves on the board of the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy (formerly the Western Virginia Land Trust), talks about the organization's mission with Expo visitors.

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

# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## Gathered on Summit >

The **Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)** held its 10th annual Summit Awards Gala Nov. 2 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center and here are the winners. The Summit Awards are an annual recognition of the best in public relations and communications efforts by professional public relations practitioners in Southwest Virginia. The Summit Awards include 16 categories which allow individuals or agencies to submit their work in a variety of areas. Neathawk Dubuque & Packett was the overall winner in the competition.



## Sat Biz Flat >

**Small Business Saturday**, a promotional event branded by American Express a few years ago hasn't really caught on in our region to the extent merchants had hoped. The designation is supposed to generate a boost to small and local businesses, and though some retailers noticed a slight increase in shopping traffic, most reported modest or negligible change. Nov. 24 presented an exceptional one day cold snap that could have impacted walk-in business, but as one anonymous shop clerk stated, the day was "no comparison to Black Friday or Cyber Monday."



## Blue Ridge Region honors vets >

The first **Blue Ridge Veterans Celebration** regional event organized around Veterans Day 2012 was held Nov. 9, 10, 11, featuring a D-Day Memorial tour in **Bedford** and restaurant crawl on Friday; the Veterans Parade in **Roanoke** followed by a barbeque at Railside Stage on Saturday; and a morning Memorial Service at **Salem Museum**, concluded by a picnic at the **Vinton War Memorial** on Sunday (pictured above). The BRVC also held a 5k Run/Walk at Wasena Park, Roanoke on Sept. 9 to kick off the new event.

# CONTRIBUTORS

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**Colin Dwyer** is a senior at Roanoke College studying communication. Following graduation in May he has ambitions to work in the Roanoke area in media, public relations or advertising.

**Tom Field** is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT magazine. He has written and produced programs and materials for local and international organizations for more than 30 years.  
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**Kathleen Harvey Harshberger** is a graduate of Radford University and the Protocol School of Washington. She conducts seminars in business etiquette, international business protocol, and dining skills She has an international clientele in business, government, and higher education. She is a certified Protocol Officer.  
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**Gene Marrano**, a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, is one of the most prolific journalists in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Roanoke This Week with Gene Marrano" on Fox Radio 910).  
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**Michael Miller** is senior licensing manager for Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties in Blacksburg. His consulting company is Kire Technology. With more than 25 years as an inventor and technology consultant, working with Fortune 500 companies and startups, he screens businesses for the World's Best Technology Showcase and mentors tech startups through Development Capital Networks and the National Science Foundation.  
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**Anne Piedmont** is the president of Piedmont Research Associates, a marketing communications firm she has started after working for the Roanoke Regional Partnership as director of research for more than 18 years. She's also worked in public relations and journalism. She loves numbers and wants them to make sense for you.  
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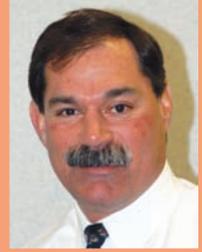
**Laura Purcell** is a mother, wife, rat-terrier wrangler and writer living in Blacksburg. Her website is purcellink.squarespace.com.  
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**Dan Smith** is editor and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT. A native of Asheville, N.C., he has been a journalist for more than four decades and has won many journalism awards (writing, photography and design). He is a member of the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame and was a 2009 recipient of the Perry F. Kendig Literary Award. He was Virginia's Business Journalist of the year in 2005. He is the founder of the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference.  
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**Kathy Surace** is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years.  
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**Nicholas Vaassen** is a graphic designer with 12 years experience, specializing in publications. His design projects include FRONT, lifestyle, real estate, municipal, classified sales and cultural organization magazines in the Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets.  
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**Randolph Walker** graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a journalism degree in 1983. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in Roanoke and an advertising copywriter for the Edmonds Packett Group. He is now a freelance writer as well as a performing musician and guitar teacher.  
[ rwalker25@cox.net ]



**Andrew Hudick**

**November 2012 >  
Contributor of the Month**

**Andy Hudick** has been with our organization since before it was founded as FRONT. He has written his financial advice for more than 20 years and continues to hand out sound advice with a conservative slant upon request. Andy runs Fee Only Financial Planners in Roanoke and generally charges for his advice, but you get it here free. His November column was more political than usual, but it came at the height of the political season and warned against lying and cheating in the halls of Congress, among other things. For his efforts, Andy is our November Contributor of the Month. You can read Andy's current and back issue articles at vbFRONT.com



Imagine a three-legged stool that walked around your kitchen

— Page 35

The numbers don't lie: the economy in the Roanoke and New River Valleys continues to improve. Unemployment and initial unemployment claims are down. Employment is up, and so are home prices.

## Unemployment/Employment

**Unemployment rates** in the Roanoke and New River Valleys fell below 6.0 percent in September and are down from both a month ago and a year ago. The combined Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas' unemployment rate dropped more than 10 percent over the year, just off the national pace of 13.6 percent (from 8.8 percent to 7.6 percent). Virginia's unemployment rate fell from 6.3 percent in September 2011 to the current 5.6 percent (down 11.1 percent).



	UNEMPLOYMENT		
	Sept. 2011	Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012
Blacksburg	6.6%	6.4%	5.9%
Roanoke	6.6%	6.0%	5.9%
Combined	6.6%	6.2%	5.9%

Fewer people unemployed translates to more people **employed** in the region. In the two valleys, more people were working in September than last month and last year. Employment improved by 1.4 percent from a year ago.

EMPLOYED		
Sept. 2011	Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012
233,136	232,313	236,476

Initial unemployment claims – perhaps an

indicator of future unemployment rates – for the region fell by an impressive 64.6 percent during Week 43 (October 19-25) from the same week last year. The regional drop was just off the state's (68.9 percent). The Roanoke MSA's initial claims fell by 66.1 percent, while the Blacksburg MSA dropped by 60.4 percent.

### INITIAL UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Week 43 2011	Week 43 2012
365	129

*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*

## Real Estate

**Home prices** in the region are up more than 25 percent from a year ago, compared to 9.0 percent nationally. The local average home price in September topped \$200,000 for only the second time since August 2010. The number of **homes sold** in September was down from the previous month, but up by 5.3 percent from a year ago.

HOME PRICES		
Sept. 2011	Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012
\$160,055	\$192,455	\$200,878

HOMES SOLD		
Sept. 2011	Aug. 2012	Sept. 2012
281	384	296

*Sources: Roanoke Valley Association of REALTORS & National Association of REALTORS*

—By Anne Piedmont,  
Piedmont Research Associates

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photos: Randolph Walker

**Bill Roth (left) and Mike Burnop: "Slicker than a peeled onion in a bowl full of snot."**

## Booger boy and the Hokies >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Broadcaster Mike Burnop has his own way of describing Virginia Tech football games.*

### **By Michael Abraham**

You might not recognize the face, but if you are a fan of Virginia Tech sports, you certainly know the glib, colloquial voice of Mike Burnop. A former football player himself, Burnop teams with Bill Roth on radio broadcasts of Hokie football and basketball. His intimacy with the game and his affinity for the players and fans allows him to get away with occasional unctuous utterances like, "boogers" and "snot bubbles."

Burnop's most outrageous quotation even astounded Roth. Burnop said, "This guy is

slicker than a peeled onion in a bowl full of snot!" On the air.

"We had a great running back a few years ago, Ryan Williams. In a game against Nebraska, he made an incredible run, cutting around a would-be tackler and gaining several additional yards. So I made that comment about him. Bill looked at me incredulously and said, 'What did you say?' He'd never heard it before, but I didn't make it up. When you put a peeled onion in a bowl of snot, now that's pretty slick."

Burnop, 62, is in his 30th year as a broadcaster, 25 with Roth. He played tight end at Tech from 1969 to 1973 after playing at Roanoke Catholic. "I grew up a mile from Andrew Lewis High School in Salem—they were the big gun—but I played in Roanoke. Everyone in Salem was mad at me." He garnered attention for both basketball and football, earning many scholarship offers. He took several recruiting trips, but with many Tech connections, he chose Tech. He earned his degree in health education and eventually a master's degree in education, and he's remained in Blacksburg.

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

He is a recent widower. His wife Ellen died in May after a three-year battle with lung cancer. He has three children, Greg, Jenna & Erin, all now in their 20s and 30s. Burnop owns New River Office Supply, which he ran with Ellen.

Mike was tapped for the broadcast job in 1982, primarily because he was a good interview as a player. When Roth came along five years later, there was instant rapport. Bill's eloquence and smooth, clear voice fit in perfectly with Mike's glibness and warmth. Now, with XM and the Internet, they are heard all over the world.

One of the things that distinguishes his work is his empathy with the players. He says, "Everybody out there is trying to do their best, on both teams. They want to be successful, to make the catch, make the tackle, don't fumble. When something bad happens, nobody feels worse than he does. Sometimes the opponent makes a great play. Lots of announcers will criticize players and give no credit to the opponent, or they'll blame the officials whenever a call goes against them. I've always felt you give credit

where credit is due. Some days we're not the best team. Let's recognize what the other team has done, too.

"Bill and I do a lot of preparation. Including pre-game and post-game broadcasting, we'll be on the air for six hours or longer. It's a part-time job but it's almost full-time."

Burnop says there are 120 Division I football programs in America, but "there really is something special about Tech. It is incredible what Frank (Beamer) and his staff have been able to do. We have 19 bowl games in a row, eight 10-win seasons, and four ACC championships in eight years.

"Football really put Virginia Tech on a national map. The admissions office went nuts when we played for a national championship (in 1999). But the tail doesn't wag the dog here. We do things the right way. It is a team thing, a family thing. [Bill and I] go to schools all over, but we never see anything like what we have here.

"Hokie fans love the game day experience, whether home or away. They are incredibly passionate." 



# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT

### Accounting

The firm of N. Wesley Pughsley Jr. and Associates in Roanoke has named **Andrew Pughsley** a staff accountant.

### Banks

**Mary Sowers** has been named retail specialist at the Colonial Ave. branch of HomeTown Bank in Roanoke and **Milton Showalter** of the New River branch in Christiansburg has graduated from the VBA School of Bank Management.

**Vicky Zimmerman** is the new branch manager at the Salem branch of the Bank of Floyd. **Melissa Ann Harden** is assistant manager.

### Financial Advice

Scott & Stringfellow in Roanoke has named **Linda Long Barnett** a financial advisor.



Clements

### Insurance

Scott Insurance has named **Curt Clements** a group benefits consultant in its Roanoke office.



Via

**Thomas "Tommy" Via**, president of Brown Insurance in Roanoke, is the new chairman of the Independent Insurance Agents of Virginia (IIAV). The National Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers Association is the nation's oldest and largest association

of independents representing a network of more than 300,000 agents and agency employees nationwide

## LEGAL FRONT



Ashwell



Perrow

Two Woods Rogers attorneys have been named to leadership roles in key statewide legal professional organizations. **Erin Ashwell**, a Woods Rogers associate, has been named president of the Roanoke chapter

of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association and **Elizabeth Guilbert Perrow**, a principal with the firm, is the new president of the Virginia Association of Defense Attorneys (VADA). **John Benjamin Rottenborn**, a partner with an international law firm in Chicago, has joined Woods Rogers as Of Counsel.



Brown

Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore associate **Margaret A. (Megan) Brown** has been recognized with the 2012 DePaul Community Resources Women of Achievement Award in the category of law.

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## WELLNESS FRONT

### Dental

The following changes have been made to the staff of ETS Dental in Roanoke: **Scott Bradford** is a recruiter trainee; **Natalie Thompson** is database marketing coordinator; **Chris Fitzgerald** is an account executive and recruiter.

### Hospitals

LewisGale Hospital Montgomery has named **Rex Etherege** interim CEO. **Paula**

**Mitchell**, VP of behavioral health services at LewisGale Regional Health System in Salem, has been named to the Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Board of Directors.

### Services

**Tammy White-Halsey** is a new marketing and sales representative at

Gateway Health in Roanoke.

## TECH / INDUSTRY FRONT

### Distribution

**Bob Archer**, president and CEO of Blue Ridge Beverage Company in Salem, Virginia, has been named chairman of the board of the National



Archer

Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA), a trade group representing 3,300 independent beer distributors with

*Have a career announcement?*

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

## Joy Sutton



- Former WDBJ TV Anchor/Reporter
- TV Host, "The Hour of Joy"
- Howard University and Virginia Tech graduate
- Vibe Radio Listener

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# Career FRONT

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## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

### Architects/Engineers

**John Berg** of Obenchain, Linkous, Daniels & Sowick in Roanoke has achieved his professional engineering license for Virginia.

### Extension

**Danny Peak** is the new director of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Southwest District.

### Materials

Permatile Concrete Products of Roanoke's **Mimi Rainero Coles** has been elected chairwoman of the National Precast Concrete Association board of directors.

### Real Estate

The new president of

the Virginia Association of Realtors is **Mary Dykstra** of MKB Realtors in Roanoke.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

### Automotive

Brambleton Imports in Roanoke has named **Bob Conner** general manager.

### Exterminating

**Jerry McLawhorn** of Superior Exterminating Company (Roanoke and NRV) has been presented the Virginia Pest Management Industry Stewardship Award.

### Movers

**Becky Beard**, of Premier Transfer and Storage in Blacksburg has been named national Salesperson of the Month for September 2012 by Mayflower Transit.

## EDUCATION FRONT

### Colleges

**Jeff Wilkinson** is the new VP for the school of professional development at National College in Salem.



Pesapane

### Organizations

**Risa Pesapane** joined the Cabell Brand Center as the executive director. She is a double-major graduate of Virginia Tech and has a master's degree in disease transmission dynamics at the interface of human and wildlife populations (2011).

## OTHER FRONTS

### Organizations

The Kiwanis Club of Roanoke has elected its board 2012-2013. New officers elected to serve on the Board are: president, **Alexander Bowman Jr.**, Anderson & Reed; president-elect, **J. C. Taylor**, Young Realty Co; vice president **Sherry Dillon**, Valley Bank; secretary-Treasurer **Lloyd W. Enoch**, Kiwanis Club of Roanoke; past president **Jim Arend**, retired; **Gary Duerk**, resident Roanoke Kiwanis Foundation, Inc., Brown, Edwards, & Company. Board members are **Jeanne Bollendorf**, Historical Society of Western Virginia; **Donald Chichester**, retired; **Preston Collins**, UBS Financial Services; **Wilburn Dibling, Jr.**, retired; **Robert Eaton**, American Red Cross; **Nancy Hack**, Valley Bank; **Scott Jenkins**, Stellar One Bank;

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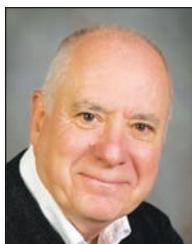
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**William Logan**, Trinity United Methodist Church; **Michael McEvoy**, Western Virginia Water Authority; **F. Anderson Stone**, Montrose Advisors; **Reginald Wood**, retired.

named to the board of directors of the Roanoke Valley SPCA.

**Andree Brooks**, Past President of the Roanoke Kiwanis Club, has been appointed Lieutenant Governor Division 2 of the Capital District of Kiwanis International. Division 2 represents clubs in Roanoke, Salem, Botetourt County, Lynchburg, Fort Hill, Appomattox, Danville, Martinsville, and Basset.



**Flowers**

KnowledgeWorks has been recognized as the recipient of the Virginia TradePort Innovator of the Year Award for 2012, recognizing an individual who has made a significant impact on international trade and business development in and around the Virginia TradePort.

“there are some who come by like clock-work to get their cupcake fix

— Page 39



**Morgan**

**Adam Morgan** of C5 Wealth Management in Roanoke has been

*World Trade*

**Jim Flowers** of VT

**Sharisse Brookins** 

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- *Mother of two*
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Officials pitch dirt at the FedEx groundbreaking

## *FedEx breaks ground*

**FedEx Ground** has broken ground on a new 103,000-square-foot distribution center to meet growing customer demand in the region. The facility is at the Roanoke Centre for Industry and Technology and will be on property that had been occupied by a company making ceramic chip capacitors.

The company's \$12.65 million investment is part of a nationwide expansion to boost daily package volume capacity and further enhance the speed and service capabilities of the FedEx Ground network. The new facility will be able to process 50,000 packages per day, up nearly 30,000 from its current regional facility in Salem. The facility will dispatch 80 trucks daily from the new location.

The facility will be open

in the fall of 2013 and 75 jobs from its existing facility will be transferred there. Fifty home delivery jobs will remain in Salem.

Since 2005, FedEx Ground has opened 11 new hubs and expanded or relocated more than 500 local facilities. Since 2003, FedEx Ground has improved the transit time in more than two-thirds of its lanes by at least one business day.

## *Advance for sale?*

Reports circulating in early November had **Advance Auto Parts** being up for sale, but nothing has been confirmed. The Wall Street Journal, New York Times and CNBC all had reports based on anonymous sources. Advance executives would not comment on the rumors.

Advance is a large retailer of aftermarket auto parts and has 3,727 stores in 39 states and the islands. It is the only Roanoke-based Fortune 500 company and was founded in Roanoke.

The company's overall employment in the Roanoke area stood at about 1,600 early this year.

## *New logo for commission*

**The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission** has unveiled a new logo.

The Regional Commission presented the new logo and announced plans to implement a regional public relations strategy in the region. "In order to create visual consistency among the Commission's many programs, a new logo was designed and a comprehensive

communications strategy for promoting our various programs will be implemented," says Billy Martin, the Regional Commission Chairman.



Roanoke Valley-Alleghany  
**REGIONAL**  
**commission**  
New logo for Regional  
Commission

## *Montgomery plant to close*

Christiansburg's former CraftMaster and C&S Door plant, bought by **JELD-WEN** in October, is scheduled to close at the end of the year, costing Montgomery County 130 jobs. Employees have the option of transferring to

another JELD-WEN plant, according to published reports.

Oregon's largest private company has 100 locations worldwide, but it has been reported as having financial troubles of late.

### *Localities to rescue of SPCA*

The **Roanoke Valley SPCA** and area municipalities have agreed to create a new entity to operate the Regional Center for Animal Control and Protection. The City of Roanoke, counties of Roanoke and Botetourt, and the Town of Vinton, will assume operational responsibility of the regional center.

Barbara Dalhouse, president of the RVSPCA's board of directors, says: "Given the public confusion over the current arrangement, we and the municipalities felt it was important for the RVSPCA to focus exclusively on its unwavering mission to improve the quality of life for animals and the people they touch in the Roanoke Valley."

The RVSPCA has operated its education and adoption facility to better coordinate animal adoptions. Since 2004, the organization has placed 14,585 animals into adoption. In the past year alone, more than 11,000 distinct medical services were provided to animals in the care of both the RVSPCA and the regional center. Over the next several months, the participating localities will

work with the RVSPCA to transition control and operations of the regional center to a new board appointed by the local governments. The RVSPCA will continue to support the regional center with adoption services.

### *Roanoke names ED director*

**Wayne Bowers** has been named Director of the Department of Economic Development for the City of Roanoke. "I am pleased to have Wayne Bowers lead our Economic Development team," says City Manager Chris Morrill. "His long experience in local government will be a great asset to Roanoke as we continue to work to expand our existing business community and attract businesses to locate in our city."

Bowers has worked in local government since 1973, most recently as City Manager of the City of Greenville, N.C. His

## *Have an announcement about your business?*

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

work experience includes serving as Assistant to the City Manager for the City of Tallahassee, Fla.; City Manager of the City of Jacksonville Beach, Fla.; City Manager of the City of Huntington, W.Va.; City Manager of the City of Spartanburg, S.C.; City Manager of the City of Gainesville, Fla.

### *Celanese creating 22 jobs*

Converting boilers from coal to natural gas will require a \$150 million investment from **Celanese Corporation** in Giles County and create 22 permanent, fulltime jobs, as well as 200 jobs to do the conversion. Work will

start in the near future.

### *To run facility*

**Friendship Retirement Community** has entered an agreement to manage Salem Terrace, a 90-bed facility with services that include independent living, assisted living and memory care. The partnership expands Friendship's healthcare services to Salem Terrace residents, employees and the greater Salem community.

### *EventZone out; DRI in*

Roanoke City has ended its 43-year affiliation with **EventZone**, which



**Wayne Bowers**

# FRONT Notes



**Chef Collin Donnelly**

produced several of its festivals and events. Jill Sluss, executive director of EventZone, says she welcomes the opportunities presented by opening up the field for the organization to pursue other localities to work with. **Downtown Roanoke Inc.** will take over organizing Roanoke's festivals and events.

*Lexington chef recognized*

The editors of the national culinary magazine *Cooking Light* have named Lexington's Red Hen executive **Chef Collin Donnelly** among its Trailblazing Chef designations. The awards are in the November 2012 issue of *Cooking Light*. Donnelly, 37, was cited

by the magazine for his thoughtful balance of "trend and tradition" and his "deft combination of the familiar and the deliciously inventive."

*Richfield names CEO*

The Board of Directors of **Richfield Retirement Community** has selected D. Raymond Fisher as Chief Executive Officer. Fisher served as Chief Financial Officer of the organization and has more than 30 years of experience in healthcare, financial management and strategic planning. Robert Rector will continue in his role as president and COO.

Fisher has held key leadership roles in both the private and non-profit

sectors. He spent 18 years with CSX Corporation most recently as director of corporate strategy and held the position of VP of

corporate development at Cadmus Communications, a provider of marketing and print services.



**D. Raymond Fisher**

## Volvo layoffs

**Volvo Trucks North America** in Pulaski County plans to lay off about 300 of its employees the first of the year because of a decline in orders. Layoffs will start in January.

Program in the General Contractors category from The Virginia Contractors Group Self Insurance Association. This is the third time in four years that MB Contractors has been recognized with the award, receiving Bronze in 2009 and Gold in 2011.

Public Relations Society of America for excellence in public relations. Roanoke's Access won four. ND&P won both Best of Show awards for the highest-rated public relations work of the past year.

## CHP cited

Christiansburg-based **Community Housing Partners** (CHP), an advocate for affordable housing since its beginnings in 1975, has been recognized by the Housing Education and Research Association as a "Friend of Housing."

## MB wins award

**MB Contractors** of Roanoke has been presented the Silver Safety Award for Outstanding Safety

## Summit Award winners

**Neathawk Dubuque & Packett** won 15 Summit Awards—the most of any entrant—from the Blue Ridge Chapter of the

ND&P won four awards for its work to create Save a Ton, a campaign funded by client Roanoke County to encourage people to save money while reducing energy consumption.

*Compiled by Dan Smith*

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

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

# So much more.

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- > Tech Approves Unique Real Estate Program
- > EventZone, Roanoke End Long Affiliation
- > Localities to the Rescue of SPCA in Roanoke Area
- > Roanoke Hires Economic Development Director
- > FedEx Breaks Ground for Roanoke Facility
- > Novozymes, Syngenta Reach Distribution Agreement
- > Anne Clelland To Present in D.C.
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- > Atomic Axis Brings 30 New Jobs to Blacksburg
- > Roanoke Co-op Wants To Farm Again; Submits Proposal

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

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“”  
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 to make the catch, make  
 the tackle, don't fumble

— Page 61



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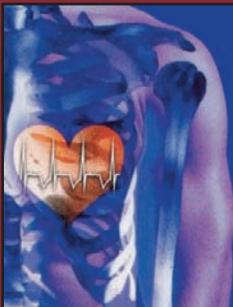


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