

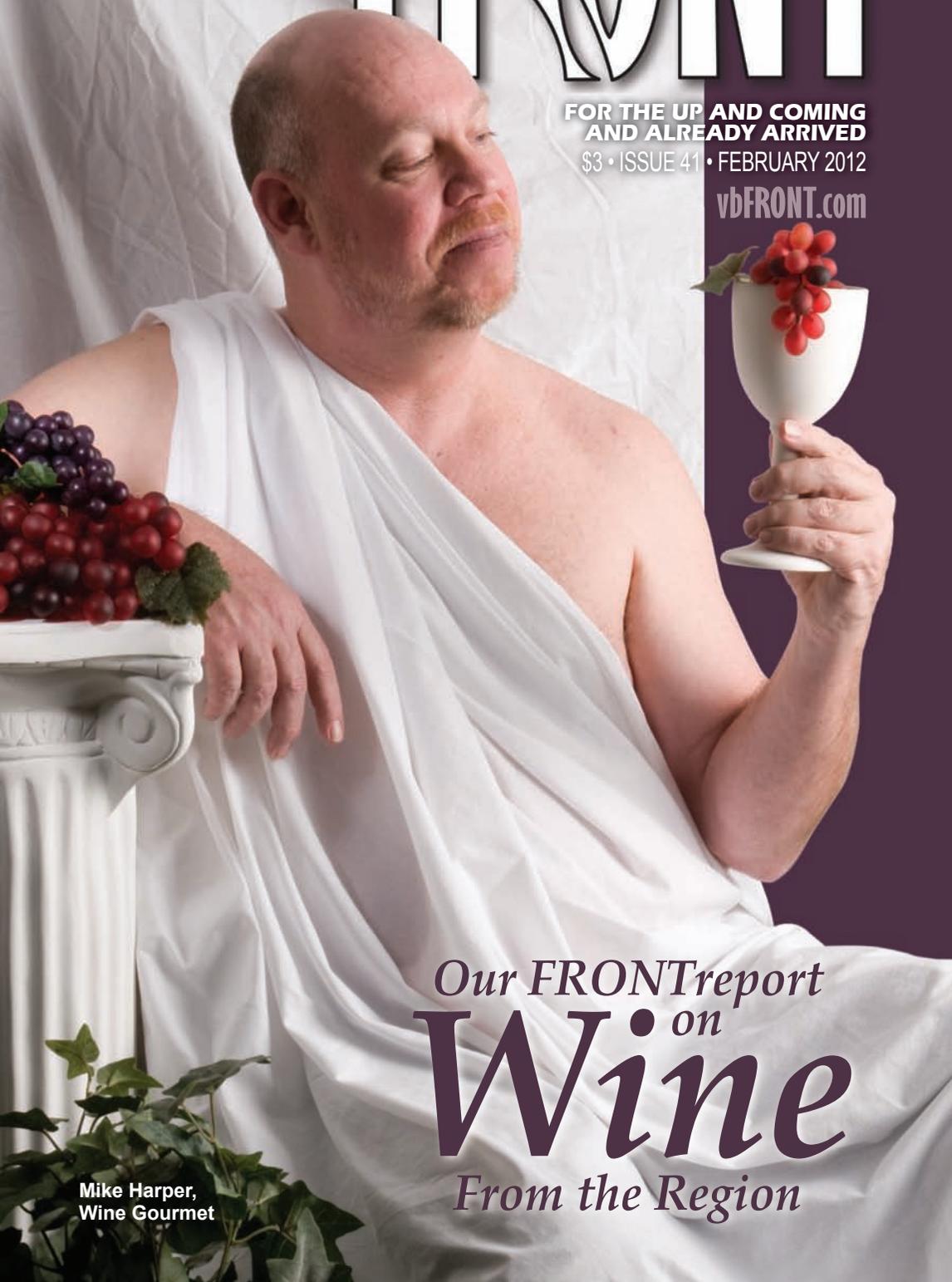
Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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vbFRONT.com



Our FRONTreport
on
Wine
From the Region

Mike Harper,
Wine Gourmet

NEW FACE AT VALLEY BANK

Steve Smith



For the past 23 years I have dedicated my professional life to working with Small Business owners in the Roanoke Valley. The passion I have for helping them achieve their business and personal goals is immeasurable.

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Valley Bank

Steve Smith

*Senior Vice President
Small Business Banking Manager*

36 Church Avenue, SW
Roanoke, Virginia 24011
ssmith@MyValleyBank.com

540 769-8568
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WELCOME to the FRONT

Anne Piedmont, who takes a monthly look at economic trends with Economic Indicators and Census Data in VB FRONT, has been assuring us for months now that the economy is turning in this region. That's not to say it's turning everywhere, but this part of Virginia has traditionally trailed the rest of the nation both in entering and exiting recessionary times.

This time, perhaps there's a difference. It certainly is being reflected in the housing market rebound and employment numbers that are steadily climbing. We're seeing expansions and a good bit of movement with the opening of new businesses in the region—a distinct sign that there is some confidence and a lot of optimism in these parts.

Anne knows a trend when she sees one, having worked for 18 years with the Roanoke Regional Economic Development Partnership, making just these kinds of assessments. They were necessary for the Partnership because it was recruiting industries to locate in this region and those companies want numbers, good numbers, before making decisions. Anne's the one to give them and it's looking like her natural optimism is being borne out by the numbers.

Tom Field

Dan Smith

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DEPARTMENTS

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Wine



*A Report from
the Grapevine*

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Valley Business FRONT

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

Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Editor	Dan Smith editrdan@msn.com (540) 556-8510
Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

Departmental Contacts

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

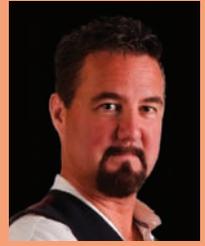
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FEBRUARY



Anne Giles Clelland



Tom Field



Anne Piedmont



Dan Smith

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 48.

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."

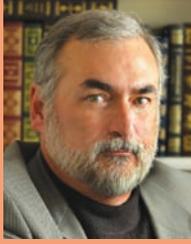
CONTRIBUTORS



Kathleen Harshberger



Gene Marrano



Michael Miller



David Perry



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen



Greg Vaughn



Randolph Walker



For an arts operation to be successful,
there must be a business enslaved to it

— Page 47

2011 / 12 Members

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

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



what you are
doing has an
eternal impact

— Page 29

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



Greg Vaughn Photography

In classic pose, **Mike Harper** plays Dionysus, the ancient Greek god of the grape harvest on our FRONTcover. In real life, he's, well... not far from that role. A certified culinarian and specialist of wine paring, Mike graduated Magna cum Laude from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts. He's on staff at Wine Gourmet in Roanoke, which does not require you to wear a toga to visit.

Vino Virginia >

Executive Summary:

Cost and quality of Virginia's wines are catching up with the competition, and the natives are responding favorably. So's the rest of the nation.

By Anne Piedmont



Wine

A Report from the Grapevine

Boy, would Thomas Jefferson be surprised!

America's third president dreamed of producing fine wines. He cultivated European grapes at Monticello for three decades, but never produced a bottle of wine. Before him, the English settlers at Jamestown hoped to supply the folks back home with American wine. Pests, disease and, ultimately, lack of interest, doomed those efforts.

Today there are 213 wineries operating in Virginia (16 in the greater Roanoke and New River Valley Valleys), an increase of 34 from a year ago, says Annette Boyd, director of the Virginia Wine Marketing Office. She attributes the growth to several factors, starting with the fact that more Americans are drinking wine. She says the United States is on track to surpass France in total wine consumption. (Note here that there are 65 million Frenchmen and more than 300 million Americans.) This love affair with wine began in the 1970s with the Baby Boomers. Generation X may like its beer and Cosmopolitans, but the Millennials – 77 million strong – are driving a new bump in wine drinking. Boyd says wine is more natural and healthier than other beverages.

The eat local/drink local movement is fueling the popularity of Virginia wines and wines within Virginia's regions, as well. "What's better than having a glass of wine produced in your area?" she asks. That trend has not gone unnoticed by wine sellers in the region. Bill Philips, owner of Mr. Bill's Wine Cellar, says that local wineries tend to raise the profile of Virginia wines. His store has one of the region's largest selections of Virginia and local wines, which he says have built a following, thanks to people visiting the wineries and attending festivals.

Kimberly Eakin, who founded Wine Gourmet 10 years ago and who has been helping her mother at Blue Ridge Vineyard in Botetourt County since she was 16, says there is a "synergy between the local wineries and local wine sellers." A customer

COVER STORY



Dan Smith

Adam Markham, beverage manager at Tinnell's Finer Foods.

“

A year ago we had 12 Virginia wines. Now we sell a little over 70 wines, ciders and meads.

—Adam Markham,
Tinnell's Finer Foods

might not be able to get to a winery to get his favorite wine, but can find it at a local store. She sold the store six months ago to Brian Powell.

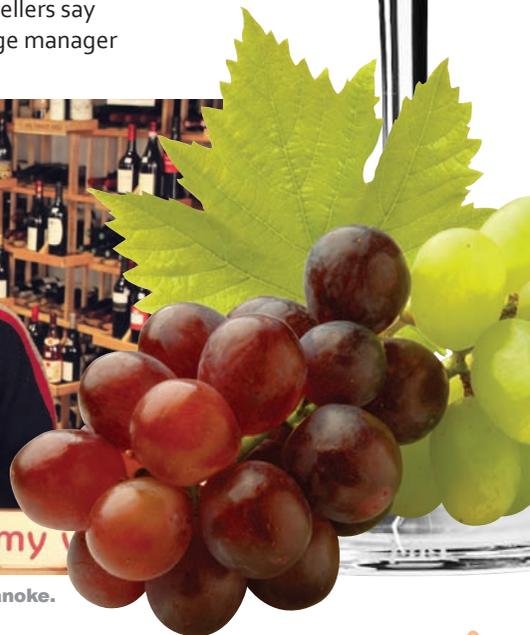
Virginia's location in the center of the East Coast, within a day's drive of about two-thirds of the U.S. population, is another reason for the growth in popularity of the state's wines, says Boyd. When the recession hit, out-of-state oenophiles chose Virginia over the Napa Valley or the South of France, and Virginians began using their "stay-cations" to explore the state's many wineries. What have all the wine tourists discovered? "Our wines are getting so much better," says Boyd. She says it has taken Virginia's wine industry 30 years to figure out what grows here and what works. Thomas Jefferson was right; he was just way ahead of his time.

The rap against Virginia wines has been that the quality isn't there and that the prices are too high. Local wine sellers say that's no longer the case. Adam Markham, beverage manager



Dan Smith

Brian Powell, new owner of the Wine Gourmet in Roanoke.





“ ”

Wine festivals also allow us to offer samples to many people who have not yet visited the winery or even heard of us. Quite a few of our best customers have discovered us at festivals.

—H.T. Page,
Brooks Mill Winery



H.T. Page of Brooks Mill Winery bottles.

at Tinnell's Finer Foods, has made a commitment to carry Virginia wines. He says there was a "pushback in the past" because of the cost, but notes that there are some great bargains in Virginia wines. His customers are discovering the quality. He sold 15 cases of Virginia wines in October (Virginia Wine Month) and has seen that number continue to increase.

Philips agrees: "There are some excellent wines being made in the state." As to the cost, he says Virginia wines likely will never be able to offer low cost labels, like Yellow Tail, for example, because the wineries here tend to be small and offer unique, handcrafted wines. Virginia wines are made in the European tradition, he says, with a "more fruit forward" taste than wines from California or Australia. He says they tend to be less expensive than their European counterparts.

Living the dream

There are 16 wineries, including a cider maker and meadery, in a region that includes the Roanoke and New River Valleys, as well as Bedford, Carroll and Floyd counties. They range from the well-established, like Chateau Morrisette on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Floyd County, to the brand new, like Franklin County's Brooks Mill Winery, which opened just three years ago last December. They all started with a dream.

H.T. and Rhonda Page opened Brooks Mill after making wine as a hobby for many years. They decided to try it commercially to continue into retirement. They researched the process through the library, internet, and other small wineries, and credit Hilltop Winery in Nelson County and Bright Meadows Winery in Halifax County for their help during the opening process.

In 1995 Danny Johnson's Peaks of Otter Winery in Bedford

County was the 50th in Virginia to be licensed. His was the Commonwealth's first all-fruit winery. Johnson says the company decided to start making wines as a way to get more people onto the farm to buy fruit. Seventeen years later, "Wine is the tail that's wagging the dog." He and his wife, Nancy, learned the business by reading and taking classes. They use his great grandmother's recipes.

AmRhein's Wine Cellars is another progression from an existing business. Owner Russ Amrhein is part of the third generation in his family's jewelry business, AmRhein's Fine Jewelry (see story in December FRONT). The winery produced its first wines in 1999 and opened a public tasting room in 2000. In the early 2000s, Amrhein started transitioning out of the retail business to focus on the winery. Russ' son, Chad, serves as general manager.

Amrhein says he opened the winery because he's "an agriculturist at heart," and he and his wife, Paula, love wine. They traveled a lot, even overseas, visiting wineries to learn the business. "I spoke to winery owners, winemakers, and delved into research," he says.

Jim and Barbara Kolb Holaday have been making wine at Blue Ridge Vineyard in Botetourt County for more than five years and growing grapes for 28 years. Barbara Holaday says they opened the winery because they "wanted to make our own style of wine with our varieties of grapes." She has a Master of Science degree and PhD work in microbiology and biochemistry, in addition to 28 years of continuing education studying viticulture and winemaking.

Logical progression

Marie Gibbs, who with husband David, operates Virginia Mountain Vineyards, also in Botetourt County, saw producing



The view at Blue Ridge Vineyards.



I would help anyone who wants to open a winery, because I think the more wineries we have the more we are a destination.

—Barbara Kolb Holaday,
Blue Ridge Vineyard

Barbara Kolb Holaday
with **Thomas Jefferson**,
the father of Virginia wine.



Noel Turner harvests grapes at Blue Ridge Vineyard.





Bill Philips of Mr. Bill's Wine Cellar

A Tale of Two Wine Stores >

What is it about wine? From the making to the selling to the drinking, it seems to bring happiness. The people who run two Roanoke-area wine stores are no exception.

"I don't feel like I'm working," says Bill Philips, who opened Mr. Bill's Wine Cellar in September 2010. He had been in the wine business as a distributor for more than 35 years and saw opening the Brambleton Avenue store as an opportunity to do

something for himself. "I'm doing the same thing, but differently."

When he moved to Virginia from South Carolina in 1981, the Virginia wine industry was young, but Philips could see the potential. Today, he has one of the largest selections of Virginia wines in the region. In the slightly more than a year since Mr. Bill's has been open, it has far exceeded Philips' sales goals.

When he opened his store, he joined Wine Gourmet in the market. In its third location, Wine Gourmet just celebrated 10 years in business. Kimberly Eakin, who has, since she was 16, worked with her mother

“ ”

A lot of people are enjoying good wine nationwide. Local wineries raise the profile.

—Bill Philips,
Mr. Bill's Wine Cellar

wine as a logical progression from growing grapes. They've been in business for 14 years and she likes having "complete control of the process to produce a quality product." Like many other wine makers, she and her husband attended numerous classes, seminars and industry conventions related to wine grape growing and production to learn the business. They visited different vineyards and wineries throughout the state and participated in different facets of the process from planting, pruning, harvesting, and grape processing.

Two of the region's wineries listed in the 2011 Virginia Winery Guide don't actually make wine in the traditional sense. Foggy Ridge Cider and Blacksnake Meadery, both located in Carroll County, make cider and mead. But the owners got into the business for many of the same reasons their winemaking counterparts did.

Diane Flynt of Foggy Ridge "wanted a 'last career' that would allow us to live in a rural area and produce a value added agricultural product. Our elevation is not ideal for grapes, but I have a background in horticulture, so we decided to plant an



Dan Smith

Kimberly Eakin, former owner of Wine Gourmet

Barbara Kolb Holaday, at Blue Ridge Vineyard, opened the store at the Botetourt Commons in Daleville. They had a billboard advertising the store on Interstate-81, and it attracted then-Senator Joe Biden, who came in and bought a bottle of wine.

Eakin moved her store to Franklin Road in Roanoke, to complement the non-wine-selling Ukrops grocery store. Store manager Mike Harper, a certified specialist in wine, said that move allowed Wine Gourmet to increase its customer base by at more than 50 percent, which continued to grow even after Ukrops closed. When their lease came up for renewal, Eakin and company started

looking for yet another home. Which they found on Electric Road in Roanoke County. Eakin has since sold Wine Gourmet to Brian Powell and only helps out when needed.

Harper, Eakin and Philips agree that the wine-consuming local market can support several wine shops (not counting outlets like Tinnell's Finer Foods and large wine sections in supermarkets). In fact, Harper noted, they will work together to meet customers' needs. "If we don't have something someone wants, we'll send them to another store that might carry it."

—Anne Piedmont



Anne Piedmont

Virginia Mountain Vineyards pastoral scene.

““

I'm so impressed with the quality of our Virginia wines.

—Kimberly Eakin,
founder of Wine
Gourmet



Pippin gold cider apples from Foggy Ridge.



There were 191 wineries when the 2011 Virginia Wine Guide went to print. Now there are 213.

—Annette Boyd,
Virginia Wine Board

orchard of cider apples with the intent of making hard cider. Our goal is to create a sustainable farm and winery that will keep this beautiful corner of the Blue Ridge Mountains in productive farmland.” They planted the orchard in 1997 and got their ABC license in 2004.

Learning to make cider took her around the United States and to a professional training program for cidermakers in England, at an agricultural college in Pershore. She took enology classes at Virginia Tech and Surry Community College. She worked with cidermakers across the country for two years before opening Foggy Ridge. “Gaining hands-on experience was essential to having a successful startup,” she says.

Steve and Jo Villers opened Blacksnake Meadery five years ago. They wanted to start their own business, and Steve is passionate about fermentation. They make mead—honey wine—and were attracted to the idea of beekeeping. Like Diane Flynt at nearby Foggy Ridge, they wanted a business that focuses on the land and could be sustainable.

The Villers say they are self taught. They both have science backgrounds. Steve has a bachelor’s in biology and a master’s in conservation biology and Jo has a bachelor’s in biochemistry.

Meeting expectations

It appears running a winery is a satisfying as enjoying a nice glass of wine. Despite the challenges, local winemakers say the experience has more than met their expectations.

The Villers continue to sell out of mead and want to expand. They say the best element is “pride. We did it ourselves from startup to where we are now. We are the only decision makers. We get to share our creativity with others. As educators by profession, we enjoy sharing the history and diversity of mead with our customers.” A significant challenge is time: “We are still employed fulltime as high school science teachers.”



Blacksnake Meadery bottle.



Blacksnake Meadery owners Steve and Jo Villers with one of their trophies.



Nancy and Danny Johnson relax after a tough day at Peaks of Otter Winery.

“ ”

We started out small. As we've grown have added to the winery and bought equipment. Paid for it as we went along.

—Danny Johnson,
Peaks of Otter Winery

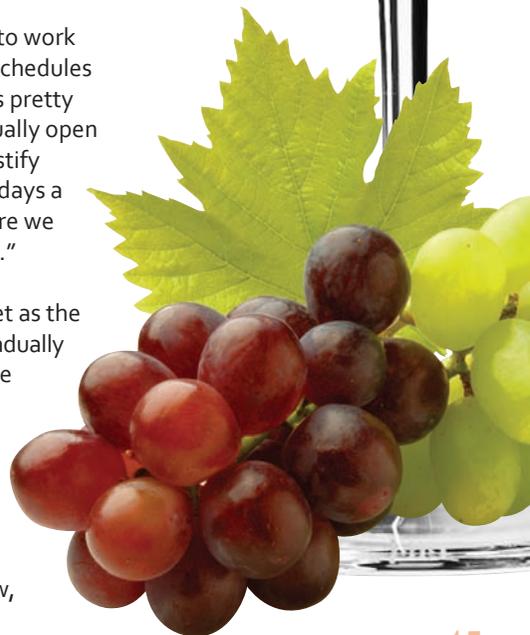
Flynt's experience with Foggy Ridge has exceeded her expectations. "We've had tremendous success in the market and have sold out of our cider each year. We distribute to five states; we have good working relationships with four distributors and have had double digit growth in sales each year. I love working with our many creative restaurant and wine shop customers, as well as those customers who visit Foggy Ridge. And I'm pleased with the national publicity and award we've received both for growing heirloom cider apples and for our hard cider."

She enjoys the variety. "One day I am a farmer, the next a lab worker and the next a salesperson. It's a role that exercises many muscles." After a long career in the corporate world, she's found a challenge in running a complex small business. Her solution: bring others on board who can keep the business organized.

The Pages at Brooks Mill, like the Villers, continue to work their other jobs and see that as a challenge. Their schedules do not allow them to establish regular hours, so it's pretty much hit and miss for their customers. "We are usually open on weekends, but the hours vary. It's difficult to justify hiring someone to keep the business open several days a week. We tell our customers to call ahead to be sure we are open if they are making a special trip to visit us."

They're pleased to see their expectations being met as the business continues to grow. "Not too quickly but gradually as we prepare for retirement from our careers." She says that "surprising to some, is the fact that we continue to grow even in this economy."

For Danny Johnson and his family at Peaks of Otter Winery, the experience has been "far beyond what we expected. I had absolutely no idea." The farm used to be open from August to October. Now,





“ ”

Make sure you have enough money to survive 10 years without turning a profit. You don't do this because you hope to make millions. You do it because you love it.

—Russ Amrhein,
AmRhein's Wine Cellars

the winery is open seven days a week from April to December and on weekends from January to March. It allowed his son, Shannon, to come back to the farm from teaching. Johnson says a daily challenge is to “reinvent ourselves to stay up-to-date and fresh to keep people coming in.” They make 30 different wines and last year sold out all but eight of them.

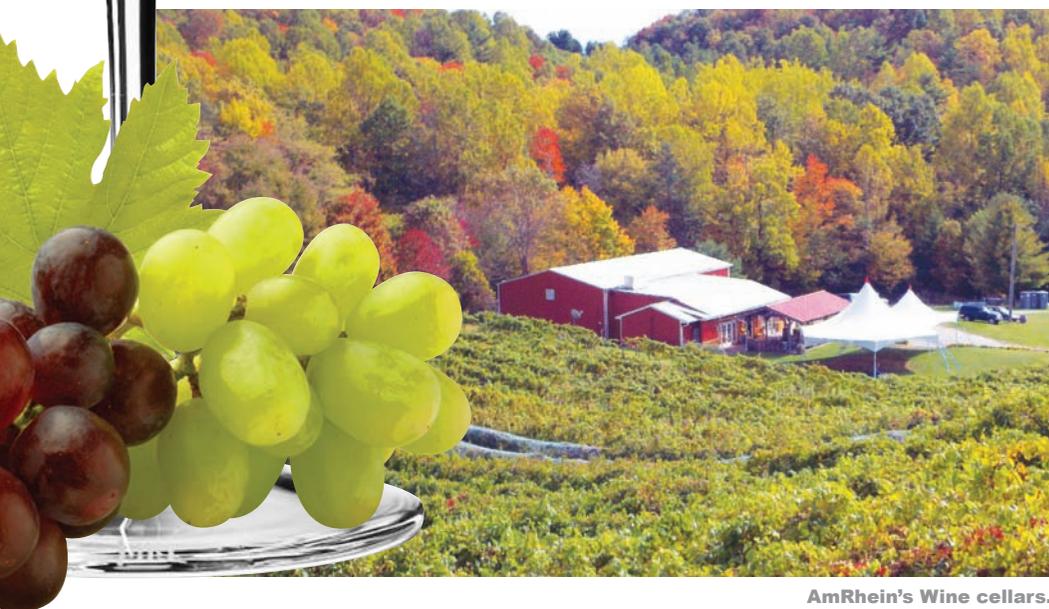
Russ Amrhein says the experience has been a lot of fun. “I get to meet great people and do something I love.” He jokes that as a winemaker, “You get to drink on the job.” Mother Nature remains a sometimes antagonist: “There’s no control over the weather, and a particularly rainy fall like we just had can ruin grapes and thus wine production for that year.”

Gibbs says that “no amount of total pre-entry activity can fully bring an understanding of the total commitment and dedication needed to make this endeavor succeed.”

Standing Out from the Crowd

With more than 200 wineries in the state, each one needs to find a way to stand out. Holaday says Blue Ridge’s old-growth vines (they started growing when there were only seven vineyards in Virginia), estate-grown and estate-bottled wines, and beautiful view bring in the visitors. They are part of the Botetourt Wine Trail and market their wines through their tasting room, events and at festivals.

AmRhein’s has three vineyards (Bent Mountain, Franklin County, Botetourt), offering the ability to grow different grapes at different elevations, something no other Virginia winery does. Russ Amrhein notes that the winery’s German-



AmRhein's Wine cellars.

COVER STORY

influenced wines have won numerous awards, locally and internationally, and are considered to be some of the finest on the East Coast. AmRhein's is part of the Mountain Road Wine Experience and markets itself in a variety of ways.

Peaks of Otter is an all-fruit winery. Beyond that, Johnson says the winery's outlook makes it stand out. "We think wine should be fun," he says. Peaks is host for the Horse and Hounds Wine Festival each year, which brings in thousands of people.

Brooks Mill is a fruit winery. Page says people are surprised that not all of its wines are sweet. "We offer some very good dry and semi-dry wines." The young winery has entered only one competition so far, where its Blackberry and Blueberry wines won awards with the Blueberry receiving a gold medal.

Foggy Ridge's Flynt sells a lot of cider through the tasting room and through events. She promotes her cider through distributors and customers.

Blacksnake's mead stands out from the crowd, as well, since it is made from honey, not grapes. Blacksnake markets the meadery through social networking, the wine trail, visitor center brochures, event listings in local newspapers, retail shops and a newsletter to customers.

If you're thinking of becoming Virginia's 214th winery, Marie Gibbs suggests spending a full year at an operational farm winery, experiencing the different seasons and the multitude of jobs required to make the endeavor happen and endure.

The Villers offer this advice: "Just like starting any business, do your research, have a business plan and know your market. Be creative." 



Dan Smith

**AmRhein's Owner
Russ Amrhein.**



Vines at AmRhein's.

Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
If showing up is such a big part of success, you'll want to make you show up right.

Making an entrance, working the room >

Have you ever noticed that some people command attention just by walking into a room? That's the charisma factor we talked about last month. Woody Allen once said, "Eighty percent of success is showing up." That means the additional 20 percent had better count. One of the most important features in showing up any place is the entrance you make. Most people watch the entrance to a room, so use that knowledge to your advantage.

To make a strong entrance, walk into the room, move to the right, and pause briefly to spot your host and the people you want to meet. This single action draws others eyes to you—the charisma effect. Remember to walk into the room before pausing. You don't want to block the doorway. Be aware of your posture, and maintain it, because good posture immediately creates the impression of confidence and authority.



April 4, 2012

Coming to Roanoke

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You know you're not invited to a business social event because your host thinks you're hungry. You are invited to thank you for past or future business, or because your host thinks you have something to contribute. At a business event you want to show yourself and your company to advantage, so heading immediately for the food table or to the bar is counterproductive. That will sabotage your professional bearing.

After making your entrance you need to work the room. This might require some effort if you are shy, but it pays. Socializing exclusively with friends or co-workers will be counterproductive.

Prepare yourself before you go. What is the purpose of the event, and who are the sponsors or hosts? Who are the guests?

- Eat something before the event—you never want to appear hungry.
- Introduce yourself to your hosts, key people, and other guests.
- Avoid two people deep in conversation—it's best to approach a group of three or more.
- Circulate, and, for a small gathering, try to meet everyone.
- At a larger event, concentrate on your hosts and key people you want to meet.
- Always close the conversation before you move on.
- Remember, a good handshake, a genuine smile, and warm eye contact will draw people to you.

Charisma: you have it. Now work it at your networking events. 



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The basics: Here's your closet >

As people live longer and healthier lives, they tend to remain active in the workforce beyond typical retirement. Doing so requires keeping up our appearance to compete with younger workers. Dressing with current fashion in mind, but with our own personal style, becomes essential.

Many women have favorite clothing pieces that they wear often. Since we feel and look best in these styles, we should buy plenty of them so we always look sharp. No agonizing over whether we've made the right choice. In these styles we feel and look confident, so we should trust our instincts.

Every woman needs the following must-have items in her closet as a basis for her wardrobe. Make sure you have them, they fit well, and they're age-appropriate. Dressing for the day will be easier as a result.

1. Black pants in a smooth fabric that fit perfectly.
2. A crisp white blouse .
3. A classic blazer.
4. A simple pencil skirt—for work, as eveningwear with a dressy top and jewelry, or even weddings and funerals.
5. V-neck pullover in your best color.
6. Cardigan in a complementary color.
7. Dark-wash jeans, dressed up or down with accessories and shoes.
8. A trench coat in a neutral color—or a jazzy style for a personal statement.
9. A sheath—with a moderate neckline and a half-sleeve. It works with the cardigan or blazer, becoming casual or dressy.
10. Classic black shoe -toe-in can be worn with skirts or pants.

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
As the workforce ages, the same rules apply: make the look yours.

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The older I get, the more I believe:

- Prints are limiting; keep them to a minimum. Solid colors create a canvas for us to accessorize.
- Reinvent your look every so often. Update the haircut, spruce up the wardrobe and you'll instantly feel younger and hipper.
- People who cling to a signature look attempting to appear a "renegade" only look outdated. Take a current fashion and make it yours, keeping it age-appropriate. You'll look savvy, but also true to yourself.
- Trust your instincts when it comes to fashion. Adopt new styles only if they make you look vibrant, fit and young for your age group.
- Getting your updated look right takes time. Spend several hours trying on new styles to see what flatters you. You'll learn a lot and increase your confidence. 

“ ”

Many women have favorite clothing pieces that they wear often. Since we feel and look best in these styles, we should buy plenty of them so we always look sharp.

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Staying at home with the baby >

Dear Anne: My wife and I recently had our first child and we both took family leave to spend time with him in the early days of his life. Problem is, now I have to go back to work and I don't want to. I never saw myself as a stay-at-home dad, but this little guy has captured my heart and I love everything about taking care of him. The blunt truth is that we can't afford to live on one income (my wife's is about two-thirds of mine), but I am truly torn about this. Help.

Dear New Dad: A new baby, a new person that you have created—it is a miracle. And your son's life will continue to be a miracle as he develops and learns and grows every day. In an ideal world, not a moment of the miracle would be missed.

First, let's be bluntly truthful: You could afford to live on one salary if you lowered your expectations for what living is: a smaller dwelling in a less desirable neighborhood, a limited variety of food or less of it, and few to no funds for non-essentials. We almost always have choices. We just don't like the consequences of making them.

In the short-term, being a stay-at-home parent seems highly desirable. But many, many hours are spent alone with the child. Stay-at-home parents acknowledge the tedium of routine chores and feeling captive and isolated. They worry about the future of their careers. The reasons they stay at home are myriad, but the primary one is for the good of the child.

A baby's needs are immediate and his survival depends on us. Caring for a baby through childhood and into young adulthood gives us a powerful sense of meaning. Your son's destiny, however, will be the same as yours: independence in a social world. Mothering and fathering become obsolete. Both stay-at-home mothers and stay-at-home fathers need exit strategies.

You have a choice to make, but the premise upon which to make it is straightforward: What is in the best interests of your son? I think it's the human condition to conceive of possible paths with our bright minds and to forever, on some level, long for the ones we didn't take. Regardless of your choice, the world is already a better place because a father loves his son and wants to care for him. On behalf of the world, I thank you. 

Need help with a personal problem at work? E-mail your question to Anne at anne@handshake20.com.

Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:

The choice is difficult, important and one to be taken very, very seriously.

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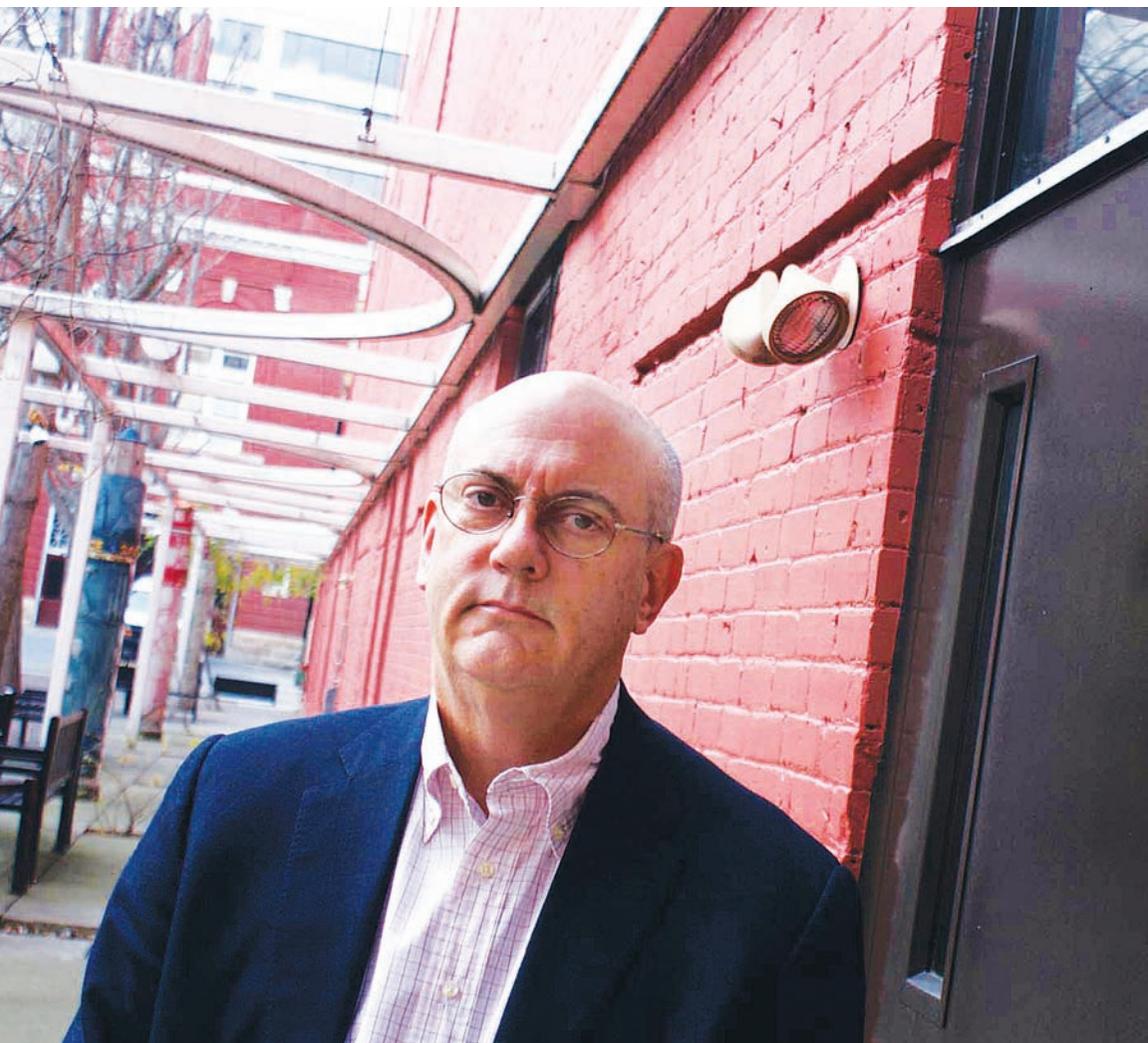
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Spectrum's John Garland in front of his renovated downtown office.

Tax credits help reshape Roanoke >

Executive Summary:

Historic tax credits in Roanoke's center have made possible massive renovations and the restoration of an important element of life.

By Gene Marrano

Federal and state tax credits available to those renovating buildings deemed to have some historic significance have helped change the face of downtown Roanoke over the past decade. John Garland, president of

Spectrum Design, knows historic tax credits. Not only has his A&E firm worked with clients that have taken advantage of them, but he is involved with several residential properties that also meet the standards.

Garland points out that the owner must hold on to the property for a minimum of five years in order to take full advantage. "If you flip them you can get state credits, but not federal credits," says Garland. His work downtown has often included historic buildings: the Roanoke Higher Education Center, the State & City Building and Warehouse Row.

The Norfolk & Western passenger station that is now the O. Winston Link Museum, the Cotton Mills and the Patrick Henry



Gene Marrano



Gene Marrano

Patrick Henry Hotel.

Hotel were also Spectrum Design projects that qualified for tax credits. Most were not financially sound until historic tax credits came into the picture, says Garland.

Those Spectrum projects include Sixteen West, a former cafeteria on Church Avenue, now being turned into apartments, retail space and a fitness club. Garland owns a house on Campbell Avenue that he is renovating under the tax credit plan. Renovations must be extensive and in the case of federal credits must meet or exceed the purchase price of the building, minus the land. State thresholds are 50 percent of the appraised building value. Spectrum's own century-old headquarters at 10 Church Avenue qualified.

Non-profits that do not pay income taxes

can qualify for the credits and then sell them to help pay their building costs. Center in the Square is now using them to remake its home on Campbell Avenue.

"Without the use of tax credits, the Center in the Square facility would have received a coat of paint and some inadequate mechanical rehab," says Jim Sears, president and CEO. "The region would have lost western Virginia's cultural center had tax credits not been available." Historic and "New Market" tax credits will generate about two thirds of the funds needed for the \$30 million makeover.

Qualifying buildings within a designated historic district must be at least 50 years old and have some historical significance. Buildings individually registered as an



Renovated Sixteen West.

historical landmark with the Department of the Interior and the Commonwealth of Virginia may also qualify for tax credits.

The process includes submitting detailed design plans (Spectrum sends architectural and engineering drawings to the state's Department of Historic Resources, where all requests for state and federal tax credits are funneled) and verifying with photographs afterward that historically significant design aspects of the structure were preserved throughout the construction process.

A CPA must also sign off on all of the costs for renovating a structure, which is necessary to compute the amount of

tax credits. They are then used to reduce the amount of federal and state income tax owed. State credits can be spread over 10 years going forward; the federal credits can actually be used one year back and 20 years forward.

Alison Blanton, an architectural historian who works for Hill Studio, is also president of the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation, which has cited Spectrum Design for its work in the past. "The historic tax credit programs have probably made the single most important impact on the revitalization of Roanoke in the last 10 years," says Blanton. "Before [that] many buildings in Roanoke stood vacant for years." 

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Randolph Walker

Terri Welch Luzynski: "Bless me, Lord, expand my territory."

Why not have both? >

Executive Summary:

Terri Welch Luzynski's career path has straddled the worlds of law and religious ministry.

By Randolph Walker

What do you want to be when you grow up?

For anyone who ever struggled to choose between career paths, Terri Welch Luzynski makes an interesting case study. After achieving success in the legal field, she closed her briefcase and began full-time service in Christian education. That career arc lasted approximately seven years. Now, she's back full time with Roanoke personal injury law

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firm Altizer & Altizer, while still keeping a hand in church work.

Born in Jeffersonville, Ind., and raised in Louisville, Ky., Terri originally intended to become a nurse. That changed while she was attending Kentucky Wesleyan College. "I had an academic advisor who pointed out that I loved to argue and I would make a great attorney," she says. The advisor encouraged her to apply to highly competitive Harvard Law School, and even offered to pay her application fee. Reluctantly, she filled out the forms. To her surprise, she was accepted.

After graduating with honors from Harvard in 1984, Terri moved to Charlottesville to accept a judicial clerkship. A few years later she established her own firm, focusing on juvenile and domestic relations law. At the same time she served as a lecturer and

if she'd be interested in doing church work. She was also involved in a group studying the Prayer of Jabez (from the first book of Chronicles) which she sums up as "Bless me, Lord, expand my territory." Rev. Harry Christie, then interim pastor, challenged members to pray it every day.

A few months later the coordinator of Christian education retired and asked Terri to apply for the job. "Darned if God didn't answer my prayer," Terri says.

Terri left Altizer to work for Colonial Presbyterian, staying there for about five years before accepting a position as Christian Education Director at Williamson Road Church of the Brethren.

Terri sums up the appeal of religious service: "You truly feel that what you are doing has an eternal impact, changing lives and giving



You truly feel that what you are doing has an eternal impact, changing lives and giving children and youth a foundation that will hopefully keep [them] on the right track.

supervising attorney at UVA's Family Law Clinic, teaching family law to third year law students and supervising students in their representation of indigent persons.

Despite success, Terri and her husband, Tom, weren't satisfied with Charlottesville as a place to raise children. "It's a very affluent place. My husband and I felt like our children were getting a misconception of what life really was," she says. "They would come home and say, 'Mom, why don't we have a maid?', because all their friends had maids."

Tom wasn't satisfied with his job. A personal connection led to an interview and job offer from Altizer & Altizer, the personal injury firm headquartered in a renovated historic home in Old Southwest, Roanoke.

Terri started attending Colonial Presbyterian Church in Roanoke. Several people asked her

children and youth a foundation that will hopefully keep [them] on the right track."

Despite the spiritual rewards, Terri began to reconsider her path in light of changing financial requirements. Her daughter was starting college. In addition, "I was 50, turning 51. In church work there's not a lot of retirement benefits."

Terri returned full-time to Altizer in 2011, while continuing to work part time at Williamson Road Church of the Brethren. While acknowledging that a church is a "kinder, gentler" place to work, she points out the similarities in her two careers.

"The Bible is not an easy document to understand sometimes," she says. "My job in Children's Chapel is to present the Bible in a way that's meaningful for them." Not unlike summing up complex concepts for a jury. 

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Randolph Walker

Chris Riha, a Carilion Family Medicine patient, accesses his medical records via his Blackberry, using the MyChart patient portal. Dr. Steve Morgan looks on.

A computer link to your doc >

Executive Summary:

A secure "patient portal" allows patients to view parts of their medical record and stay in touch with the doctor's office in the Carilion system.

By Randolph Walker

Chris Riha, a Roanoke County resident, recently had his cholesterol checked at Carilion Family Medicine /Roanoke-Salem.

Not long ago, Riha would have called the office for the results, and probably would have twiddled his thumbs while waiting for a nurse to track down the information.

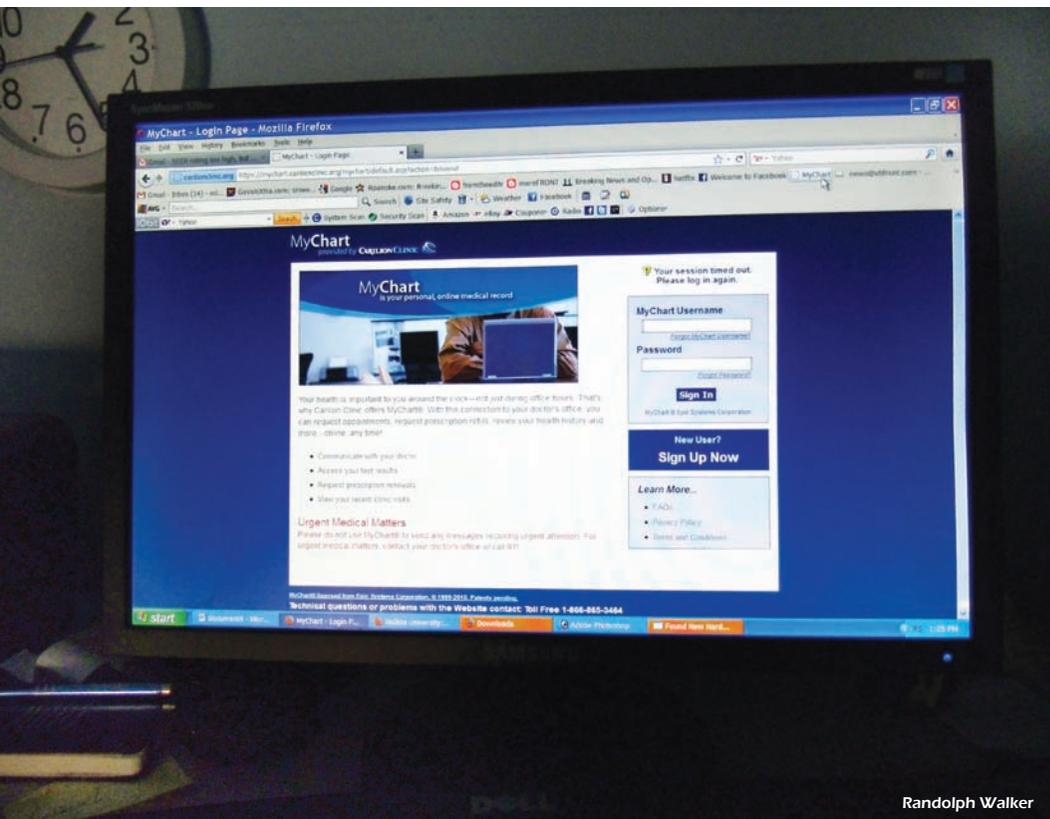
No more. "I got an e-mail to my personal

e-mail account that said, 'Your results are available on MyChart,' and I was able to check it," says Riha.

An admitted technophile who works for Carilion Clinic's technology services group, Riha says he enjoys the convenience of interacting with his doctor via the Internet.

He's not the only one, says Dr. Steve Morgan, Carilion's VP for Medical Informatics. Younger patients, mothers with children, and adults with aging parents have responded strongly to MyChart, a "patient portal" which allows access to parts of their own, or a family member's medical record.

Even some older patients are logging into MyChart. "My most typical user is someone with a chronic illness that is in need of close follow-up such as diabetes or hypertension, ages approximately 50-70 who has multiple reasons to be on a computer or whose job includes computer use," says Dr. Renee Beirne, internal



Randolph Walker

MyChart on the screen.



Dr. Renee Beirne

medicine specialist at Carilion Clinic.

MyChart was developed by Wisconsin-based Epic Systems Corporation (www.epic.com), provider of the electronic medical record system used by Carilion (www.carilionclinic.org). The introduction of MyChart, along with other elements of Epic, started in 2008.

All of Carilion's primary care doctors use MyChart, and about 230 out of Carilion's approximately 600 total physicians are on board, Morgan says. The goal is to have all physicians participating by Sept. 30, the end of the fiscal year.

How do doctors feel about it? "Overall I think MyChart saves me time," says Beirne. "For very complex patients to be able to give me small updates on the computer makes our actual face-to-face visits much more efficient."

How that will affect financial results is yet to be seen. "It is something we will try to quantify in the coming year," says Nancy Agee, Carilion Clinic CEO.



Randolph Walker

Dr. Steve Morgan of Carilion: "Our goal would be to get 30 percent of all patients to be using a patient portal."

Around 15,200 patients are MyChart users, says Morgan. "Of the sites that have it, our guesstimate is somewhere around five percent [of patients] are using it. Our goal would be to get 30 percent of all patients to be using a patient portal."

Some patients prefer to communicate the old-fashioned way. "I've had patients refuse because they didn't feel comfortable with the Internet in general," says Morgan, who still sees some patients at Carilion Family Medicine, Colonial Avenue.

Beirne says response has been overwhelmingly positive. However, there has been some negative feedback: "Some patients get frustrated when their problem lists or vaccines appear incorrect and some [patients] have had technical issues."

Development of MyChart is ongoing. An app for iPhone should be released in the next quarter, says Morgan.

Those who choose to use MyChart have access to lab results, and imaging reports and more.

"It has your medical problems, medications, allergies, immunizations," says Morgan. "It has a section on health maintenance, so if you're due [for a] colonoscopy or mammogram, it reminds you they are due. In addition, if you have a medical question that's not urgent, you can send that question back to the provider."

Refills and appointments can also be handled with ease through MyChart.

As a physician, Morgan says he appreciates the easy back-and-forth with patients.

For example, diabetic patients can enter their blood sugar readings, and Morgan can adjust their medication without an office visit. "I was one of the first folks to pilot it," he says. "Actually, now I couldn't do without it." 



Phil Barker (left) and Michael Klimchuk of Colors on Parade in Salem.

A pretty car a
while longer >

Executive Summary:

Colors on Parade, a "body shop on wheels" finds its niche fixing smaller dents, dings and scratches as people keep their aging cars longer.

By Randolph Walker

After someone backed into a door on his black Mercedes, Larry Sultze got one repair quote for \$725. The body shop believed the repair would require painting, recalls Sultze, co-owner of Elderberry's cafe in Salem. Sultze declined. At the suggestion of another body shop, he called Phil Barker, specialist in paintless dent removal.

After Barker worked on the car for a few hours, "it was just like new," recalls Sultze. The bill: \$300 to fix that dent plus two others. "Just wonderful. I'm very high

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Randolph Walker

patented processes for car restoration. The first Colors on Parade opened in 1988 in South Carolina. Barker and Klimchuk came on board in 1990.

Barker, 58, a Virginia Tech graduate and Salem resident, taught industrial arts and sold cars before joining Colors on Parade. Klimchuk, 52, a transplanted New Englander, was in car sales and rental.

As co-owners of the Southwest Virginia area developer franchise (www.colorsva.com), Barker and Klimchuk provide assistance to the 14 Colors on Parade owner/operators in the region. These independent business owners are home-based and specialize either in paint repair or paintless dent removal.

In addition, both Barker and Klimchuk have their own independent businesses. Barker removes dents, while Klimchuk repairs paint. They fix dings and scratches resulting from accidents other than collisions.

on Phil and his group," Sultze says.

Barker likes to get that reaction. He and his partner, Michael Klimchuk, own the Southwest Virginia area developer franchise for Colors on Parade, a "body shop on wheels" that is prospering during the recession by using innovative car repair techniques.

Colors on Parade was founded by classic car enthusiast Robert Lowery in 1987, using techniques based on Lowery's

"We're efficient at doing the small jobs that the body shops are not efficient at doing," says Barker, adding that a small job ties up a body shop just like a larger job. Furthermore, "The quality is as good as a body shop. The convenience is the major thing that we offer."

A Colors on Parade van pulls up to the customer's car. The specialist gives an estimate and comes back later to do the



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Phil Barker fixes a dent.

repair, or he may do everything in a single visit. Paint repair vans are equipped with mobile labs that mix and match paint on the spot.

A repair typically takes four to five hours. The quick turnaround often eliminates the need for the customer to rent a car, making the cost “extremely competitive” with a body shop, Klimchuk says.

While the retail segment—dealing directly with individual car owners—is growing, 80 to 85 percent of Colors on Parade’s business is wholesale, according to Klimchuk. Car dealers, body shops, fleet owners and rental car agencies sometimes use Colors on

like to add more owner/operators. They expect the retail segment to grow.

When the recession hit in 2008, “nobody was selling cars, there was nothing for us to do,” says Klimchuk. Now, “we’re back up where we were in 2007.”

According to a recent survey of car owners by AutoMD.com, nearly 80 percent of respondents planned to put more miles on their current vehicle than they put on their previous cars—meaning more work for Colors on Parade. “We’re not a necessary service for the longevity,” says Barker, “but we are able to keep the cars looking good for much longer.”

Parade for smaller repairs, rather than in-house technicians. Colors on Parade specialists possess “a skill set that takes a very long time to develop,” says Klimchuk. “It’s more cost effective for them to call somebody who’s trained in it, than to send somebody to school.”

In the future, Barker and Klimchuk would

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Tech Scoop

Driven to invent >

Executive Summary:

Corporations are squeezing out the basement inventors in light of a new law. But they didn't squeeze out Matt Dowden.

By Michael Miller

Invention used to be almost exclusively the realm of the small, independent tinkerer who cooked up strange and wonderful contraptions in his back yard or basement. The patent system in the U.S. was set up to allow small-time inventors to practice their inventions in the marketplace for a period of time without competition as a reward and incentive to advance the use of technology.

Today, acquiring a patent and asserting rights have become so expensive that only large corporations can afford it. And the recently passed America Invents Act institutionalizes this by making it easier for corporations to squeeze out the little guys.

But independent inventors can still have an impact. Take Matt Dowden, for example.

Matt is a Virginia Tech graduate student in mechanical engineering. First and foremost, Matt is a tinkerer who's making a difference.

As a senior engineering student, Matt learned about a program to create an automobile that could be driven by a blind person, and was instantly intrigued. So intrigued, in fact, that he went home over spring break and invented the key technology that makes this possible, returning to campus with a working prototype that he demonstrated to the development team.

The invention seems simple: a pair of gloves with tiny vibrating motors in the fingers that, when connected to his computer interface, provide tactile signals to the fingers on either



Michael Miller

hand to indicate which direction and how much to turn a steering wheel. Dowden named this invention DriveGrip, which shows how well he grasps not only the technology need, but the marketing aspects as well.

Virginia Tech, teamed with local robotic experts at Torc Technologies, was awarded a contract to build two robotic cars implementing a system containing DriveGrip. In January 2011 Mark Riccobono, a blind executive who directs technology, research, and education programs for the National Federation for the Blind, got behind the wheel of one of the cars and drove it 1.5 miles around the track at Daytona International Speedway, steering around obstacles with the aid of DriveGrip.

Dowden, who is not on the development team, provided the technology to Tech and the NFB for use on the program, and in addition gave the NFB the option to license it from him for commercial use. He knows there may not be a lot of money in this invention, but it enabled an important advancement in helping handicapped lead more normal lives.

Besides, there are plenty more inventions still in Dowden's basement. 



David Perry

Daleville Town Center exterior.

Work Spaces

A role in the community >

Executive Summary:

Fralin & Waldron's new headquarters in Daleville has more than a simple business purpose.

By David Perry

When developer Fralin & Waldron built its new headquarters in Botetourt County, it wanted more than fresh new digs. The company's executives wanted to literally be in the center of it all.

"This is the community meeting place," says Fralin & Waldron Vice President of Development Steve Claytor of Daleville Town Center, the company's new home just off U.S. 220. Looking out from his office window onto a large, flat patch of green grass and newly planted trees, Claytor sees the future.

"We plan to construct a small music pavilion

out there, whether it's music, arts or theater," he says. Last year, the grounds held two music festivals in conjunction with Botetourt County's tourism department and local wineries. Both drew a few thousand and featured acts like the Grammy Award-winning Carolina Chocolate Drops. "That's what I see our role in this community being," Claytor says.

Fralin & Waldron broke ground on the Daleville Town Center in 2005. Ultimately, the complex will feature a traditional residential development combined with retail and office space. The 5,800-square-foot main building that houses Fralin & Waldron's offices was completed in 2009 and is the work space for 11 F&W employees.

With a distinct alpine look featuring wood, stone and brick, the building looks like it belongs in Vermont or Colorado, and not in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

"We wanted to be unique," says company President Andy Kelderhouse. "While it looks a little out of place, with the timber and the rooflines, it does have a less urban feel."

Inside the building, the work environment features several amenities to help make workers feel at home.

"Natural lighting was a big driver," says Kelderhouse. And no wonder—the view to the west features the long spine of majestic



Music show at F&W grounds in the summer.



David Perry

Common work area.

Tinker Mountain. The plentiful windows all open, and glass doors allow access to balconies that provide employees with fresh air.

The new workspace is more open than what the company had at its old facilities on Electric Road in Roanoke County. "Most of us are veterans with Fralin & Waldron, and it was quite a shift coming out here," Kelderhouse says. "We were in a more typical cubicle or office environment where you kept all of your stuff in your office."

Now, information is stored in a central workspace area. "The idea is you get a little smaller (personal) environment but there's a common area where files are kept and records and that sort of thing," Kelderhouse says.

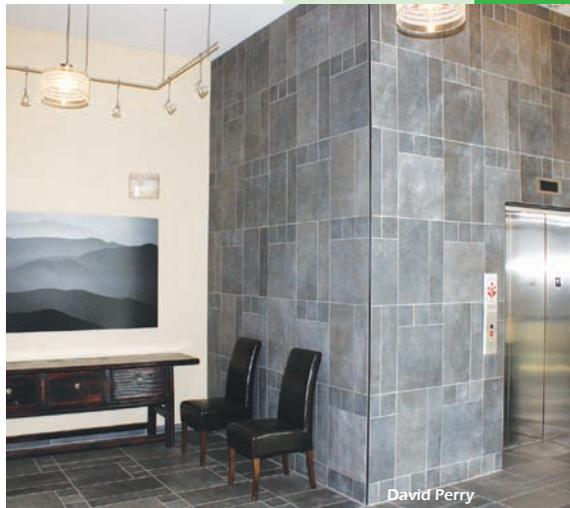
The benefits are numerous, says Kelderhouse. "It allows you to interact and get a little more face to face. It allows you to share information on what's going on today, what's happening with pricing, what's happening with a particular subcontractor. So it's a little more interactive and I think it works real well."

Despite the niceties, "At the end of the day we're still a general contractor," says Claytor. "We have a polished concrete floor in here. It's pretty durable. Not that we encourage anybody to come in with mud on their shoes, but if it happens it's not the end of the world." 



David Perry

Office with large windows and door leading to a balcony.



David Perry

Stonework in lobby evokes alpine theme.



all photos: Dan Smith

Elizabeth Merian: Following her bliss.

The right stuff >

Executive Summary:

When you're looking for olive oil, the high end—though expensive—is the place to be and Oliveto is the high end.

By Kathy Surace

Stepping into Oliveto is a warm and inviting experience. Located in The Shoppes at West Village in Roanoke beside four lanes of zipping traffic, the gleaming wood floors, warm green and burgundy walls, and shiny stainless steel tanks lining narrow high tables create an old-world, yet cutting edge ambience.

The story of Oliveto's (www.olivetooilsandvinegars.com) genesis is surprising. Elizabeth Merian was simply following her bliss when she set out to research high quality olive oils on the Internet. She enjoyed the olive oils and balsamic vinegars she discovered while vacationing in Maine and was determined to find an outlet where she could purchase those specific products closer to home.

Tracking down the distributor called for unrelenting detective skills and the more she learned, the more she entertained the

idea of opening her own shop. Eventually she located Veronica Foods Company, only to discover that she had to pass stringent standards to carry Veronica Foods products in a storefront. She passed inspection, allowing her to begin her new career.

Oliveto, which means "olive grove" in Italian, opened in early December, 2011, just in time for holiday sales. Business has been brisk, despite higher prices for products (\$14 for a small bottle of oil or vinegar) most Roanokers believe they can find for less locally.

Elizabeth begs to differ. She quickly explains that the olive oil industry is not what it appears to be. Despite regulations, "pure" olive oils can be mixed with nut oils or lower quality olive oils, and oils labeled as cold-pressed are often processed at questionable temperatures, among other inconsistencies. Olive oil is a lucrative industry offering tempting shortcuts. She points to the recently published book, *Extra Virginity* by Tom Mueller (review, page 55), an expert in olive oils, for evidence of the corruption in the olive oil industry.

Elizabeth feels strongly that "the olive oil in grocery stores is not worth the money, is full of empty calories and has no flavor" compared to her products. She believes

"Americans are interested in eating healthy, but seldom know what good quality olive oil tastes like."

To entice customers to try her products she offers samples before purchase. Her balsamic vinegars boast mouthwatering names, such as Balsamic Blackberry Ginger, Dark Chocolate Balsamic and Tangerine Balsamic. Her olive oils have equally intriguing names: Cilantro & Roasted Onion, Wild Mushroom & Sage, and Organic Persian Lime, to name a few. Prices for both oils and vinegars start at \$13.99 per 200ml bottle.

Her olive oils are sourced from California, Spain, Italy, Tunisia and Greece in the northern hemisphere and Chile, Argentina, and Australia in the southern hemisphere. Every six months Elizabeth will rotate her stock when the freshly pressed oils become available. Her distributor travels widely and often, inspecting the olive crops and stipulating they be cold-pressed before accepting them for her brand.

Elizabeth opened her own shop instead of a franchise to better control the storage and presentation of her products. She says, "The death of olive oil is light, heat and time." As a result she stores her oil in stainless steel tanks called fusti, reducing the oil's exposure to light, keeping it cool and exposing less oil surface to the air.

Elizabeth Merian's curiosity led her to a new

In Brief

Name: Elizabeth Merian

Age: 50

Company: Oliveto

Title: Owner

Type of business: Retail sales of artisan oils and vinegars

Location: Roanoke

Background: Elizabeth Merian is the youngest of several children of medical missionaries Dr. Bob Patten Sr. and Joy Patten. Earned a degree in philosophy, then worked to put her husband through dental school. Spent part of her childhood in Roanoke, and returned here to start their family and his practice. She raised three children full-time and, after 29 years of marriage, developed a fascination with artisan olive oils and balsamic vinegars that blossomed into a career. Just launched a website and plans an e-mail newsletter to educate customers about her products and promote Oliveto events.

career and passion. She decided, "It was a simple enough business that I could do it. It became a service and product I really wanted to provide to Roanoke." 



Chrome vats dispense oil and vinegar.



A lone olive tree.



all photos: Gene Marrano

Ted Edlich: "We're in a tight spot—but the people we serve are in a tight spot."

Tough times at TAP >

Executive Summary:

The Roanoke-born program is looking at a tepid economy and watching its good works being threatened.

By Gene Marrano

At 74, Ted Edlich says he has no intention of leaving his post as president and CEO of Roanoke-based Total Action Against Poverty (TAP, www.tapintohope.org) any time soon. In fact, the former minister and schoolteacher, a Greenwich Village, N.Y., native who joined TAP in 1968, is kept energized by the very mission of the sprawling social service non-profit he has overseen since 1975.

"How many people get paid to help other people?" asks Edlich, who did 75 pushups on his 74th birthday and is working on advancing a black belt in karate.

There are greater challenges these days, fueled by the sluggish economy: more demand for the services offered by TAP, including help finding a job, affordable housing for low income families and employment training. Grants are harder

to come by and the competition for that money—an integral part of TAP's annual \$18 million budget—is tougher than ever. "We're operating leaner than we have been [previously]," says Edlich. "We're in a tight spot—but the people we serve are in a tight spot."

Recent grants included money for energy conservation efforts, a fatherhood program and employment training for homeless veterans. "Our economic engine is our capability to develop [successful] grant applications that are highly competitive," says Edlich.

The agency employs around 300 after going through a round of layoffs about a year ago. Edlich estimates the annual economic impact in the area from that workforce at \$45 million. The Roanoke Valley, Alleghany Highlands, Bath County, Rockbridge County and Lexington are all served by TAP.

Edlich praises 6th District Congressman Bob Goodlatte for his work in keeping federal funding for TAP's community service block grant intact (around \$1 million dollars) when Congress crafted its last budget. "That's kind of a miracle," says Edlich, who also notes that Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell had "zeroed out" funding from his own proposed



TAP's Dumas Center

budget for the Project Discovery program as the General Assembly headed into its 2012 session.

That initiative, created by TAP and then spread throughout the state, helps students become the first in their families to attend college. "Give me a break," says Edlich, who will rely on local legislators to help put money (about \$1 million dollars overall) back in that column before a budget bill is passed. "Once you go to college ... you generally don't raise poor children. We've had hundreds of kids locally matriculate to college because of Project Discovery."

TAP's Head Start program expanded over a year ago with the help of a \$3 million dollar grant, although funding for the preschool program is always a political punching bag. "It's just baloney," says a pugnacious Edlich.

A pool of state money that TAP and other community action agencies drew from dried up three years ago as the Commonwealth went through yet another round of belt tightening, costing the agency "hundreds of thousands of dollars," according to Edlich.

TAP has also generated income over the

years by being a landlord. It partners in the Terrace Apartments for low-income residents in Roanoke and owns several downtown office buildings, including the Crystal Towers (145 Campbell), which is on the market for \$1.5 million.

Over a decade ago TAP purchased and renovated the old Dumas Hotel on Henry Street, turning it into a cultural center that helped jump-start a revitalization of the iconic entertainment district. Edlich says eventually the plan is to sell that building, as well. "We have a lot of property that we're involved in."

Over the years Total Action Against Poverty, which was created by Cabell Brand, has also acted as a non-profit business incubator of sorts, spinning off agencies like CHIP, VA Cares and the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Edlich says TAP has a "strong shared leadership culture," in place that will help keep things moving forward whenever he decides to step away. But not right now: "[We] help improve lives. This is the greatest business in the world. It keeps all of us going." 



Michael Miller

Duncan Driscoll shows off his device on a big-screen TV.

Next Big Thing is from Blacksburg >

Executive Summary:

A new way to "experience entertainment" is on its way from 3D-4U Inc. and the splash could be huge.

By Michael Miller

Do you know who Duncan Driscoll is? No? That's not surprising. Except for brief exposure as recipient of the People's Choice Award from the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council in May, 2011, Driscoll has been almost invisible as a local entrepreneur. But that's about to change, because Driscoll's company, 3D-4U Inc., has The Next Big Thing. And you will soon be hearing about him a lot.

Prior to arriving in Blacksburg in 1996, Driscoll had no connections to the area or to Virginia Tech. As the semi-retired owner of a successful marketing firm, Driscoll and his wife were simply looking for a good place to raise their children. "I guess we were a little ahead of the curve," he says, in reference to the recent BusinessWeek ranking.

But Driscoll was restless and had been thinking of a new media-related project that interested him. He sought some advice and eventually found his way to Virginia Tech alums and virtual reality experts, Drs. Sankar and Uma Jayaram. The Jayarams immediately realized the potential of the idea and partnered with Driscoll to create a new 360-degree video and audio recording platform that will soon change the way we experience entertainment.

The technology is surprisingly simple. A platform carries 10 3D HD video cameras covering a 360-degree panorama. The signals of each camera are simultaneously transmitted to a control unit, where special software integrates the images into a seamless panorama.

Big deal, you say? Well, here's the big deal: Imagine multiple such platforms installed in a football stadium, so that every instant of the game can be viewed simultaneously from multiple angles, by an unlimited number of viewers. And now, imagine that you are sitting at home watching on your 54-inch 3D HD television and you can, in real time, change the viewing angle from behind the quarterback to in front of the wide receiver or zooming in over the shoulder of the linebacker. And imagine that your buddy sitting next to you, watching on his tablet, can view the same

game in real time from different angles. Imagine that you can each rewind the video and replay it from a different angle.

Or, imagine that you're a Tom Brady fan, and you purchase a subscription to Tom Brady. The game content delivered to your set would be focused on good ol' Tom, in every play of every game, from any angle you choose, at your command.

Chirag Patel, managing partner of Highnote Ventures and now CEO of 3D-4U Inc., recites any number of applications in both entertainment and security markets. The implications of this technology are truly staggering. "We provide the viewer with individual control of the experience," says Patel. "And that is something completely new. Media are always looking for new ways to deliver compelling content. This user interaction is an innovation they haven't had before." According to Patel, the content can be delivered to the user via mobile, internet or cable TV channels.

One of the most exciting aspects of this technology is its transformative nature. Imagine that you could watch a movie and move around the scene at will, perhaps looking behind the characters and discovering a hidden weapon in the hands of a previously unsuspected villain.

Now, imagine you have to write, stage and direct such a movie and you now have all those extra dimensions to work with. This



Michael Miller

The 3D-4U platform gives you a 360 degree view of whatever you're watching, in this case a basketball game.



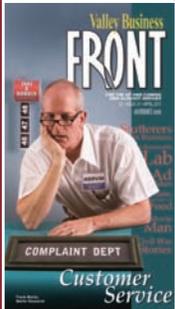
Technology Council

Duncan Driscoll (left) of 3D-4U and Technology Council President Marty Muscatello with People's Choice Award.

technology will unlock a flood of creativity in the entertainment industry. It's difficult to imagine where it will all end.

Steve Jobs? Who's he? Just some guy who sold a music player.

Duncan Driscoll? He's the real deal. He has The Next Big Thing. 



Coming Up...

March 2012

The New Country Club

How are country clubs doing these days? What are membership levels like and in what kind of activities are they engaged? With all the talk about the increasing divide between the haves and the have-nots, are country clubs affected by the current economic climate? And what is the state of business for country clubs in our region? Read our insightful report in March. Just in time for golf member signups if you're so inclined.

April 2012

Business Style Guide

Our FRONTstyle guide coincides with the BFF 2012 Best Foot Forward—Best Business Practices & World Class Etiquette Conference & Show on April 4 at the Hotel Roanoke. How perfect is that? Here's where you'll get solid information on improving your professionalism. Pay extra attention in April, and you can gain an edge over those who don't care about the details.

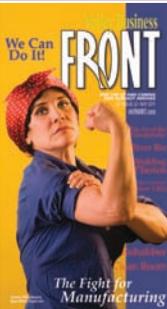
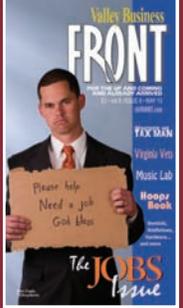
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Theater of the sometimes absurd >

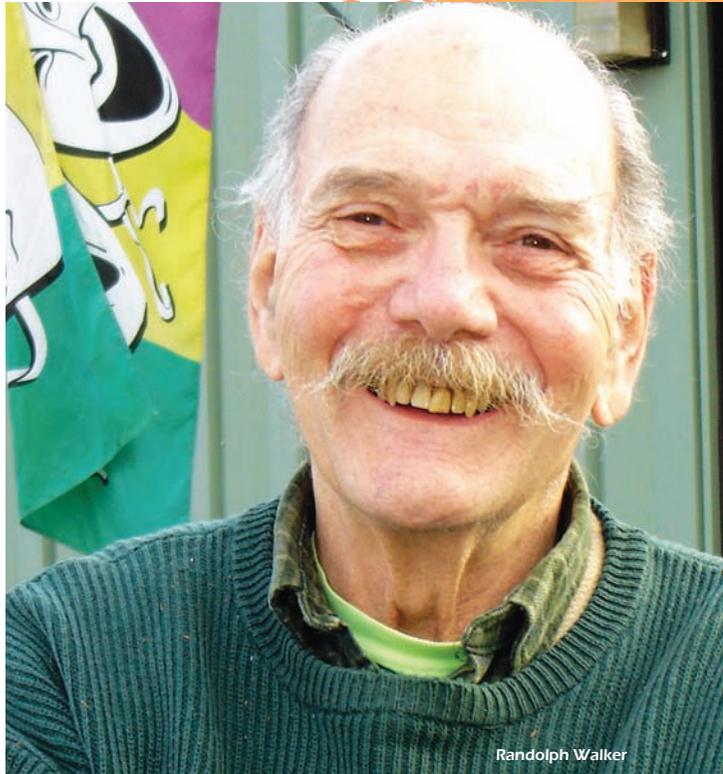
Executive Summary:
*One business model
has failed, but the show
goes on for Roanoke's
Star City Playhouse.*

By Randolph Walker

Marlow Ferguson thought he'd hit on a successful business model.

A lifelong actor and director, Ferguson moved to Roanoke in 2004 with his wife, Karon. Their plan: buy a building and renovate it to include apartments, storefronts and a theater.

"For an arts operation to be successful, there must be a business enslaved to it," Marlow says. "The business has to make a profit. It makes everybody relax; they



Randolph Walker

**Marlow Ferguson at the playhouse: 40
good years, one bad one. And it goes on.**

don't have to worry about being closed out and turned out on the street."

The Fergusons bought a former warehouse on Williamson Road. A skilled carpenter, Ferguson did much of the work. In 2007, the lights came up at Star City Playhouse.

The Fergusons mounted productions of American plays including "Play It Again, Sam," "Steel Magnolias," and "Look Homeward, Angel."

"The plays of the last 120 years were, if not a golden age of theater, certainly a silver age, especially of American theater, and most of these plays are completely ignored in the colleges," he says. "This is a rich American tradition of wonderful plays."

However—cue the ominous music—events took an unexpected turn.

"It didn't work," he says. "The hard times hit, some people couldn't pay rent at all. The theater was carrying the apartments. I can laugh at it now, but it didn't seem funny then."

In Brief

- Name:** Marlow Ferguson
Age: 75
Company: Star City Playhouse
Type of business: Not-for-profit LLC, also a registered Virginia charity
Location: Hollins Road, Roanoke County
Position: Owner (with wife Karon), director, set builder, stage hand, etc.
Background: Built sets for the Muppets. As a professional actor he once worked with Tommy Lee Jones, among other students, in a production of "Coriolanus" at Harvard's Loeb Drama Center.

CONTRIBUTORS

Anne Giles Clelland is the founder of business news site Handshake 2.0 (handshake20.com) and President and CEO of Handshake Media, Incorporated, makers of Handshake mobile applications. She is co-founder of She Chooses (shechooses.com), the social network for women. [anne@handshake20.com]

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. [tfield@berryfield.com]

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

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). [gmarrano@cox.net]

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

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

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

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. [dsmith@vbFRONT.com]

Kathy Surace is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years. [kssurace@aol.com]

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

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

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]



Sarah Beth Jones

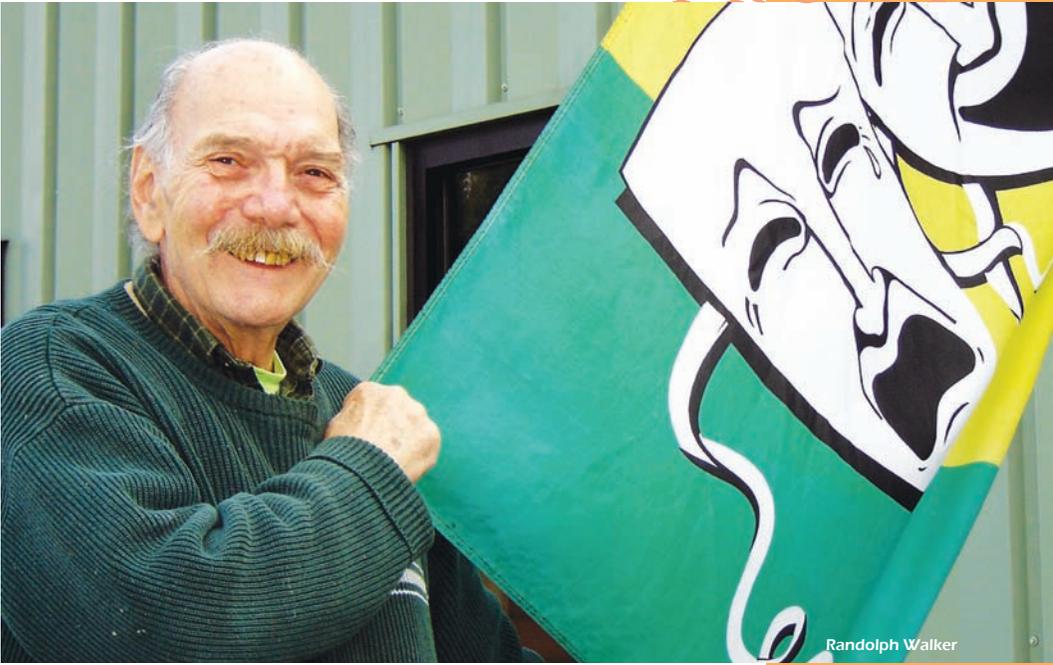
January 2012 > Contributor of the Month

Sarah Beth Jones has been writing for Valley Business FRONT for much less than a year, but has clearly become one of our most popular and consistent contributors. Sara Beth's cover story in January dealing with tattoos and body piercings is her best work so far in a body that is impressive and for that effort, she is our Contributor of the Month for January. Sarah Beth combines a roaming interest in everything with the good sense to operate her own business (Nary Ordinary Business Services, N.O. BS) in Floyd and she uses all that to write stories that probe not just the business angle, but the humanity behind it. We're grateful she's working with us. You can read Sarah's current and back issue articles at vbFRONT.com



This technology
will unlock a flood of creativity

— Page 45



Marlow Ferguson works on a set.

The Fergusons fell behind on the mortgage and property taxes. In 2010, the building, assessed at \$980,000, was sold at auction for \$390,000. The final season played out, then the curtain fell.

But the rest was not silence for the 75-year-old Ferguson. "It never occurred to me to give up," he says. "I'm pretty much an optimist, bordering on carefree, bordering on reckless, actually. I like to depend on myself. I like my future to be determined by what I am able to do."

Ferguson grew up near Louisville, Ky. "After the army I went to New York and worked in New York theater on and off for 43 years, mostly acting." He was invited to Hollins University (then Hollins College) to direct student plays. There, he met Karon Semones. "She had written one of the plays and we fell in love." They married in 1989.

"We went up to New York after we got married. I had a building in Manhattan, an apartment building in Little Italy and I was probably the only New York landlord who did not take security deposits. In the 17 years I owned that building, only one fella did me out of one month's rent."

But they eventually decided to leave New York for the Roanoke Valley, partly

to be closer to Karon's aging father.

After losing the Williamson Road operation, Ferguson started scouting for a new venue. One option was Crossroads Mall, where his costumes are still in storage. Eventually he settled on a green-metal-sided building of undramatic appearance, near Karon's alma mater at 5571 Hollins Road.

Ferguson has high hopes for the new location, as well as a different business model. "Now we're opening up a dinner theater. The dinner theater concept will work."

Most of the roles have already been cast for the first production, "The Petrified Forest."

Early this year, the building still looked more like a warehouse than a theater, even on the inside, but Ferguson is confident the show will open March 1. And, he's confident that his latest venture will succeed. "The fact that I had 40 good years in a row, then a bad one ... that's a pretty good average." 

The non-internet-savvy Fergusons do not have a website, but playgoers may call them at 540-366-1446.

Election season and our choices >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *During the season of the airing of our fears, we need to take a look at who we are and what we want as a nation. And then do something about it.*

We are running toward our occasional re-definition of who we are as Americans, this "election season" where we face our fears, our desires, or nationalism, our inherent goodness, our not-so-enlightened self-interest, our biases and bigotry, our xenophobia, our concern for others and myriad issues that can overwhelm.

The fears, for example, are carried on the spear tip of every politician, regardless of basic philosophy. Social Security, for example, is used to scare us when its demise is threatened and equally when it is revealed that the program is bankrupting our country. Illegal immigrants become a bludgeon used by racists, "America Firsters" and, conversely, those who believe our borders should be open to all. Income inequality gets equal attention from those who believe we get what we deserve and those who seek total re-distribution.

Politicians spread irrational fear of terrorism within our borders to create laws that dramatically repress our freedoms, disrupt our daily lives and make us look like a nation of shivering cowards, begging the government to do something, anything, to keep the bearded, gowned thugs away from our door.

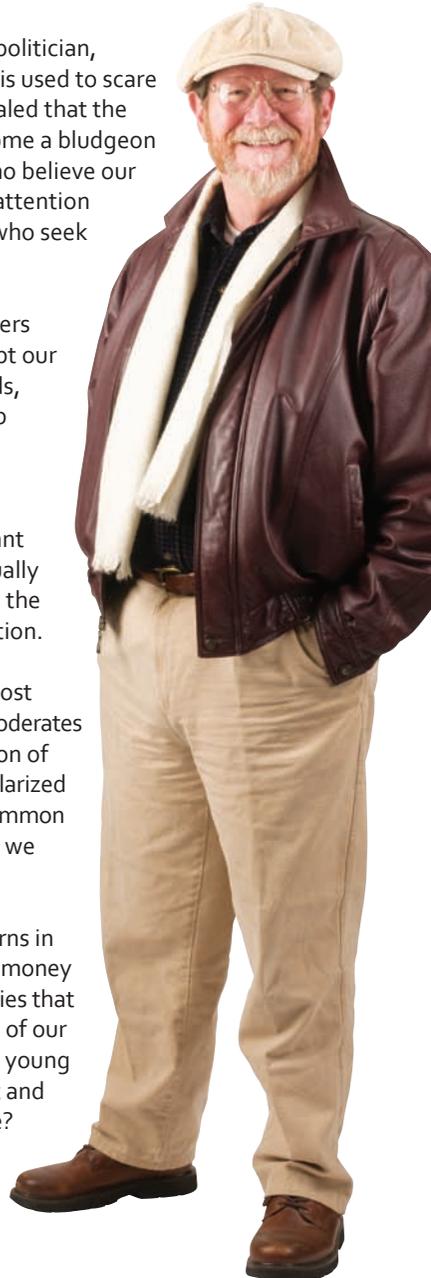
Most of what we fear, of course, comes from ignorance. The probability of a terrorist or a government agent with a warrant showing up on our doorstep, for example, are just about equally remote. And equally threatening in light of a new law giving the military the right to collect us and intern us without explanation.

The wealth gap—which is real, measurable and growing almost exponentially—is a fear more among liberals and left-leaning moderates than those on the right, but many of us see it as a re-definition of what it means to be an American. When our incomes are as polarized as they have become, we are left as two nations with little in common and no vast middle class, which is what made us the country we want to be.

Income inequality comes with huge moral and ethical concerns in my world. This is almost never about the effort to make more money or to move into the next level of wealth; it is about opportunities that are becoming increasingly hard to grasp for a large segment of our society. Look at the cost of education and what it is doing to young workers, eagerly approaching a new career \$120,000 in debt and with few jobs available. Want fries with that master's degree?

We can talk about compassion for our fellow Americans, but some don't want to go there because they perceive that

continued on Page 52



Consider What You *Don't* Want >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

In psychology (as in advertising) people are far more likely to respond to overcoming a negative than gaining a positive. Whether intentionally or subliminally, you'll act to avoid a hardship with far more intensity and urgency than you ever will to acquire a reward.

Johnny doesn't buy the flashy sports car because he wants to go fast and impress the girls. Not really. He just doesn't want to be left behind or have the girls not notice him at all.

Sarah doesn't pray every day that David will ask her to marry him because both of their lives will improve. Not really. She just can't imagine being alone.

Duane doesn't vote for his candidate because the man is capable of making the country a better place. Not really. He just can't stand the idea of someone in office who will hurt the country.

Knowing the fact that we will respond to pain before pleasure does not paint an ugly picture. We could very well be putting the necessary base down on the canvass before the beautiful painting develops. The truth behind our real motivations could serve us in a number of ways.

Our Emerald City

Right now, people concerned about the future of our city and our region are conducting visionary summits. In admirable fashion, organizers are collecting input from "crowdsourcing" and using the newest methods to gather and sift through the sand to find the glimmer of that magic gem. The ideas everyone likes most point to other communities that are thriving or celebrated in measureable ways. One place has fantastic tourism. Another has been built up around a promising industry. There's the feel-good green eco-community. And everybody's favorite: the place known for recreation. All are attractive.

We like reaching for the stars. But if our strongest motivational impulses match the suggested model above, maybe we should be looking at the places we don't want to be. After all, not everyone is going to agree on what we *should* be. But almost everyone will agree on what we should *not* be. Who votes for Camden, New Jersey?

Our Professional Development

Right now, I'm involved in two conferences sponsored by Valley Business FRONT. At the *Roanoke Regional Writers Conference*, the purpose of the workshops is for writers and aspiring writers to improve their craft. In my particular class, we're looking at what makes a good writer.

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Smith / My View

from Page 50

argument shows weakness. But how and where we were born has nothing to do with our inherent greatness as an individual and very often the amount of money in our pockets does not equate to hard work, intelligence or any of the other gauges we like to think we use.

Often, wealth is determined by who our parents or spouses are, the raw luck of our investments, and other issues out of our control. On the other end, a lack of education because of income and society's built-in discrimination against the poor are elements that must be overcome if there is to be a chance. Some of the hardest workers in America are illegal immigrants at the bottom of the wage scale who simply want to support their families and give them an opportunity.

Political influence in our country is bought, plain and simple. Our politicians, like those in the Third World, are for sale—at bargain basement prices—to whomever comes up with the cash. They prove it over and over and we equally ignore the evidence, saying, "Sure, they are corrupt, but my Congressman isn't." Fact is that the Congressman who does not allow political gifts to influence votes would be the very rare exception and if he's not doing that, why's he taking the money? We are a country seriously divided along lines of our fears more than any other definitions. We rarely show the characters of a democracy, even during election season and maybe especially during election season when raising money counts for far more than raising the level of the debate.

The obvious first step in helping us to solve some of these overwhelming problems and to make certain all our citizens are heard equally is to remove the money from politics, to outlaw corporate donations (corporations are not people, dammit! And money is not speech) to politicians and political groups, to forbid political action committees and out-of-control lobbying, and to finance elections—moderately—through federal and state election commissions, broadcast and print journalism requirements and the general education of the electorate, beginning in grammar school and continuing throughout life.

We can continue as we are and we will fail. That's the choice we have. The only one. 

Field / On Tap

from Page 51

In preparing for it, I discovered that though it is very easy to assemble examples of good writing, the compilation is so diverse, it would be difficult for any student to get his hands around any one certain list of proven principles, much less an easy formula (though plenty abound). As soon as you cite one rule, there's an example right behind it where the rule was broken. However, bad writing (and writing that is just ineffective) is much easier to reveal, even if it's discovered on a best seller list.

The second event is the new *Best Business Practices & World Class Etiquette Conference & Show* (branded as "BFF 2012" for Best Foot Forward) coming up in April. One of the segments is a fashion show. Showing people what constitutes appropriate attire is nice—but if you really want to make an impact—show them what *not* to wear.

Making a Splash

Right now, in your business and professional development you could do some benchmarking to figure out where to go next. Look at best-in-class examples and then try to copy that successful formula. That approach might work. But when it comes to overcoming mediocrity or achieving greatness, you're likely to find the key much quicker using the opposite approach. Determine what it is you absolutely do *not* want to be—and it's amazing what will creep into your business plan.

It was a Saturday in June. Eight years old now, Richard, was not a great swimmer. But there he stood, on the diving board at the deep end. Everyone was shouting, "Jump in, Richard! You can do it! It's fun!" Words of encouragement and positive reinforcement. Five minutes later, Richard finally jumped in. He didn't want to miss out. He didn't want to be called a chicken. No one can sit near the deep end anymore, because that's where Richard is—laughing and jumping and splashing like an octopus with Tourette's syndrome. But for five minutes on that Saturday in June, not once did he think to jump because it was fun. 

Letters

That's Tat

I love the tattoo article. I've had one of mine for over 20 years now (WOW, hurts to say that!) and it's always interesting to see the reaction I get.

**Stefanie Brown
Daleville**

That Happy Place

After seeing your new vbFRONT iPad app, I've just got to say that seeing this put me in that happy place where love grows. In this case, it's love of an app. Your app, with all of its wonderful features for finding and sharing, has taken your excellent content and catapulted into a whole other realm. Your advertisers, writers, and the people you write about are going to be so very happy.

I cannot wait to download and share content from your magazine with others, as well as use it myself. Here are just a few of the ways I will use your app:

1. I will share the article you ran about SmartCollegeVisit with my contacts and suggest they download your app.
2. I will use your app to research companies and business contacts by reading what you've written about them.

3. In the same way folks used to clip articles and send them to business contacts along with a note saying "Great review of your company!" or "Congrats—you're doing great!" I will likewise share articles online with people to whom I want to extend an especially warm greeting through e-mail, Twitter and Facebook.

4. I will bookmark articles I want to reference or reread.

5. I will enjoy the graphics and photos as they are always stunning and now I'm not limited to the website.

Once I've downloaded the app and have had a chance to explore on my own, I'm sure I'll have another list of five (or more) wonderful ways to use this app but for now, I'm standing in line, in that happy place, waiting to download your app.

**Kelly Queijo
Blacksburg**

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

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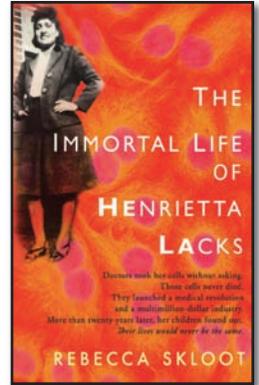
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



The source

In *Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (Crown), Rebecca Skloot tells us that her title character (born Loretta Pleasant in Roanoke in 1920) did not make her mark on this world until after her death at Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1951. She ultimately saved many thousands of lives, but nobody knew this poor tobacco farmer was actually the medical miracle cell generator known as HeLa. Not even her husband and children knew her tumor cells were being replicated and sold for research in labs and hospitals all over the world; not until someone at Johns Hopkins tied the name Henrietta Lacks to the initials HeLa and made it public.

Once it was known that the famous HeLa cells, the research catalyst for almost 11,000 patents, including the polio vaccine, had a traceable source, her family was beset by curious and often insensitive reporters and researchers. Her husband and children had no idea what was being done with Henrietta's "remains," and assumed the worst, from the creation of clones and cross-bred mutants, to the fear that parts of their mother were still alive and feeling pain.

Rebecca Skloot was fascinated with HeLa from an early age, but not just the medical implications of these amazing cells. She wanted to know everything she could about the woman they came from, and how Henrietta's huge contribution to medical science affected her family. This is a story of ethics and fear, and the implications of the blind trust we place in the medical profession. It is told without malice or ire, and with a huge respect for all involved. Absolutely mesmerizing.

—Beth Garst

Love by the book

When science writer and *Dirty Minds* (Free Press, \$25) author Kayt Sukel found her marriage unraveling, her heart broke but her interest was piqued. Well aware of love's emotional side, she wondered about its scientific impacts. How do chemistry and biology influence what our brains do in response to love, lust, and infatuation?

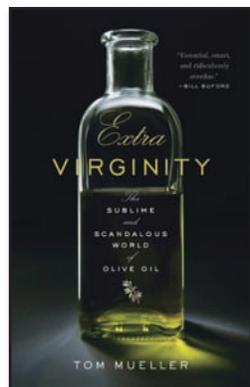
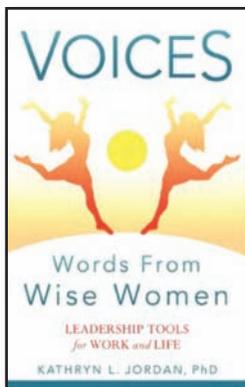
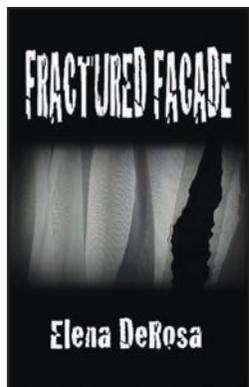
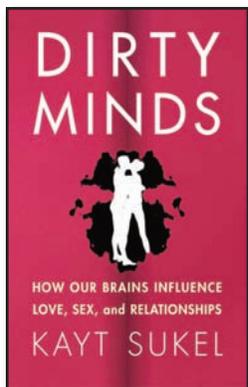
Sukel interviewed international experts in neuroscience and explores research about infidelity, parental love, human MRI studies and animal research on dogs, monkeys and monogamous prairie voles. But she also was willing to make herself the guinea pig, sampling a pheromone called Boarmate, contemplating a cure for heartbreak, and having an orgasm while in an MRI machine—all in the name of scientific research.

Sukel's accessible, interesting writing demystifies obtuse scientific terms and she intersperses her reporting with humor and anecdotes. Ever wonder about that crazy little thing called love? *Dirty Minds* is an interesting scientific take on matters of the heart.

—Laura Purcell

Unwelcome intruder

Roanoke writer Elena Derosa's *Fractured Facade* (Elena Derosa Publishing, \$4.99 Kindle) is a true story of the deranged woman who came into the author's widowed father's life and made things bizarre for the entire family. She explores her own intimate familial relationships with both parents and her



brother and includes much interaction with aunts, cousins and assorted others in a big Italian, Brooklyn family.

DeRosa shows us the angst of dealing with the local law enforcement, courts and even the family that thinks she is the problem. You will be cringing and shouting with her. DeRosa is talented and her story is important.

—Sandi Mays Saunders

Words to the wise

Many serious readers would almost be as embarrassed to have someone find them in the self-help section of a bookstore as in an adult bookstore. That's why we hope *Voices: Words from Wise Women* (MAS Publishing, \$16.95) will be shelved in the business section—where it belongs.

Written by Radford business consultant and executive coach Kathy Jordan, the book is an easy, comfortable read, with a forthright structure. Woven among 10 practical principles for women searching to create a successful balance between the career, family, community and self-enrichment parts of their lives are delicate nuggets that pack a wallop. For example, Jordan insists an annual resumé check-up is as crucial to professional success as a medical exam is to physical health.

With a raft of relevant case studies from personal and professional experience, this author fills her pages with practical wisdom and a positive outlook, then adds a series of worksheets to change theory to practice.

The tools, the stories and the yes-you-can tone can make even this job market look better for working women.

—Rachael Garrity

Olive oil fraud

Tom Mueller's *Extra Virginity: The Sublime and Scandalous World of Olive Oil* (W.W. Norton, \$25.95) startled me right out of my complacency over one of my favorite foods: olive oil. This magical little product, so good for our health and well-being (it's the basis for the healthy Mediterranean diets), is surrounded by chicanery, fraud, greed and deception. Most of the olive oil you buy in the United States, according to Mueller, is, at best, suspect. A good bit of it is a worthless mixture of diluted olive oil and other oils that aren't nearly as good for you.

This book (illustrated with 25 photos) is marvelously written, startlingly revealing in every aspect from one of the world's top experts, and, simply a good read. This is a combination investigative piece, medical history, cookbook and edifying volume.

—Dan Smith

(The reviewers: Beth Garst owns Howlin Dog Designs in Rocky Mount. Laura Purcell works at Virginia Tech and writes for Valley Business FRONT. Sandi Saunders is a Hardy-based bookkeeper. Rachael Garrity is a Blacksburg-based writer. Dan Smith is editor of Valley Business FRONT.)



RAC Xpress opening >

Carilion Clinic and Spectrum Design cut the ribbon for the new **RAC Xpress** at 16 West in downtown Roanoke Jan. 6, opening a workout facility and returning the historic building to a longtime use. 16 West was originally a cafeteria, but since 1980 it has most often been used as a facility for working out, designed around the schedules of business people. It has become an anchor for a group of businesses that will occupy the building. Carilion CEO **Nancy Agee** is shown here through the railing on the mezzanine at the press conference while several people work out.



Hotel discussions >

Rob Ledger, manager of the Department of Economic Development for the City of Roanoke, talked about the plan to re-develop the old Huff Lane School property with two hotels and a restaurant off Valley View Boulevard Jan. 10 at a **Dorchester Court** community meeting. There was some brisk questioning

about the height of the proposed hotels, who would operate them, how they would be shielded from the neighborhood and the amount of revenue the city could expect from them. City officials had few answers to the questions.



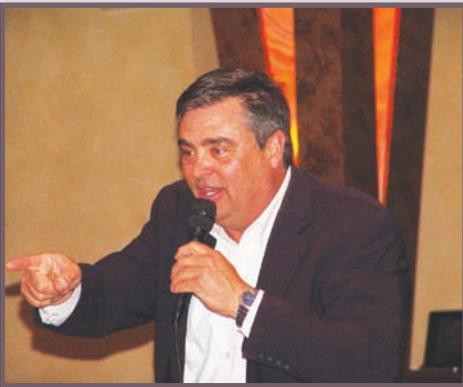
National Geographic talk >

Declan Moore (here shown speaking and with **Mike Pace** of Gentry Locke Rakes and Moore), the president of the publishing division and executive VP of the National Geographic Society, gave a well-received talk Jan. 11 at the Shenandoah Club to the **Bankers Forum**, sponsored by the law firm of Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore. Moore talked about the technological changes his company specifically and publishing in general are going through and how the company has managed to become an industry leader in it.



Elmwood re-design >

Architect **David Hill** of Hill Studio (left) explains his firm's re-design of **Elmwood Park** in downtown Roanoke to colleague **Richard Rife** of Rife + Wood at the Main Library in downtown Roanoke (which is beside the park) Jan. 12. The drawing is of the conversion of the parking lot beside the library leading into the park, which will have 1,900 seats at a new stage among other things.



Bidding for Ads >

Businesses and organizations sent media buyers to the **AAF Roanoke** annual **Media Auction** at Schaal's Metamorphosis in Roanoke, January 12 to bid on advertising, creative services and other packages. The fundraiser for the ad club also serves as a stimulus for local businesses with more than \$60,000 of inventory auctioned at a fraction of the cost. Auctioneer **Russell Seneff** accepts a bid, while AAF volunteer **Stefanie Brown** and auction director **Allan Mower** tally up the reports.



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

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

The local economy had its ups and downs in November, which for the most part, was a good thing. Employment was up and unemployment, down. Home sales were up over the year, but home prices were down.

ago, an additional 7,951 people are working, an increase of 3.6 percent.

EMPLOYED

Nov. 2010	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011
219,281	226,511	227,232

Unemployment/Employment

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Unemployment rates in the combined region continue to fall. And they're falling faster than the state and national unemployment rates. The November unemployment for the combined Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas was 15.5 percent lower than it was a year ago, a steeper drop than the healthy declines for Virginia (-12.3 percent) and the United States (-11.8 percent). Within the region, the Blacksburg MSA rate fell 17.8 percent and Roanoke's dropped 14.3 percent. Will that trend continue? If the initial unemployment claims filed in the last week of the year are any indication, yes. The region's 125 initial unemployment claims were 82 percent lower than the 696 filed during the same week in 2010. Statewide, initial unemployment claims dropped 64.5 percent. At the MSA level, Roanoke saw an 86.2 percent drop and Blacksburg MSA saw a 73.3 percent drop.

Real Estate

The real estate recovery, locally and nationally, is a little less clear cut than the employment trend. The **average home price** in November region remained flat from October, while the national average home price rose 2.2 percent over the same period (\$205,900 to \$210,500). Home prices fell for the year, both locally and nationally. The average price of a home nationally fell 3.5 percent from \$218,100, while the local average fell 13.1 percent. The **number of homes sold** in the region, on the other hand, rose 15.5 percent from a year ago, a higher rate than the 12.2 jump nationally.

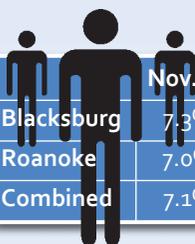
HOME PRICES

Nov. 2010	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011
\$207,256	\$180,212	\$180,131

HOMES SOLD

Nov. 2010	Oct. 2011	Nov. 2011
226	294	261

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



UNEMPLOYMENT

	Nov. 10	Oct. 11	Nov. 11
Blacksburg	7.3%	6.5%	6.0%
Roanoke	7.0%	6.2%	6.0%
Combined	7.1%	6.3%	6.0%

Fewer people filing for, and receiving, unemployment means more people are **employed**. Compared to November a year

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

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vbFRONT.com

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

Continuing the move from manufacturing >

Executive Summary:

Manufacturing remains a vital part of the economy, even as the shift continues.

In the early part of the last decade, a study on the economies of the Roanoke and New River Valleys declared that the twin economic drivers for the region were Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech—health care and education. That is even truer today as the local economy continues to shift away from manufacturing, one of its traditional mainstays.

Manufacturing is still an important segment of the local economy, and one that creates high-paying jobs and investment. It employs a greater segment of people in the civilian workforce locally than nationally, but those percentages are dropping. Education and health care are taking an increasing large part of the work force.

The recently released 2006-2010 American Community Survey, the Census Bureau's

detailed look at all the numbers that make up our lives, shows that 12.7 percent of the region's civilian workforce is employed in manufacturing, higher than 11 percent at the national level, but down from 16.7 percent in 2000. The sharp drop in manufacturing employment in the New River Valley speaks to a higher number of plant closings and lay-offs.

The education, health and social assistance segment accounts for more than a quarter of the local workforce, 26.4 percent, up from 23.2 percent in 2000, a testament to the health of the region's two biggest employers. Employment in the sector has grown faster in the Roanoke MSA (up 18.8 percent), reflecting the region's move to become a medical center. The Blacksburg MSA, more dominated by education than health care, saw a growth of 7.6 percent, while the US rose by 11.1 percent

Over the years manufacturing also has lost ground to the services sector, particularly in the Roanoke MSA, with its local and regional bank headquarters, large insurance presence and real estate firms.

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

A Shift in the Local Workforce

	Manufacturing		Finance, Insurance, Real Estate		Education, Health, Social Assistance	
	2006-10	2000	2006-10	2000	2006-10	2000
Botetourt County	13.0%	14.6%	8.4%	8.4%	21.3%	16.4%
Craig County	16.9%	19.8%	9.5%	4.8%	17.2%	23.9%
Franklin County	15.6%	24.3%	7.1%	5.0%	21.1%	16.2%
Roanoke County	11.7%	12.3%	10.2%	9.3%	23.6%	19.7%
Roanoke City	10.8%	13.1%	7.0%	7.5%	24.2%	21.7%
Salem	10.8%	13.4%	9.6%	7.6%	26.7%	22.2%
Roanoke MSA	12.2%	14.9%	8.5%	7.7%	23.4%	19.7%
Giles County	20.9%	27.3%	4.3%	2.9%	25.9%	23.6%
Montgomery County	10.1%	14.0%	4.4%	3.7%	37.0%	35.2%
Pulaski County	23.0%	33.6%	4.5%	2.9%	23.9%	19.4%
Radford	9.2%	15.5%	4.1%	4.6%	32.0%	34.8%
Blacksburg, MSA	13.7%	20.2%	4.4%	3.5%	32.6%	30.3%
Combined Region	12.7%	16.7%	7.1%	6.3%	26.4%	23.2%
United States	11.0%	14.1%	7.0%	6.9%	22.1%	19.9%



David Perry

Kim Stanley: “When you focus on your employees and treat your employees well, then that reflects on how our employees treat our customers.”

The hard way, with grace >

Executive Summary:

Cox Communications’ Kim Stanley is still working on her degree, but the Roanoke native knows just how far hard work and a good attitude will take you.

By David Perry

Kim Stanley’s story is proof that hard work and dedication sometimes can substitute for more traditional credentials on a resume.

“I’m blessed. I’m just really blessed,” says Kim, the VP of Roanoke Operations and Cox Business who doesn’t have the ubiquitous MBA hanging on her office wall. “I worked all through school. I’ve been working since I was 14 ... babysitting, paper route.

“I went to work for Sidney’s, a local clothing store,” she recalls. “I worked there for about 10 years and ended up growing with them and becoming the district manager. My career just continued to blossom.”

Her work ethic led her from Sidney’s to positions with several telecommunications companies, including MCI, before arriving at

Cox in 2007. While Salem residents fume over their cable service (Comcast), Kim chalks up Cox’s success in Roanoke to the company’s community involvement, citing Cox Charities (the company’s grant-making arm) and Cox Conserves (its sustainability program) as examples.

She also believes the company’s corporate culture plays an important role.

“We are so focused on our employees,” she says. “When you focus on your employees and treat your employees well, then that reflects on how our employees treat our customers.”

She cites as an example her first days on the job at Cox.

“When I first came here, I would walk around and everybody would smile and say hello,” she says. “I would think, ‘They’re just being nice to me. It’s going to change.’ But it doesn’t change. Our employees are genuinely happy.”

Some may question why Cox bothers, given the assumption that it has a stranglehold on cable television in the Roanoke market. But Kim is quick to dismiss that notion.

“We’re not in a monopoly,” says Kim. Roanoke “can grant franchise agreements to other providers if they want to come in.” But with

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

the high cost of building infrastructure in a new market, Kim says "in Roanoke our competition is satellite."

A single mother of three, some may also wonder how Kim manages to lead the 140 employees in the Roanoke office off Starkey Road and still handle kids' baths and school lunches. Kim says she learned the tricks from her mother.

"She worked hard and she worked outside the home," Kim says. "I saw her find the balance. I never felt like I missed out on anything where she wasn't there."

When it comes to her own children, Kim says all mothers find themselves in the same boat. "It's just like any other mom, whether you work inside the home or outside the home, you find your work-life balance. I have to make choices and I'm careful about the choices. The free time I have is dedicated to my children. When I have a free lunch, I go to the school. I get there early so I can help out with teacher appreciation."

Kim makes education a priority for her children, just as she continues to do for herself. She started on a business degree at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton and plans to complete it this year.

"I've always continued my education, but it's been one class at a time," she says, adding that she has completed the Batten leadership program at Hollins University. Part of her motivation is her upbringing. "I come from a very humble background,"

In Brief

Name: Kim Stanley

Age: 47

Company: Cox Communications

Title: Vice president, Roanoke Operations and Cox Business

Location: Roanoke

Background: A Cave Spring high school graduate, Kim is a 23-year veteran of the telecommunications industry who was promoted to her position in 2009 after two years with Cox. She says biggest challenge was learning the consumer market. "I had personal changes to make," she says. "I became more active with United Way," and spent time getting to know all of the company's 140 Roanoke employees instead of just those in the business segment, where she had also been VP. A single mom with a 19-year-old son and 8-year-old twin boys, Kim says her kids are her hobby.

and says she'd be the first in her family to earn a college degree.

And what's her motivation for spending 22 years in the telecommunications field?

"It's always changing," she says. "It's fun and you never get bored." 



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Together Building a Better Community

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Accounting

Russell Hicks, **Sonny Walker Morris** and **Robert Ryan** of the Roanoke office of Brown Edwards have earned the designation of Certified Construction Industry Financial Professional through the Institute of Certified Construction Industry Financial Professionals.



McCarthy

Insurance

Mike McCarthy of Brown Insurance Agency in Blacksburg has completed The Hartford School of Insurance New Producer training program.

WELLNESS FRONT

Organizations

The Medical Society of Virginia and the MSV Foundation have elected new officers and directors. Among them: MSV associate directors **David E. Berry** of Blacksburg and **Robert White** of Roanoke; MSVPAC **Geoff Harter** of Roanoke **Catherine Daniel** and **Reena Thomas** of Roanoke.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Newcomb

Architects/Engineers

Draper Aden Associates in Blacksburg has

named **William Newcomb** as one of its stockholders.



Traylor

Apartments

Courtney Traylor, leasing consultant for Knollwood Condominium with CMG Leasing in Blacksburg, has been selected 2011 Leasing Consultant of the Year by the New River Valley Apartment Council.

Designations

Adam Cohen, co-founder of Structures Design Build in Roanoke, has received certification from the Passivhaus Institute in Germany as a Certified European Passivhaus Planner.



Cohen



Holmes



Dunaway

Real Estate

Celie Holmes and **Carla M. Dunaway** have joined Waldvogel Commercial Properties, Inc. in administrative positions: Holmes as marketing and transaction coordinator



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and Dunaway as administrative assistant.

SENIOR FRONT



Long

Facilities

John Long has been named the Sodexo food service management general manager at Warm

Hearth Village in Blacksburg.

EDUCATION FRONT

Advertising/PR

Rachel Spencer of Access and **Jen Ward** of Blue Filly Productions have been recognized by the Blue Ridge Chapter of the



Spencer

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Spencer with the Illuminator Award and Ward with the Sparky Award.



Ward

Colleges

Hollins University has named author and Sweet Briar College professor **Carrie Brown** as

Have a career announcement?

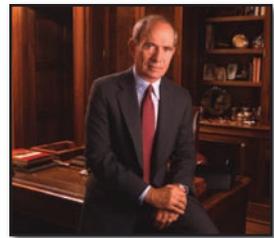
Send announcements to news@vbFRONT.com. Photos should be color, 300dpi. A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.



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ROANOKE TIMES



ROWE

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Career FRONT

distinguished visiting professor of creative writing. She begins in August.

CULTURE FRONT

Certification

Richard “Pete” Peters, director of Botetourt County’s Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department, has earned the Certified Park and Recreation Executive certification from the National Recreation and Park Association.

OTHER FRONTS

Organizations

The Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce has elected **John Francis Jr.**, of First Citizens Bank, chairman. Other officers are: **Dan Motley**, Norfolk



Francis

Southern, chairman-elect; **Ken Lanford**, Lanford Brothers, past chairman, **Barry Henderson**, SunTrust Banks, vice-chairman membership; **Harvey Brookins**, Wells Fargo, vice-chairman economic development; **Melinda Chitwood**, Brown, Edwards & Company, treasurer; **John Parrott**, Rutherford, vice-chair at large; **Vickie Bibee**, Scott Insurance, vice-chair of public policy; and **Joyce Waugh**, Roanoke Regional Chamber, president and secretary. New members of the 2012 Board of Directors are: **Garry Norris**, Express Employment Professionals; **Ted LeNeave**, American HealthCare; **Jonathan**

Hagmaier, Interactive Achievement; **Tamea Woodward**, EastWest DyeCom/Global Metal Finishing; **Scott Hodge**, AECOM; **Roger Elkin**, Hall Associates; **Steve Strauss**, Strauss Construction; **Ryan Patterson**, BB&T, Backbone Club representative; **Betsy Head**, Home Instead Senior Care; and **Leonard Wheeler**, Wheeler Broadcasting.



Sutherland



Lindsay

The Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce

has named **Kristi Sutherland** director of membership services and **Deborah Lindsay** director of events and leadership programs.

The Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce has named the following as its 2012 Foundation Board of Directors: president, **Danny Hart**, Hart Motor Company; treasurer **William Long**, L&L Brokerage; secretary **Quinn Mongan**, SERVPRO; past president **Robert Pollard**, Lotz Funeral Home; **Teri Atkins**, City of Salem; **Compton Biddle**, Osterhoudt Prillaman Natt Helscher Yost Maxwell & Ferguson; **Carol Chappell**, LewisGale Regional Health System; **Rosie Croft**, SunTrust Bank; **Neil Conner**, Renaissance Contract Lighting; and **Roger Rakes**, Allstate.

The Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSAhas

“Power To The People”

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

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installed its newly elected officers and board of directors. They are: president **Nancy Simmons**, National College; president-elect **Heidi Ketler**, APR, NEWSource & Associates; treasurer **Melinda Mayo**, Roanoke City; secretary **Chuck Lionberger**, Roanoke County Public Schools; immediate past president **Laura Neff-Henderson**, APR, Virginia Tech; directors at large **Rachel Spencer**, Access Advertising & Public Relations; **Beth**

Kolnok, Vistar Eye Center; **Douglas Cannon**, Virginia Tech; **Elizabeth Parkins**, ND&P.

Voice of the Blue Ridge has named the following officers: president **Debbie Helms**, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired; vice president **Dr. Joe Blackstock**, Newman, Blackstock and Associates; secretary **Lila Dickerson**, Business Solutions; treasurer, **Bob Stevenson**, Dominion Air and Machinery Co.; and members **David**

Boyes, JDS Uniphase; **Dr. David Hartman**, Carilion; **Lance Hodges**, Sound Advice; and **Darla Schumm**, Hollins University.



Crizer

Tourism

Gary W. Crizer has been hired as the National Sales Manager at the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau.



Heflin

Suni Heflin has joined Children's Miracle Network Hospitals at Carilion Clinic Children's Hospital as Community Relations Specialist.

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VWCC's Bobby Sandel and Ferrum's Jennifer Braaten

ITT lays off 300

ITT Exelis in Roanoke County, a significant defense contractor with 1,400 employees in the Roanoke Valley, has furloughed 300 of its hourly employees. ITT makes night vision goggles, mostly supplying the military whose needs are declining with the wind-down of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Apparently, more cuts were on the way before the end of January.

VWCC, Ferrum sign agreement

Ferrum College President Jennifer Braaten and **Virginia Western Community College** President Robert Sandel have signed an Agreement of Articulation to facilitate the transfer of students from Virginia Western's Administration of Justice Associate of Applied Science degree program to Ferrum College's

Criminal Justice Bachelor of Science/Bachelor of Arts degree program. The agreement, signed during a ceremony at Ferrum College, guarantees that Ferrum will accept Virginia Western students who successfully earn their AAS Administration of Justice degree and meet outlined criteria.

The articulation agreement ensures that Ferrum College will transfer credit for all Virginia Western Administration of Justice courses completed successfully with a grade of "C" or above at the 100-200 level, excluding SDV College Skills Courses, even when the student has not completed the Associate Degree. Virginia Western students who successfully complete 56 hours with a grade of "C" or above will be admitted to Ferrum College with junior status.

Carilion upgraded

Credit rating agency Moody's has upgraded **Carilion Clinic** from negative to stable, a significant change, especially when linked with Carilion's A1 rating on \$600 million in outstanding bonds. Carilion's market share of 56 percent (compared to LewisGale Regional Health System's 27 percent) is also significant in the upgrade.

Admissions were up 1.1 percent for the fiscal year ending in September and its loss of \$7.5 million (on \$1.3 billion in revenues) was better than the \$13 million loss that was expected.

Supercomputer super fast

Virginia Tech crashed the supercomputing arena in 2003 with System X, a machine that placed the university among the world's top computational

research facilities. Now comes HokieSpeed, a new supercomputer that is up to 22 times faster and yet a quarter of the size of X, boasting a single-precision peak of 455 teraflops, or 455 trillion operations per second, and a double-precision peak of 240 teraflops, or 240 trillion operations per second.

That's enough computational capability to place HokieSpeed at No. 96 on the most recent Top500 List, the industry-standard ranking of the world's 500 fastest supercomputers. More intriguing is HokieSpeed's energy efficiency, which ranks it at No. 11 in the world on the November 2011 Green500 List, a compilation of supercomputers that excel at using less energy to do more. On the Green500 List, HokieSpeed is the highest-ranked commodity supercomputer in the United States.

Carilion joins eye groups

Carilion Clinic, Vistar Eye Center, Eye Care & Surgery and Blue Ridge Eye Center will collaborate to provide emergency and in-patient eye care to patients at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. The agreement includes the provision of 24/7 on-call service for Carilion's Level-1 trauma program, along with general and retinal ophthalmologic care for emergency/urgent care and hospitalized patients.

The three physician groups will continue as independent practices,

but will collaborate with Carilion's trauma and emergency programs to further advance the level and quality of eye care in the region. The physicians participating in the collaboration include:

- Eugene H. Eng, M.D., Carey W. Robinson, M.D., and William M. Thompson, M.D., with Eye Care & Surgery;
- Chad Albright, M.D., Jon Brisley, M.D., Timothy Byrnes, M.D., Frank Cotter, M.D., John Facciani, M.D., Kurt Guelzow, M.D., Craig Hartranft, M.D., John Hines, M.D., David Kinsler, M.D.,

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.

Scott Strelow, M.D., Kenneth Tuck, M.D., and John R. Wood, M.D. with Vistar Eye Center;

- Joseph S. Weisman, M.D. with Blue Ridge Eye Center.

Earns award

Sawyer Paving of Salem, a Boxley Company, has earned the Diamond Achievement Commendation for Excellence in Asphalt Plant/Site Operations from the National Asphalt Pavement Association.

So much more.

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- > 300 Layoffs at ITT in Roanoke; More To Come
- > Energy Summit Scheduled at Virginia Tech
- > Ferrum, VWCC Sign Transfer Pact
- > RAC Xpress Cuts Ribbon for Downtown Facility
- > Tech's New Supercomputer Far Faster
- > Carilion, Eye Clinics To Collaborate
- > Wireless Medicare Has Joint Venture
- > Roanoke Co-Op Helps Charities, Keeps Bags from Landfill

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- > Manufacturers Receive Second Round of Grants
- > Social Media Meetup: Christmas Lunch
- > Luna Plans To Redefine Its Mission
- > Dresser-Rand Acquires Synchrony for \$50M
- > Executive Coaching Tips Workshop Set
- > Tech-Wake Research Rewarded with Projects
- > Michael Miller Wins Top FRONT Award
- > A History Lesson from the Ex-Governor

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

FRONT Notes

Shenandoah sale approved

Roanoke-based **Shenandoah Life Insurance Company** sat on the precipice of existence until late December when policyholders approved its sale to Arizona-based United Prosperity Life Insurance Company, part of the Prosperity Life Insurance Group. The sale should take place during early 2012.

The vote gave permission for a conversion from mutual company to stock insurance company and Shenandoah got an agreement for an infusion of \$60 million from United to stabilize its reserves.

Wireless MedCARE venture

Wireless MedCARE, LLC has announced a customer and joint venture agreement with Senior Homestyle Living, LLC of Arlington, Texas in which Wireless MedCARE will provide its FDA-cleared VivaTRAK

sensor assisted care system to two Senior Homestyle Living (SHL) facilities currently under construction in Texas.

The VivaTRAK platform technology aggregates sensor and device information for healthcare applications in long-term care facilities and in homes. Benefits include higher quality care and operational efficiencies. In addition to the 32-bed installation, the two companies have agreed to form VivaSense Solutions, a joint venture that will be owned equally by the two companies.

VivaSense will focus on further product development, marketing and sales of technology products with applications in the independent living, assisted living and home healthcare market segments. Wireless MedCARE staff will provide product development and an advanced technology roadmap to meet the product needs at SHL installations.

Organizations get grants

A grant from the **Center for Innovative Technology** will help Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute recruit a heart regenerative medicine specialist. The grant is for \$250,000. Other CIT grants included \$50,000 for Tech's Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science; \$148,998 for Tech researchers looking at costs to make a photovoltaic interter; \$50,000 to Synthionics Inc. in Blacksburg.

Competitors merge

CMC Supply of Roanoke has purchased **Rocky Mount Supply**, putting two 30-year competitors together in one company. They supply electrical, plumbing and home construction products.

Large donation

Novozymes, which has a large facility in Roanoke County, has made a \$50,000 gift to Radford University for a laboratory

in the new Center for the Sciences building. The soon-to-be-named "Novozymes Biology Lab" will be a teaching laboratory for introductory biology courses for undergraduate students. Construction on the Center for the Sciences is expected to begin in fall 2012 with a tentative completion date of fall 2014.

Accredited

Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital has received accreditation for percutaneous coronary intervention and cardiac catheterization by Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence (ACE). ACE is a new accreditation organization sponsored by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions and the American College of Cardiology. In another development, Roanoke Memorial has won the Consumer Choice Award from the National Research Corporation.

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StellarOne repays

StellarOne Corporation

has redeemed its remaining 22,500 shares of its Fixed Rate Cumulative Perpetual Preferred Stock, Series A (CPP Preferred Stock), it sold to the U.S. Department of the Treasury on December 19, 2008 as part of the Capital Purchase Program established by the Treasury under the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008.

Roanoke lab purchased

Professional Ophthalmic Laboratories

in Roanoke, which has been in business for more than 55 years, has been purchased by Essilor, an international company which owns Spectacle Lens Group in Roanoke. POL will retain its name and continue to operate in Roanoke. The company has 33 employees and has annual revenues

approaching \$4 million.

Award winner

The Marshall University Foundation's 2009-2010 annual report, designed by **Access Advertising & Public Relations** report, titled "Words to Live By," has been recognized with a Gold Award in the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) District II 2012 Accolades Awards program.

Graham-White division sold

The controlling interest in **Graham-White Manufacturing Company's** Salem rail brake components division has been purchased by Faiveley Transport of France. Faiveley is a company that operates in 24 countries and has 5,000

employees. It is 90 years old, while Graham-White is older, having been founded in 1914. G-W has 300 employees in six facilities. Headquarters is in Salem.

Jim Frantz, grandson of Graham-White's founder, will remain with the company as CEO.

Volvo gains big

According to retail sales data compiled by WardsAuto Group, **Volvo Trucks** in 2011 recorded the North American heavy-duty truck industry's largest market share gain of the year. Volvo, which has a large assembly plant in Dublin, also hit a company record market share of 12.1 percent of the combined U.S. and Canadian retail market, and reached record penetration levels for its proprietary engines and innovative I-Shift

automated manual transmission.

WardsAuto Group gathers industry data on retail sales to end-users. Volvo Trucks' record year was fueled by a particularly strong performance in the United States, where the company's retail market share jumped nearly three points and retails increased 109 percent over 2010. For the combined U.S. and Canadian market, the company hit a record 12.1 percent market share (vs. 9.6 percent), and boosted its total retail volume to 23,820 vehicles, vs. 12,100 in 2010.

Compiled by Dan Smith

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