

Valley Business

# FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING  
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

A lot of us have been banging the “buy local” drum for some time now, but it appears the message is still not getting through to some. It needs to. This is about the health of our local economy, our local businesses, our local communities.

Buying locally does not promote provincialism so much as it preserves our society, piece by piece. You can call it “provincial” if you want to shop at farmer’s markets, to buy from small hardware stores and drink at the corner bar, to frequent local book stores and purchase appliances at locally-owned dealers. It might be a small-town mindset to have your printing done at a local print shop, your advertising and public relations created by a local firm, your home or business built and designed by a contractor and architect from this area and your banking through a home-grown institution. Eat at local restaurants, attend local live theater and music presentations, buy locally-produced publications that concentrate on local news.

All of that is part of the concept because by doing it, we support ourselves, we tell ourselves that we are important, that we are the equal or superior to the mega-companies. By staying home as much as we can—and it’s not always possible—we support community groups and keep ourselves unique. We diminish environmental impact and get better service from people we know. We invest in ourselves and we send our tax money to our local governments. In short, we encourage prosperity at a local level, the most important and personal level.

The responsibility here is to know who’s local and who’s not. Who cares about the community enough to have a firm home base here? Those are the people we want to deal with.

It is a lesson we should not forget. No matter who we are.

**Tom Field**

**Dan Smith**

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#### DEPARTMENTS

# 8

## I WANT YOU! TO VOLUNTEER

### TRENDS

- etiquette & protocol 22
- workplace advice 23
- business dress 24

### FINANCIAL FRONT 26

### LEGAL FRONT 28

### WELLNESS FRONT 32

### TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT 34

### DEVELOPMENT FRONT 36

### RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT 40

### SENIOR FRONT 42

### EDUCATION FRONT 44

### CULTURE FRONT 47

### REVIEWS & OPINIONS

- dan smith 52
- tom field 53
- letters 55
- book reviews 56

### FRONT'N ABOUT 58

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS 61

### EXECUTIVE PROFILE 62

### FRONTLINES

- career front 64
- front notes 66

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## What's In Your Pocketbook? Page 26



## Roller Girls! Page 47



## MOTORCYCLE Page 40 MAN

Cover photography of George Kegley by Greg Vaughn Photography. Art direction by Tom Field.

# Valley Business FRONT

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# JULY



Michael Abraham



Susan M. Ayers



Rebekah Manley



Gene Marrano



Greg Vaughn



Randolph Walker

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 60.

## 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



Rod Belcher



Anne Giles Clelland



Tom Field



Kathleen Harshberger



Mary Hill



Michael Miller



Anne Piedmont



Dan Smith



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen



Alison Weaver

“

I squeeze my way through that pack of angry, powerful, independently hell-bent women...

— Page 47

## 2012 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)
- Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)
- Nicholas C. Conte** Woods Rogers (Legal)
- Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Seniors)
- John Garland** Spectrum (Development)
- James Glass** JG Co. (Development)
- Nancy Gray** Hollins University (Education)
- Ellis Gutshall** Valley Bank (Finance)
- Nanci Hardwick** Schultz-Creehan (Tech/Industry)
- George Kegley** Retired (Seniors)
- John D. Long** Salem Museum (Culture)
- Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)
- Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)
- Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)
- Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)
- John Williamson** RGC (Tech/Industry)

“

sounds like you've raised yourself an entrepreneur, Dad

— Page 23

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

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**George Kegley** plays our Uncle Sam, asking you to volunteer. In real life the retired journalist isn't the one asking the question. He's *doing* the volunteering himself. Uncle George is one of the most recognized volunteers in the region...even without all the red, white and blue.



Free labor ...  
happily >

**Executive Summary:**

*The benefits of volunteerism are difficult to deny (though unions often try to) and businesses run to be involved. There are some serious challenges, especially in training and organizing, but volunteers underpin the community.*

**By Alison Weaver  
and Dan Smith**

# I WANT YOU! TO VOLUNTEER

The intense conversation centered on volunteers and the four people taking part threw out fact and opinion like rice at a wedding. From the far side of the room, a small voice piped up: "That's how I got this job." Meghan Kelleher Griffith smiled and continued to type on her computer.

Meghan is hardly alone in that side benefit of volunteering, one that young people—especially—discover every day. Volunteers, some pure "goodness of the heart" types, others corporate sponsored and working as part of their day jobs, are everywhere. The stats are clear:

In the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) alone, according to *Volunteering in America*, between 2006 and 2010, there were 53,100 volunteers, 26.4 percent of the population. The state numbers are impressive, as well.



LewisGale Volunteer Diane Nelson pushes a patient.

Between 2008 and 2010, there were 1.7 million Virginians who gave their time, 28.6 percent of the population (ranking the Old Dominion smack in the middle—24th—of the states). They meant 228.7 million hours of service (38 hours each), conservatively valued at \$4.9 billion.

The Corporation for National and Community Service tells us that 62.7 million Americans—26.5 percent of adults—gave 8.1 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$173 billion in 2010.

As dry as those statistics are, they give you an idea that volunteering is big business. During the course of interviewing more than 20 people for this story, the common refrain was this: “If we didn’t have volunteers, we wouldn’t exist.”

Unions have opposed the wide-scale use of volunteers for years, but even they get volunteer help for their events. With government support of non-profits and cultural organizations drying up, volunteers are increasingly important. And it’s not just culture and charity getting benefits. Hospitals use armies of volunteers and you have to think that health care costs would even be higher without them.

Joy Sutton of LewisGale Medical Center in Salem says most of the hospital organization’s volunteers are retirees and they stay busy. She says, “Volunteers at LewisGale answer phones and transfer calls to patients; deliver mail, newspapers, and flowers to patients; provide beverages and information to families in waiting areas; provide directions and wheelchair assistance; and support patient care in our Cancer Center,



Many people had their first experience volunteering in a hospital as a teenager and some moved on to pursue healthcare careers – others have had personal experiences in hospitals that have instilled the desire to help those who are going through similar situations.

—Joy Sutton, LewisGale Medical Center



Dan Smith

Stephanie Koehler with Roanoke City Manager Chris Morrill

## An overview from a pro >

Stephanie Koehler, who owns SAKinterMedia in Roanoke, has worked with volunteers for years, often as a referee or wrangler, organizing, prodding, recruiting. In that time, she has developed some definite and distinct opinions about how best to employ these sometimes small armies. Here's what she has to say:

"I see a lot of volunteering in the region, but this category of 'serve' has changed shape and form in the recent past. People make shorter 'one time' commitments rather than long term commitments.

"Poorly managed non-profit boards have created a feeling that people do not want to commit, or they commit but they disengage because they don't exactly know how or what to do. This is a board leadership problem.

"People want their volunteer service to matter and be productive, not just a series of monthly meetings. Boards rarely see the value in developing a board filled with young leaders, a huge mistake. By sticking to the old system of 'let's build a board based on titles at area businesses', they end up with people who are not engaged in the organization. They need to be recruiting with an eye on the group's dynamic and skills of the individual and not just job titles that are frequently eliminated or face personnel changes."

Stephanie believes the larger events have the

most consistent volunteer help, "but those people are dwindling in numbers rapidly. Many area groups are actively trying to recruit their base, but busy schedules make it hard. Better board development and more systematic volunteer development would help this stay vital. Sadly, organizations view volunteerism as an afterthought, so they end up with a bunch of poorly trained bodies instead of a useful volunteer corps."

A significant problem she sees is "that organizations typically place a volunteer in the position of volunteer coordinator. This has inherent problems and is the greatest problem with creating a strong core of volunteers."

Stephanie says social media has created a large number of new events and niches, "so people tend to focus on their pet project rather than joining larger volunteer corps. This spreads the field too thin. Younger volunteers tend to focus on volunteerism through an organized group (school or church). Adults tend to volunteer for their kids' activities."

If organized and used properly volunteering can be a positive for everybody. But, Stephanie says, "Sadly, [organizations] tend to look at [volunteers as] free labor, which is not empowering to the volunteer and leads to burn-out. This weeds the good volunteers out and the organization ends up with a 'C' team of talent. If it is done right organizations end up with passionate supporters, on the street/community marketing, and long term loyal supporters."

—Dan Smith

Mended Hearts Program and Inpatient Rehabilitation Services.” That’s a lot of jobs.

She says they provide “the one-on-one customer attention that makes a patient stay more comforting and less stressful for the family.”

Shanna Flowers of Carilion echoes those thoughts: “Applicants come in all the time and say they just want ‘to give back.’ Some are former patients here or elsewhere whose lives were touched by volunteers. Others grew up in households where giving back was ingrained in them.” For Carilion, that has meant a value of \$500,000 a year, Flowers says. Carilion has 175 volunteers who are “expected to log 31,000 volunteer hours this year,” she says.

## ‘CORPORATE CULTURE’

Allstate in Roanoke encourages its employees to volunteer with a program that means money. Says Bob Neil of the large insurance company, “Allstate’s charitable foundation has a program where if you volunteer 25 or more hours to a qualifying entity, you’re placed in the running for a grant for your organization.”

HomeTown Bank’s Carolyn Kiser says volunteering “is part of our corporate culture. ... As a community bank, we believe it’s our responsibility to give back to the communities we serve. Volunteer time, whether it’s serving on a board, cleaning up a neighborhood or teaching kids about saving and financial literacy are different ways that HomeTown Bank is able to get involved and connected in the community. From the volunteers’ perspectives, they have an opportunity to help an organization that they personally believe in.”



Volunteering “isn’t difficult if the opportunity is fulfilling. When people volunteer, they truly want to be put to work and given something meaningful to do.

—Carolyn Kiser,  
HomeTown Bank



They asked me to go up on the roof to work, and I was kind of hesitant. But then I looked up there and saw a guy who was 75. How could I say no?

—Bob Neil, Habitat for Humanity volunteer



Dan Smith

Carolyn Kiser



Dan Smith

Lillian Crites



You may have only spent one hour painting the walls [during] an afterschool program, but it allows you to confidently say that you are supporting that cause, that you're personally invested in its success.

—Lillian Crites,  
Woods Rogers



I always worry myself sick about whether we'll have enough volunteers, but so far it's never been a problem.

—Susan Loveman, Virginia Museum of Transportation

Law firms are often major contributors to community events, both with money and time. Lillian Crites, who heads Woods Rogers' volunteer efforts, says, "I think a key to any successful community [is] that its citizens are invested and active in the community's growth and development. All the time and money people spend supporting non-profits and independent causes are actually building the foundation of a supportive and active community."

Norfolk Southern has a couple hundred employees who participate in corporate-sponsored volunteer projects in the region. "It's not just employees," says Jamie Helmer of the Thoroughbred Volunteer Council in Roanoke. "They also bring their families and friends. It's really rewarding to see them bringing their children and their grandchildren." In 2010, NS' four volunteer councils contributed 3,400 hours of service to more than 30 organizations.



Norfolk Southern

Jamie Helmer of Norfolk Southern's Thoroughbreds works at Fishburn Park School.



Dan Smith

Susan Loveman in front of a school group at VMOT.

## Getting back on track >

Six years ago, the Virginia Museum of Transportation was in a precarious position.

A freak storm blew off part of the museum's roof in July 2006, forcing it to close temporarily. The same week, local media broadcast a report alleging that the museum's executive director had misappropriated finances. The director quickly resigned, citing health reasons (no charges were ever filed) and former VMOT board president and civic leader Bev Fitzpatrick Jr. stepped in.

"Most of the volunteers had left. We had maybe one or two," says Susan Loveman, who became director of retail, volunteer coordinator and director of education soon after Fitzpatrick took over.

She laughs about her multifaceted job title. "Each one of us had to do many things," she says. The state had reduced funding and the staff was pared to the bone, so Loveman knew

that "whatever came through the door that needed handling was going to be handled by one of us. My job just evolved."

With the museum in dire need of volunteer assistance but severely limited in resources, Loveman recalls that the recruitment happened "by grace."

"We didn't go out recruiting. People started walking through the doors ... they'd heard about the 'regime change' [the new executive director, Fitzpatrick] and they'd visit and then ask what they could do to help," Loveman says.

"Volunteering here is different. We have a lot of older people and retirees who have a tremendous amount of expertise and who'll get their hands dirty."

Some of the VMOT volunteers know trains, some know automobiles, others have experience in landscaping, education, laying railroad ties, using a forklift or installing electronic equipment.

"If we didn't have volunteers, we'd lock our doors and go out of business," Loveman says. "We would not be able to offer five different

continued to Page 15



**John Carlin (center), Ronny Angell and Pete Eshelman of the Roanoke Marathon**

"The goal of our organization [the Thoroughbred Volunteer Council] is to provide labor. We don't do fundraising, we don't provide materials and we don't provide money." (A separate entity, the Norfolk-Southern Foundation, provides funds for many nonprofits.) Volunteering "has to be on your own time," says Helmer, because of union regulations.

## **'BADGE OF HONOR'**

John Carlin, an active volunteer and Owner and President of the Carlin Agency Public Relations in Roanoke, says volunteering is "a sub-culture ... like a badge of honor."

He's rich with examples: "At Saint Francis Service dogs, volunteers are a huge part of our organization, from those who help with puppies, to board members assisting with fundraising, to selling raffle tickets and checking people in at Dogtoberfest or Puttin' on the Dog. At the YMCA, volunteers help with children's and family programming and the kid's marathon. At the Blue Ridge Marathon, we had 300-400 volunteers doing everything from water stops, to setting up and tearing down the course, to guiding runners at intersections to helping with the pasta dinner. There are too many jobs to mention. Beth Pline of the Symphony was volunteer coordinator. She also organized local Rotarians to head up the volunteer effort."

Perhaps the best known and most often recognized volunteer in this region is George Kegley who is in his 80s and has hardly lost a step. Whether giving another gallon of blood, putting together a preservation foundation, writing local history and publishing it, manning a booth for a land trust, raking leaves at his church or any of a dozen or more activities, he's the go-to guy for a large number of people and organizations. It's in his blood.

Kegley, a former journalist, says, "Volunteering is essential for most non-profits who are scrambling to find operating funds to replace government funding." He has found that



I think anyone can volunteer successfully, but not everyone can be plugged into any job. You need to match a person with [her] skill set and expectations. Some people want/crave responsibility. Others are happy to be given a simple task and put in their time. It takes both kinds. Typically people self-sort pretty well.

—John Carlin,  
Carlin Agency



Susan Loveman with volunteers (from left) Nelson Graybill, Mike Musselwhite and Chuck Wertalik.

## Getting back on track >

continued from Page 13

learning centers. Volunteers, each of whom is knowledgeable, skilled and good with children, run those. Do you think two staff members could possibly manage a group of 80 kindergartners?"

In 2011, about 125 volunteers donated 9,703 hours of service to the museum. "That's \$194,254 worth of labor, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service, which placed a value of \$20.02 per hour on volunteer labor."

Loveman almost hyperventilates as she tries

to convey the many ways volunteers keep the museum going. "One volunteer comes in loyally and works in the museum store two days a week. Another has cleared out an overgrown area filled with gosh knows what," she says. "All of our outdoor maintenance and yard work is done by volunteers."

Volunteers take up tickets during special events such as RailFest, take out the trash, tidy up the property, wax cars and move exhibits. "Our operational budget is really, really tight. We simply couldn't afford to pay for these services."

—Alison Weaver



"some volunteers become almost as valuable as staff members ... but there seems to be a new mindset among younger couples, even teenagers, who enjoy volunteering, once they find satisfying projects. Making the connection, getting them started, is difficult sometimes. People with day jobs usually have some spare time when they could volunteer on weekends and they have some open nights during the week."

Payback is often immediate, says Kegley. "When a match is made between a willing volunteer and a supervisor, a significant dollar value is established. If this match works out, the volunteer gains a new perspective, a sense of accomplishment, of giving back to the community. Volunteer commitment to a project is priceless."

“ ”

Recruiting a volunteer to do a job he ... does not like simply won't work. This must be a pleasant experience.

—George Kegley,  
community volunteer



Dan Smith

Shanna Flowers with volunteer Sam Bickford



We look for people who have a warm and inviting demeanor. My role as volunteer manager is to make sure we have the right ‘fit,’ that the volunteer is in a role that meets her or his interests and personality.

—Shanna Flowers, Carilion Clinic



Retirees make the best volunteers. They’re so responsible and loyal, and they’ve got so much experience to share.

—Joy Parrish, executive director, West End Center

Says Kegley, “I have found that the best way to sign a volunteer is a one-on-one conversation, explain the need, offer options, give the prospect a choice and don’t push too hard.” Kegley continues, “I have often said that if all volunteers stayed home one day, many organizations would be in deep trouble.”

Shanna Flowers says Carilion, like many large companies with a real investment in volunteers, is highly organized in its recruitment: “To help us grow our program, we have established a four-person recruitment team. We look for opportunities to speak to groups and spend time in the community.”

## NON-PROFIT BENEFITS

The non-profit organizations that benefit from volunteers are unabashed in their enthusiasm. Habitat for Humanity has a wide range of volunteers, often with excellent skills. The Roanoke Valley Habitat’s executive director Karen Mason says, “I’ve heard time and again from so many folks who’ve indicated their motivation for volunteering was to put their faith into action and then discovered in the process that their own lives were changed.” Habitat has built 175 homes in the Roanoke Valley since 1986 and averages 75 volunteers a week, 100 in summer.

Habitat volunteer Jim McCarthy says, “A couple of guys that I knew from church were doing Habitat and asked me to come along. I had no clue how to build a house. ... It’s so upbeat. We have good laughs and it’s very positive. ... At the end of the day, you have such a sense of accomplishment.”

Carol Sheahan has been a volunteer for 12 years and has served on the executive board for five years. “My background is as an internal auditor, but I’ve always been fairly handy,” she says. She is one of the relatively few female members of the Builders Club, a core group that typically participates in every single work day. “They



Dan Smith

Kenny Kendall works a Habitat house.



Dan Smith

### Joy Parrish

respect my abilities now. I've got my own hard hat and name tag."

Roanoke's West End Center, which provides after school care, tutoring and recreation for at-risk kids, has about 100 children a day in attendance and about 50 or so volunteers a month contributing about 200 hours. Says director Joy Parrish, "WEC would not be able to provide tutoring services or reading instruction without volunteers. Our academic support services have produced a 93 percent pass rate on math and reading SOLs [Standards of Learning exams] and 44 percent of our children are on the honor roll."

Recruiting efforts are varied, but "word of mouth is by far the most effective," says Parrish. "If volunteers have a good experience, then they tell their friends." Roanoke College and Interactive Achievement are big contributors of volunteers. "Roanoke College has been around forever as partners," she says. "A lot of the students need community service hours, and we have close associations with various professors who send students our way."

Interactive Achievement, a company that develops software so educators can gauge students' proficiency in SOL subjects, has become an unusually active partner. "One IA employee began volunteering, told others and it snowballed. It's a great fit. Their goals mesh well with our tutoring goals."

## 3,500 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Roanoke Area Ministries House (RAM House) gives shelter, food, money and even a job to those in need. Executive director Debbie Dennison says RAM House serves lunch



We don't seem to have a shortage of volunteers. Habitat has developed a reputation for producing tangible results that go far beyond building a house. We change families' lives.

—Carol Sheahan, *Habitat for Humanity* volunteer



Dan Smith

**Debbie Dennison**

to an average of 130 people each day and provides a day shelter for people with nowhere else to go. "We've got 3,500 volunteer spots to fill annually and a small staff," Dennison says. "Without volunteers, we'd cease to function."

Dennison says area businesses sign up to have their employees serve lunch, colleges and schools send groups of students and churches provide hundreds of helpers. "Many people volunteer multiple times a week, and they can be kind of territorial about their shifts. They don't like to give up their spots," Dennison says. "We have a waiting list of people wanting to volunteer, believe it or not."

Steppin' Out in Blacksburg is probably the largest festival west of Roanoke and volunteers are critical to its success. Director Laureen Blakemore says the festival uses about 50 volunteers a year in shifts of about two hours each. She and an assistant coordinate and she says, "I still find that in general people love to volunteer for our festivals because they have so much fun."

The Roanoke Children's Theatre bloomed when founder Pat Wilhelms was fired by Mill Mountain Theatre a few years ago and took her show across the street to the Taubman Museum of Art. It was a startup with little capital and a lot of volunteer support. Says Val Moore, who directs volunteers, "We try to give parents of our students and youth performers in our productions opportunities to help with every production. Volunteers can help with loading in our sets for shows, box office, building costumes, office duties, distributing advertising for shows, fundraising, etc. Our volunteers benefit by gaining a full understanding our how RCT functions and the efforts that go into each production. Most volunteers will be able to attend a show for free."



**Steppin' Out volunteer vice mayor Leslie Hager-Smith of Blacksburg.**



**Steppin' Out volunteers.**

## TRAINED AS DOCENTS

Elsewhere in the Taubman, Jill Colby says, “Our volunteers are retirees, high school and college students, and working professionals. We train volunteers as docents to give tours to school and community groups; [then use] them as greeters, ushers, and gallery hosts for special events. Some assist with installation and removal of exhibitions; many work with our school and community-based education programs, including Art Venture, our interactive children’s gallery; we use volunteers in the Museum Store; and we have volunteers who provide administrative assistance in our offices.”

The value? “Immeasurable,” she says. “We are able to tap into the vast talents and the enthusiasm of members of our community to help us advance our mission by providing exceptional programming and events to our members and visitors. In return, our volunteers have the opportunity for ongoing education in the visual arts, particularly our temporary exhibitions, as well as a sense of pride in their contributions to the advancement of the museum’s mission. I hope our volunteers feel that they are valued stakeholders in the museum.”

Old Southwest is becoming a legendary neighborhood in Roanoke, partly because of its association, which is manned by volunteers. This group does more than just party hardy at the Gish House in Highland Park. It gathers to repair and refresh neighborhood homes, much in the manner of a barn-raising.



The museum has a small staff and relies heavily on volunteers in order to accomplish the work we must do in order to continue as a valuable resource to Roanoke and the surrounding region.

—Jill Colby, Taubman  
Museum of Art



Dan Smith

Val Moore



Dan Smith

Jill Colby



Dan Smith



I would not be truthful if I [said] it's always easy to obtain volunteers, because it has not. The line to volunteering can be very short and can be frustrating at times.

—Tim Taylor,  
Old Southwest Inc.

Tim Taylor

Tim Taylor, president of Old Southwest Inc., says, "Our volunteers are predominantly made up of residents within the Old Southwest neighborhood. These individuals live in all areas of the neighborhood, not just one concentrated block or street. Occasionally we'll have friends of neighbors come to Old Southwest and lend a hand on a project or event. We have had church groups [help]. ... Our neighborhood organization has been around and active for over 30 years so we are fortunate enough to call upon some of the 'pioneers,' as we like to call them, as well as residents who are newer to the neighborhood when something arises."

Recruiting is solved by meeting regularly, says Taylor. "We do our best each month with the neighborhood meeting, our neighborhood website and we [use] social media as well. Our neighborhood has a monthly pot-luck ... where residents come together at a different neighbor's home and share a meal. ... This has been a great tool to use when a volunteer event or project arises for recruiting needs."



Dan Smith

Jan Keister plants flowers for Old Southwest.

## EVEN WHEN CLOSED ...

Roanoke's Center in the Square is undergoing a massive renovation these days, and that has lessened the need for volunteers, says Julee Goodman. During normal times, though, she says, "Center has always experienced a high response rate when asking the community to volunteer. It seems that the people are willing to give of their time and often are rewarded and encouraged by their employers to do so. We often find that people who are not in a position to support non-profit organizations financially tend to volunteer and give of their time."

Volunteers, she says, help with the overall experience at Center. "By using volunteers, we find that we have an elevated customer satisfaction at an event and we also maximize the funds raised at the event by reducing paid staffing needs. ... We have had a constant group of volunteers for 30 years, The Athenian Society, who work at the information desk in the lobby of Center in the Square. The Square



Dan Smith

**Julee Goodman**

Society is a group of young professionals [that has] raised over \$200,000 for Center over the years and dedicated thousands of hours to support Center and its mission."

With the opening of its new aquarium, Center is developing a new volunteer program called "The Tank Team" to help run the program. Goodman says, "This will be the largest and most extensive volunteer program that Center has ever had consisting of about 200 consistent volunteers each year."

What constitutes a good volunteer? Julee Goodman has the answer. It is "someone who comes to help with a good spirit and a flexible schedule. Good volunteers appreciate good training and expect to be given a very specific activity. Volunteers are most satisfied when they have a measurable amount of work that can be accomplished while they are volunteering. We find that people of all ages can volunteer if you approach them with the right message and match their interest with your mission.

"Recruiting is the most difficult part. Social media has really helped in the recruitment process of volunteers. The key to success in recruiting volunteers is creating a database of information on each volunteer so that you can thank, cultivate and continue your relationship with them." 



Good volunteers are priceless! Volunteers provide the manpower to make events successful and enhance the services that an organization provides to the public. Often volunteers become so emotionally invested in your organization that they become lifelong donors.

—Julee Goodman,  
Center in the Square

## Volunteer opportunities > ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Council of Community Services in Roanoke has partnered with United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd to create HandsOn Blue Ridge, an online registry of volunteer opportunities. Groups or individuals can search the database at [www.handsonblueridge.org](http://www.handsonblueridge.org) or call Alison Jorgensen, director of volunteer services, at 540-985-0131. The website also contains profiles of dozens of local nonprofit groups.



## A world of thanks (‘No problem’) >

Just about every country in the world has an expression for gratitude or thanks. Whether it is “thank you” in English speaking countries, “arigato” in Japan, “danke” in Germany, “grazie” in Italy, or “merci beaucoup” in France, expressions of gratitude are spoken millions of times a day, in hundreds of countries throughout the world. Let’s consider the response to a “thank you.” How do you reply when someone thanks you?

When people thank you, they are acknowledging you, and giving you and your contribution significance and value. How you acknowledge that is important. Do you accept the praise in a gracious manner, or do you in some way shrug it off, and dismiss it as somehow not being deserving of praise. “Oh, I’m just doing my job,” “it was nothing,” or “forget it.”

If you think about it, handling a “thank you” message in that way somehow diminishes the message, and even diminishes the person offering the gratitude. My least favorite response to “thank you!” is “no problem.”

I train waiters in high-end restaurants and country clubs on proper dining service. I advise the staff members not to say “no problem” when a guest thanks them. People who say “no problem” in reply to “thank you,” are basically saying that there was a problem, but that they have overlooked it. Not appropriate at all.

In England, Canada and some parts of Europe, one often hears, “Don’t mention it,” or “Not at all,” or the more formal, “My pleasure.” In the U.S. the response to a compliment or a thank you is simply, “You’re welcome.”

Moving to the other side of this topic: do you genuinely and readily give praise, and thank colleagues? Do you acknowledge good work or outstanding contributions made by members of your team? Sometimes we fail to recognize that readily expressing our appreciation can mean a great deal to another person.

There are some professionals who think that doing good work has its own reward, and that persons should not be thanked or acknowledged for something that they are paid to do. May I suggest that that thinking is dinosaurian. Studies show that humans thrive under positive feedback and approbation.

Look for ways to showcase the work of colleagues or other professionals. Share their positive contributions with others. Many of us bloom when we are praised and thanked. So thank frequently, praise often, and when thanks come your way, remember to respond graciously. 

## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey  
Harshberger

**Executive Summary:**  
*Expressing appreciation  
is a good thing and  
it is important to do  
it properly.*

## Broken line of succession >

**Dear Anne:** *My father started the company I now run and I want my son to take it over when I retire. He came with me to work as a child and has worked part-time in the company during summers through high school and college. He knows the business, he's smart, he has integrity, and he could grow this company to new heights. Now that he's graduating from college and ready for a management position with the company to begin to work his way up, he's not interested. He wants to start his own company. This has torn our family apart. We've always talked about him being my successor. Why is he changing his mind?*

**Dear Change:** We all want our lives to matter and for the best of our efforts to continue on in some way after we're gone. That can be through our children, through good companies or organizations we've founded or contributed to, or by discoveries we make. For you, having a fine son running a family business would be such a gratifying double legacy.

Your son has a vision for how he wants his life to matter and the legacy he wants to leave that differs from yours.

In business, with the best of intentions, we keep making exceptions to this rule for our family members, for our friends, for people who need a break: Depending upon any one person for any one outcome is a flawed business strategy. People change or circumstances change them. We need to have many people, not one, who can execute our plans.

Various versions of this question are out there about the frequent incompatibility of principles and relationships, but this version is useful: Do you want to be right or do you want to be close? Do you want to hold tightly to your belief that your son should take his position in the company—or do you want to hold tightly to your relationship with your son? Rigid insistence upon your way—a legitimate one, just not one your son shares—will put him in the position of having to choose your dreams or his. I'm afraid you'll end up right—and alone.

Sounds like you've raised yourself an entrepreneur, Dad. You have personal, executive and financial resources that could be of assistance to him. Time to ask your son what he wants. Maybe he'll let you help him. And it's time to let go of wishing your son would change his mind to your way of thinking and start thinking about other ways to leave a legacy that you would value. 

*Need help with a personal problem at work? E-mail your question to Anne at [anne@handshakezo.com](mailto:anne@handshakezo.com).*



## Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

### Executive Summary:

*So now the son says he doesn't want to be in Dad's business. What's more important here, family or business?*



## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**  
*If you're accomplished, you can break the rules of business dress and appearance. If you're not, you'll want to rethink that hoodie.*

### Zuckerberg and the hoodie >

The success of Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg are impressive. With over 900 million users, Facebook leads the social media industry under Zuckerberg's creative and savvy guidance.

Despite this, when Zuckerberg began seeking major IPO investors in May, he was criticized for eschewing business attire in favor of his trademark jeans, t-shirt and hoodie. For the uninitiated, a hoodie is a hooded sweatshirt that may or may not zip up the front.

The media immediately questioned whether investors should trust a guy in a hoodie—even a guy as successful as Zuckerberg.

It was projected that after the IPO Zuckerberg will be worth about \$17.6 billion and own a 57 percent stake in the company—with or without the hoodie.

Meanwhile, during the same week, Hillary Clinton announced that she would not be wearing makeup or contact lenses that week and if the media wanted to criticize her, well, that was fine with Clinton. Clinton routinely meets with leaders of nations, influencing events and decisions as they evolve. She has proved herself an invaluable asset to our country.

These are fascinating developments in business where standards for appearance are high. What does this mean for the rest of us? It's really simple; work hard, prove yourself valuable, establish a successful track record, and you'll earn the right to flaunt the rules at times.

Some college students and even established professionals argue that it isn't fair that they are judged on their appearance and that professional attire is still expected in some businesses, banks, and courtrooms. The difference between them and success stories like Zuckerberg and Clinton is their proven track record of financial earnings or successful diplomatic accomplishment. Nothing speaks louder than success and proving yourself to be an asset to the team.

However, the introduction of the hoodie into the boardroom creates questions about the future of business attire. Will it devolve into an ever more casual appearance or swing back to more formal attire? As the baby boomers retire, will younger CEOs uphold or forsake today's business attire? Will Millennials allow tattoos, green hair, and hoodies when they own the business?

Today more and more companies carry out business without ever seeing their customer. The question is, does appearance and image no longer matter if we get a high quality product? 

*To comment on Zuckerberg's hoodie or Clinton's no-makeup decision email [Kathy@peacockimage.com](mailto:Kathy@peacockimage.com).*



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Rebekah Manley

**Connie Guelich:** “The fact that I’m a woman is a plus because I think women enjoy working with another woman.”

## Teaching women about money >

### Executive Summary:

*Connie Guelich has spent the bulk of her career managing people’s money, with a concentration on mentoring women.*

**By Rebekah Manley**

If her seminar title “Wise Women Leave a Legacy” is true, then Connie Guelich is wise. As founder and president of Guelich

Capital Management, Connie’s legacy includes rich investments in women for more than 32 years. “I really am passionate about helping other women understand money and making good decisions with their money,” she says.

This firm has an even split of men and women clients and offers classes to both. However, this grandmother works to give women opportunities to build on their own legacies. “We differentiate ourselves by offering educational opportunities to women,” says Connie.

Connie, now 65 years-old, noticed the need: “I realized my women clients wanted to

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learn more about money and they would ask me, "What can I read and do to learn more about how to work with money?" So I started putting together educational workshops for women. Women really expressed an interest to learn. So it is kind of like a little community of women who get together and I do workshops on different topics."

One of these workshops, "7 Steps to Managing Wealth Wisely," is inspired by the poetry in Proverbs. "The themes of diligence, hard work, honesty and compassion run throughout the book...there are rich lessons to manage two important resources, our time and our money," says Connie.

Another upcoming workshop is "The Retirement Challenge." This three-part series will address taxes, medical care and the number one question, "How do I make sure my money doesn't run out?" Connie says, "There is the challenge of longevity and women need to prepare for the possibility of living a long life."

Aside from these public offerings (a more detailed list available at [www.guelichcapital.com](http://www.guelichcapital.com)) this firm meets with its clients and manages their portfolios closely. "The thing that I hear most frequently is appreciation for communication," says Connie. "We call our clients frequently for reviews. We try to make different opportunities for people to get in touch and understand what is happening with their money." In what Connie calls "a relationship business" it is all about the

clients. "We make a point to get to know them and helping them reach their goals is what we are all about."

Connie doesn't know why more women aren't in her field, but she says, "The fact that I'm a woman is a plus because I think women enjoy working with another woman." Husbands seem to find comfort in this female-friendly niche and frequently express, "I know should anything happen to me, my wife will be able to ask the questions and get the help she needs here." With Connie's son, Steve, as the firm's vice president, the family's financial and client focused standards are secure.

In 1998, when Steve joined the firm, Connie made sure to school him. "Give as much eye contact time to the women as you do to the man," she advises. "You include the woman in the conversation. Because quite frankly that doesn't happen everywhere and women talk about it. They feel like they are ignored and not included in conversations with financial advisors."

Connie also told Steve, "The woman might be really quiet in the conference room but I can promise you that when she gets in the car, she has lots to say and you dare not ignore her." She recognizes women's influence. "Women make decisions in the home. If they aren't the final decision maker perhaps they have a lot of influence with the final decision maker. I made sure Steve understood the importance of that and I think he does it very well." 



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Gene Marrano

Sam Long of Miller & Long real estate appraisal.

## The expert witness factor >

### Executive Summary:

*Expert witnesses are used for a wide variety of purposes in a wide range of disputes.*

You've probably seen it one of those TV crime shows: the defense brings in a mysterious "expert witness" to bolster its case, or the prosecution uses one to poke holes in the defendant's argument. Yet expert witnesses are used in a variety of legal matters on a regular basis, often in cases that never make it to trial. Many are in-house experts from a firm involved in the legal matter at hand and are not brought in from the outside.

By Gene Marrano

Outsiders are sometimes brought in and

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Gene Marrano

**Dominion Metallurgical's Paul Huffman.**

fees can run into the thousands—or tens of thousands of dollars.

Sam Long of the Miller & Long real estate appraisal firm in Roanoke has testified in divorce proceedings, where the value of a home is being contested, and in partition suits when other assets have to be dissolved. "Typically the more expertise [a witness has] the better he should do on the stand," says Long, who has testified for three decades-plus.

Two depositions where he testified in a recent case took almost 10 hours to complete. "A lot of times these are settled out of court," says Long. "It gets down to the dollars ... it's a business decision on the client's part." He declines to say what he charges for services, which usually involve an initial charge for property appraisals and then an hourly rate.

Long was involved as an expert witness in the high profile Surfaces eminent domain case in Roanoke, where the owners of a private business disputed the amount they were offered as properties were cleared out to make way for a medical complex.

Long was hired as a witness by the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, which was acquiring the Surfaces parcel. "I just told the truth [about property value]," says Long. The two sides eventually compromised on a price at far less than what the owners hoped for.

Dominion Metallurgical in Roanoke, which supplies metal and plastic parts for manufacturers, gets involved with expert witnesses where the quality and reliability of the materials sourced are an issue. President Paul Huffman says because Dominion has a roster full of technical people, "we understand how these components are made." They've gone as far as to reenact the engineering and assembly process, helping law firms demonstrate where a part may have failed.

"It helps you to understand the liability side of supplying components," Huffman says. Being able to express technical jargon in a way that lawyers or a layman jury can comprehend is a major part of the equation.

Relationships with local law firms that



Dan Smith

**Woods Rogers' Mark Loftis: "Both sides have to make a decision on whether they're willing to roll the dice."**

needed expertise on process control, quality and assorted manufacturing concerns led to some good press and invites from other legal firms. "We do bring a unique expertise to attorneys that are in a product liability lawsuit," notes Huffman, who also won't say what he charges. It can get testy at times when his credibility is questioned by the opposing side: "It's not a business for the faint of heart. [You've] got to be able to withstand some severe deposing."

Woods Rogers attorney Mark Loftis, who heads up the litigation division, says fees for expert witnesses can run in to the tens of thousands of dollars, especially in federal court cases. Loftis, who focuses on product liability and commercial contract disputes, adds that expert witnesses are often in-house

employees that work for the clients Woods Rogers is representing, as opposed to outside experts on retainers.

Expert witnesses can have a major impact on a case, but Loftis says jurors are "a lot more savvy," than in the past when listening to what a witness might tell them. Still, a bad expert "can help sink a case."

Fewer disputes nowadays make it to trial: "It [often] depends on what the stakes are," says Loftis. "Both sides have to make a decision on whether they're willing to roll the dice."

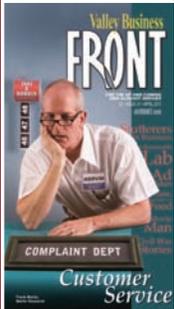
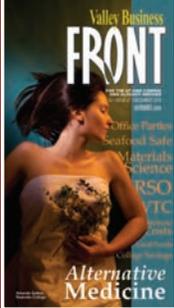
When the two sides roll the dice, expert witnesses are often standing alongside them at the craps table. 

## "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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# Coming Up...

**August 2012**

## Parentpreneurs

As more and more people work from home-based businesses and take care of home and hearth at the same time, somebody looked around and came up with the job title of "mompreneur." That's not accurate, however, as many of these mothers are Mr. Moms. They all do double duty, some quite successfully. Sarah Beth Jones takes a close look and lets you in on what she finds out.

**September 2012**

## Construction

The construction industry in our region has been quiet of late, unless you consider the complaints about major contracts going to outsiders. There's a lot going on, though, and our September cover gets you up to speed with the major players, the subcontractors and what projects are on the board.

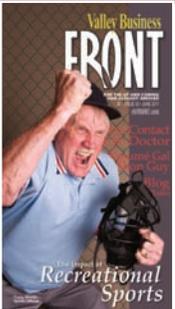
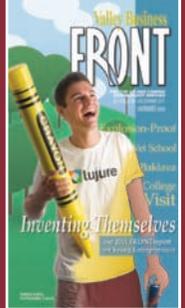
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Dan Smith

**Dr. Ralph Whatley: "We've known this for the last 15 years. The surgical procedure reverses most, if not all of the metabolic processes of diabetes."**

## Diabetes: Old procedure, new hope >

### Executive Summary:

*Gastric bypass surgery seems to be offering positive results for Type 2 diabetics, even though the procedure is hardly anything new.*

### By Rod Belcher

It is a silent killer, a disease that has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. About 25.8 million children and adults in America have it and another 79 million are on the cusp of falling prey to it. It costs our country over \$200 billion a year and researchers may have just found a way to reverse the devastating effects of the illness in many of its victims.

The disease is diabetes and cases of it have tripled in the U.S. in the last 30 years as obesity has grown more prevalent, especially in young people.

For those who suffer from the Type 2 version of the illness (which occurs generally later in life in overweight people who don't exercise), a new hope for an end to symptoms may have been discovered in an old procedure: gastric bypass surgery.

Two recent studies published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, present a powerful case for the weight loss operation resulting in a more effective management and reversal of diabetic symptoms in obese test subjects than traditional diet, exercise and medication regimens.

Many of those who had the procedure where the stomach is stapled and the small intestines re-routed, saw an almost total remission of diabetic symptoms or a much-reduced need for medications.

"This is not exactly new finding," says Dr. Ralph E. Whatley, M.D., the chairman of medicine for the Carillion Clinic. "We've known this for the last 15 years. The surgical procedure reverses most, if not all of the metabolic processes of diabetes. What is new in these studies is the method in which they were conducted and some

of the implications they offer for further research.”

Whatley says that the difference in research methodology is that the current studies were prospective in their selection of subjects for the study, as opposed to retrospective. In retrospective studies, all the events-exposure, latent period and subsequent outcome for the subjects have already occurred in the past and data is collected and examined after the fact. In a prospective study, data is collected by starting with two or more random groups of subjects at their current point of illness and following up in the future for occurrence of disease, if any.

“The study was randomized,” Whatley says. “Patients who received an aggressive management of diabetes with drugs and a second group that underwent the surgical procedure. The surgical group had a significant reduction in the need for medicine.”

Whatley says that, traditionally, approximately 60 to 90 percent of those Type 2 diabetics that undergo the bypass procedure have remarkable change in their diabetic symptoms.

“As often as not many of them in a year or less can come off of their medications,” He says.

Whatley says the rapidity in which the diabetic’s health improves is remarkable.

“There is normally an association of

benefit with Type 2 Diabetes and weight loss,” Whatley explains. “The metabolic derangements associated with diabetes, like blood glucose levels improving after the surgery even before weight loss has occurred, is interesting. The surgery seems to be rearranging the hormonal milieu of the patient.”

Whatley says that this sudden improvement after the gastric bypass procedure points to the possibility of an unrecognized hormonal pathway that could eventually lead to a hormonal drug treatment that offers similar benefits as the gastric bypass procedure for Type 2 diabetics.

“There are 30 to 40 genetic markers involved in diabetes,” Whatley says. “Certain populations, like some groups of Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and African Americans, are more predisposed to diabetes. It’s going to be difficult, but some research may be on the right path. Right now, no one has a smoking gun.”

Insurance companies are seeing the implied benefits and healthcare savings to be found in covering gastric bypass surgery for those suffering from obesity and diabetes.

“There has been a fair amount of enlightenment about the benefits among insurers, these days,” Whatley says. “They can see the saving in the long run to helping someone right now before more health complications arise from the diabetes.” 



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## Tech Scoop

### Send in the ... crowd >

#### Executive Summary:

*Here's the newest thing in begging for money ... uh ... fundraising. And all it costs is a cookie.*

#### By Michael Miller

So, you have this great idea for the next groundbreaking tech widget, but you've already taken out three mortgages to pay for your kid's college education lottery ticket. You know your idea is a sure winner, but how will you get the money to take your idea to market?

You need to pay a visit to "THE CROWD."

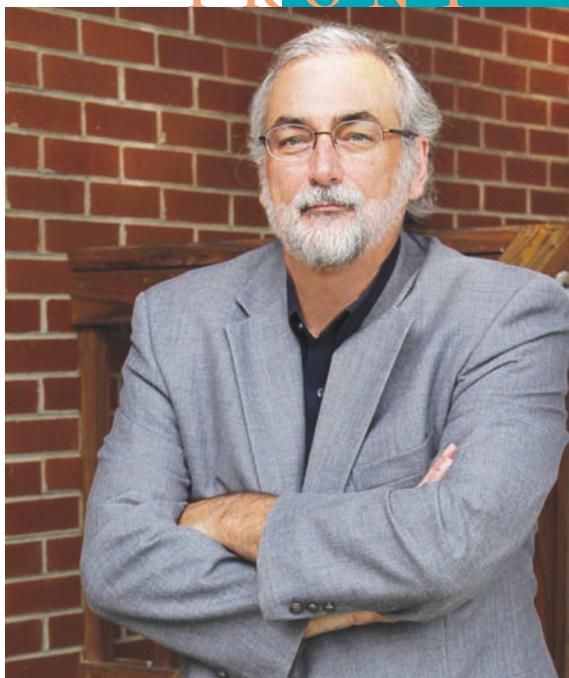
Seriously, the newest thing in funding cool ideas and products that don't attract venture capital is called "crowdfunding." In crowdfunding, you essentially use Facebook to beg for money.

Ok, not really. Actually you create a pitch and post it to one of the dozen or so well-known crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter or IndieGoGo, and sit back and watch suckers (I mean, donors) send you money. What could be easier?

You may be wondering what you get for your money. In a word, nothing.

OK, so that's not precisely true either. But this is not an investment deal. It's a donation. The person seeking the funding may offer inducements to convince you to get on board, but you don't get equity or royalties or anything like that. In fact, you may just get a cookie.

That was the case with a local mother-daughter baking team who needed \$2,500 to purchase a new commercial grade oven and refrigerator to get their fledgling bakery off the ground.



Michael Miller

Each donor was promised a free cookie every week for a year.

Now, that doesn't seem like much, but think about the deal that Pebble Technology got for its new smart watch. The product is cool—it looks like a digital watch but actually links via Bluetooth to your other electronic devices. The company had already manufactured 85,000 units, but needed about \$100,000 cash to set up the next batch. For your donation it promised ... wait for it ... to allow you to purchase one of the 85,000 units at regular price. What a deal.

Well, somebody must have thought so, because they raised over \$10 million in just a couple of weeks.

Yes, they raised \$10 million without having to give away equity in the company.

I am not endorsing this method of fundraising, but, like electronic publishing to a Kindle, it has its place in the new world order. So check it out.

In the meantime, I'll be munching on my free cookie and staring at the oven I helped buy for my friend Donna, at the Mockingbird Café. And yes, that's a shameless promotion. 



Randolph Walker

Owners Todd Morgan, Jed Hammer and Michael Cagle display the 1934 contract to build Mount Pleasant Elementary School.

## A flexible century >

### Executive Summary:

*100-old MB Contractors of Roanoke has prospered through the years by bending with the times and building relationships.*

early days of Martin Bros. The company is first mentioned in a 1912 Roanoke directory, making 2012 its 100th anniversary. In the course of a century, the company has left its mark on the Roanoke Valley with buildings including the Salem Civic Center, schools, offices and churches.

### By Randolph Walker

Jed Hammer picks up a yellowing document. It's a contract to build Mount Pleasant Elementary School, dated 1934 and signed by A.P. Martin, one of the co-founders of Martin Bros. Contractors. The price: \$61,268.

In 2010, the same company, now known as MB Contractors, completed additions and renovations to the school for \$7,167,708.

Between those two dates and figures is the story of a company that has continued to thrive in a world of web-based document management, environmental certification and other changes that A.P. and Jim Martin could not have foreseen.

Hammer, the CEO, takes an interest in the



Martin Brothers founders Jim and A.P. Martin.



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Dan Smith

**Cave Spring Middle School represents a large investment.**

Hammer first worked for Martin (through a subcontractor) in 1970, putting a roof on the Christian Science church on Overland Road. He continued to work for Martin during summers off from college. After graduating, he stayed on. "After spending a year or two in estimating, I moved into project management."

In 1982 Hammer bought Martin Bros. ([www.mbcontractors.com](http://www.mbcontractors.com)) from the third generation of the Martin family. The ownership now includes, in addition to Hammer, president Todd Morgan and executive vice president Michael Cagle. In 2010 the name was changed to MB Contractors.

The recession has caused a few ups and downs, but 2010 was a record revenue year at \$58 million, and Morgan expects this year's revenue to top \$60 million. MB is the Roanoke Valley's second largest contractor, behind Branch & Associates.

Morgan attributes MB's success partly to flexibility and willingness to accept

projects of differing types, sizes and financial structures. "We haven't gotten locked in on any one thing. We'll do a \$1,000 maintenance project, then we've got Cave Spring Middle School which is a \$25 million project."

The largest projects recently completed include an Appalachian culture center in Abingdon and renovations to four Roanoke county schools. Projects underway include, in addition to renovations at Cave Spring Middle, two new schools in Richmond, and a senior living facility in Crozet.

Depending on client need, projects may be financially structured as general contracting, design-build, or construction management at risk.

Construction management at risk is an alternative to the low-bid system. The contractor commits to completing the project within a guaranteed maximum price.

Says Morgan: "The biggest advantage to doing that is you're getting all the team

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members together early in the project, the designer, the contractor and the owner, and that allows the contractor and the designer to work together to meet the owner's needs, from the design and aesthetic standpoint, but also from the budget standpoint. You work together from the very beginning."

Team members have access to documents through NextPlans, a web-based document management system. "It's an online plan room that allows people to view plans online, download onto their computer or print 'em out," says Cagle. "It allows for rapid distribution of plans and saves time and money as far as having to make hard copies and distribute them."

It's an aspect of modern contracting that would be unfamiliar to A.P. and Jim Martin, as would

the concept of environmental certification.

The Claude Moore Education Complex, part of the Roanoke Higher Education Center, earned the Roanoke Valley's first Gold LEED Certification. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a rating system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

While innovation and flexibility have been important, the first thing Morgan mentions, when asked about the company's success, is people—meaning MB's employees, as well as the management of relationships with owners, architects, subcontractors and vendors.

"Treating the subs and vendors fair, as part of a team, and by building relationships with them and with owners, are things that have helped us succeed in these times." 

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Michael Abraham

**Travis Jones of Go Race in Christiansburg: "Dad encouraged me and convinced me it was the right time to go for it."**

## Travis Jones finds his passion >

### **Executive Summary:**

*At his motorcycle shop in Christiansburg, Go Race, Travis Jones has found a niche that has a national following.*

### **By Michael Abraham**

From his earliest memories, Travis Jones has been motivated to go fast on two wheels. He's brought this passion to the business he founded seven years ago in Christiansburg, Go Race Inc.

"My father loved motorcycles, especially off-road bikes," he says. "He raced, and I

grew up around motorcycles. He shared his interests with other riders in the Blacksburg area. There were always creative, high-intensity people around. I grew up with a wrench in my hand. My dad was a master technician in the automotive field. He taught me the basics of mechanics."

One of the aspects of primary importance to performance motorcycles is suspension. Travis became particularly interested in making motorcycles' suspensions work well for individual riders and their needs.

"Some of dad's friends were wildly creative with regards to designs and utilization," says Travis. "These designs inspired me. I decided early on that the motorcycle business is something I wanted to be part of."

Travis understood he needed a more complete educational background. He studied briefly

at New River Community College, taking courses in business and machine technologies. He then attended the Motorcycle Mechanics Institute in Florida for a year. He moved to the Blacksburg area and worked in the motorcycle business as a mechanic. Then he went to Northern Virginia where he worked for one of the East Coast's largest motorcycle dealership. "I came in as a technician and worked my way up to shop foreman. They sell all the Japanese bikes (Honda, Suzuki, Yamaha, and Kawasaki) and the Italian bikes (Aprilia and Ducati)."

Eventually he was drawn back to Blacksburg where he worked for the new Honda dealership in Christiansburg. "I didn't like Northern Virginia, the rat race," he says now. "I missed the mountains. I missed the twisty roads. I missed my family."

By 2005 he started his own business: "It seemed like the right time. Dad encouraged me and convinced me it was the right time to go for it."

Nowadays, his business is comprised of custom suspension work, routine mechanic work and retail sales of parts and accessories. "The suspension work is what I really love," he says. "I modify off-the-shelf suspension parts to the particular size, riding style, needs, and desires of individual riders to provide a full custom package expressly for them. Appropriate solutions are multi-dimensional.

"Often people will buy a new bike and send

it to me before ever riding it. I'll update the components inside, installing new valving, shims, springs, and oil. I re-sell replacement shocks, often placing custom orders from the manufacturers. People who buy on-line don't get custom equipment. By nature, mine works better."

His customers are across the nation and around the world. "I've had customers from New Zealand, Europe and several from Canada," says Travis. "My reputation has spread by word of mouth. There are lots of Internet-based forums where people discuss my work. When people have spoken highly of my work, I soon get orders from people who read it.

"What I sell is confidence and control of the motorcycle. When people are confident, they ride faster and more safely ... and they have more fun."

The Go Race storefront is a full-service facility for motorcycles, ATVs, and personal watercraft. In the retail area, it sells parts and accessories and used motorcycles.

Travis says, "People need to work in areas of their competence. Then they need to be confident. Then they need to follow their hearts. I get up every morning looking forward to my day's work. I love my job. Motorcycles have always been my passion. I've been lucky enough to make a living following my passion." 

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Children's Etiquette Classes forming for the Summer



Susan Ayers

**Tom Bondurant: "The best work you do, no one knows about."**

## Legal relocation >

### **Executive Summary:**

*When Tom Bondurant moved from prosecution to defense the adjustment was smooth.*

**By Susan Ayers**

When the region's longest serving federal prosecutor and criminal chief Thomas Bondurant Jr. retired from the U. S. Attorney's Office on Sept. 30, 2009, after 30 years of service, he relocated to the other side of the courtroom. He didn't wait a full day to move.

The 58-year-old Bondurant joined Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore as a partner at noon the following day to help lead its White Collar Criminal Defense Practice.

"The timing was right," says Bondurant. "I had to start paying the college tuition of my three children."

Bondurant never has been one to let any grass grow under his feet. He recalls during his federal career prosecuting 200 jury trials in United States District Courts, hundreds of bench trials in United States Magistrate Courts and dozens of arguments in the United States Court of Appeals for the

Fourth Circuit. And he directed more than 1,000 investigations in cases that included racketeering, organized crime, healthcare fraud, civil rights, bombings, arson, embezzlement, money laundering, firearms and moonshine offenses.

At one point, Bondurant was appointed a Special Prosecutor for the Eastern District of Virginia and the Southern District of West Virginia. And over the years he taught courses to prosecutors and agents.

"I concentrated on firearm and drug cases early in my prosecutorial career," says Bondurant. "One year I had 17 trials in a 12-month period. The trials lasted anywhere from one day to two weeks. During one week, I finished one trial and began another trial on the same day, while awaiting the first verdict." Sounds exhausting.

In his last 20 plus years of federal service, Bondurant says he tried more complicated matters. He prosecuted ten Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) cases involving an organized crime family, two outlaw motorcycle gangs, four police corruption cases, one elected official corruption case and two healthcare fraud cases.

Four of Bondurant's jury trials lasted approximately two months—a RICO prosecution involving an organized

crime family with predicates of murder, arson, fraud and drug offenses; an international drug smuggling case involving defendants from Bolivia, Colombia and Panama; and two capital murder cases involving the killing of a family (father, mother and child) to prevent its testimony. Seven of his jury cases have lasted approximately one month.

As a defense attorney, Bondurant tries to get involved early in the investigation of the company or individual in order to try to reach an administrative settlement. Bondurant has conducted investigations in the banking, healthcare, construction, mortgage and salvage industries.

"The best work you do, no one knows about," says Bondurant.

On the defense side of the table, he has represented individuals and corporations on

criminal matters including RICO, tax evasion, internal banking crimes, money laundering, customs violations, insurance fraud, mortgage fraud, capital murder and solicitation to commit capital murder, counterfeiting and firearms offenses. He does some civil work.

"The greatest successes on the fence you can't talk about," says Bondurant. "It's mostly white collar stuff. Approximately 95 percent involves economic topics, tax evasion, ponzi schemes and a lot of regulatory matters."

"The job transition has been an easy one," says Bondurant. "The hardest part was to get used to not saying in Court the government calls ... versus saying the defense calls..."

What are Bondurant's plans for the future? "I think I've found a home here," he says. "I think I will be here for quite a while." 

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Mary Hill

**Tony Pearman: "The [cause] I never could say no to was child abuse prevention."**

## Ad-man on a mission of mercy >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Award-winning advertising executive Tony Pearman of Roanoke's Access fights the good fight to save battered children locally.*

### **By Mary Hill**

In one ad, an infant's crib is lit by fire, a teddy bear at the center of the flames. The caption reads, "Would you leave your baby here? Each year, more than 30 children die of heat exposure while left alone in a vehicle." In another, a man's fist grips the leather strap of a belt, as he walks toward a closed door. The text? "These days not everyone is tightening their belt. Child abuse thrives in a recession."

They are difficult to look at, but then again, ads about child abuse aren't

supposed to make us want to buy.

For almost 20 years, Chief Creative Officer and Senior Partner Tony Pearman of Access Advertising and Public Relations, has used creative communications to advocate for child abuse education and prevention. "There are so many causes out there," Pearman says, "but the one I never could say no to was child abuse prevention."

This year, Pearman's long-term efforts in the Roanoke Valley were recognized by Children's Trust through the Guardian Angel Award. While the Trust annually recognizes numerous volunteers in a range of categories, from mental health professionals to foster parents, the Guardian Angel is the highest volunteer award honoring exemplary service over a number of years.

"There is no single person in the Valley that has done more to further child protection than Tony ... [His] huge heart and concern for their safety is a quiet, but powerful presence in our community and a blessing for us all," says Janice Dinkins Davidson,

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#### Anti-child abuse ads from Pearman.

executive director of Children's Trust.

"I was incredibly humbled to be recognized along with the other folks [who won Golden Halos this year]. They've done such important work," says Pearman.

Ironically, the Guardian Angel, now in its fifth year, was originally Pearman's brainchild. "The award was an idea I had when I served on the board," he says. "The Children's Trust is an important organization in the Valley ... They provide children with a continuum of care. The general population seems to think social services and the police take care of [all the needs of abused children], but the Trust plays a crucial role [by filling in the gaps]." Pearman was hoping the awards would encourage support of the organization and increase its name recognition.

His campaigns have paid off. "I see larger crowds at events," says Pearman. "I see the organization struggling less. ... and I see the work that this organization continues to do—work that no one else in the Valley does."

Would you leave your **baby** here?

Each year, more than 30 children die from heat exposure while left alone in a vehicle. Never leave your child alone in a car.

Ten minutes takes a lifetime.

Children's Trust  
Carilion Clinic | Children's Hospital | Roanoke Valley  
roact.org



Pearman hangs rattles from a donation tree.

So what exactly is that work? Simply put, Children's Trust gives children and families what they need to prevent and deal with child abuse—whether that means educating children about ways to protect themselves, helping parents provide better care for their children, finding children safe permanent homes, or working with court systems to provide a child-friendly environment in which children can tell the stories of their abuse.

While Pearman has been most passionately involved with child abuse prevention, he and his creative team at Access have supported numerous community organizations since the agency's founding. What began with Pearman and his co-founder, Todd Marcum, as a two-person office in 1996 has grown into

a nationally recognized agency with a staff of 16. Access has found success providing advertising and public relations services for projects that range from a new business launch to a billion dollar capital campaign and everything in between. That success has translated into meaningful community action for much more than Children's Trust.

"We've been incredibly fortunate in our business to receive great support from businesses in this market," says Pearman. "We've had many loyal clients. ... Just like buying local at the farmer's market is important, so is keeping your advertising business in the Valley. I couldn't donate \$50,000 of in-kind services to community organizations every year if I couldn't pay the mortgage." 

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Roller derby teams gather after a game

## A game for the girls >

### Executive Summary:

*These are some tough women, who often call themselves girls, but don't be fooled. They're everything Roller Derby implies and a whole lot more.*

By Dan Smith

It was a simple question: Why Roller Derby?

For 28-year-old Emily (Massacre Marie) Winters, a telesales agent for United Healthcare in Roanoke, there was more to it than simplicity. Roller Derby has "everything I need. Exercise. A challenge. A social life. Friends across the continents. Confidence. Respect. Freedom.

"When I step on that track, adrenaline rushing through my chest, I see the girl lined up next to me trying to hide the nervous look on her face, and smirk to myself. I see people throw their bodies at mine, but only note when they bounce off and hit the floor. I squeeze my way through that pack of angry, powerful, independently hell-bent women feeling like I've fought for my life. And what could be better than fighting for your life and coming out a free individual?"

OK, so there's a smidge of rhetoric in there, but the passion is real. Emily and nearly 20 other Roanoke Valley women form Star City Roller Girls, a team of tattooed, Mohawk-haired, torn fishnet-hosed, camo hot-pantsed, muscled, thin, helmet-wearing babes by night, accomplished business professionals in suits by day. There's a contradiction



Dan Smith



Dan Smith

**Group of roller girls dress for practice: (from left) Nadean Carson (with broken foot), Lauren Carroll, Dana Averill, Katie Jones, Emily Winters and Cathy Cockrell.**

here that doesn't escape notice.

Says 33-year-old Roanoke College student Dana Averill (Devious Dee), "We are rewriting the norms for the female gender and what it means to be taken seriously as a woman and an athlete." A little extreme for some, but not for these women, many of whom have spent lives in one kind of internal rebellion or another that is easy to express on roller skates where the rules invite knocking somebody's hat off and putting her butt on the deck.

Katie Jones (Daisy Claymore), a 34-year-old unit administrator for the U.S. Army Reserves and mother of three boys, loves the contact and the fact that Derby keeps her in shape. "When I first started, I would show off my bruises to everyone," she says. Derby, she insists, gives her doses of "Stress [relief], physical conditioning, teamwork, friendship and overall bad-assness." That last part seems to have some importance to most of the team members.

The team practices and plays at a couple of skating rinks in the Roanoke Valley and it travels to other cities where teams are in place. The women on the team take care of the playing and the business. Emily Winters says, "Physically, professionally, and socially, everyone has something to contribute to keep us going: PR skills, physical capability, connections in the food industry, social butterflies that make fantastic recruiters ... something. There is no one person to delegate and keep us afloat, it's everyone or nothing." The very definition of a team, as it were.

Dreama Secrist (Ms. B. Haven) is 46 and a medical underwriter at Wellpoint Blue Cross Blue Shield for 21 years. She has three kids and is the senior member of the team. She has found mixed response at work: "My co-workers think it's awesome as does my current boss. My former boss thought I was kidding and never signed the consent form the first year I tried to get her to."

Motivation to do something completely out there is strong among team members. Emily Winters says, "It's unconventional, to say the least." Yep, it's that. Dana Averill explains it: "This sport empowers women in a way that an all-woman sport has never done before. It enables women to showcase their talent as athletes and to have a different persona if they want and to live life on the edge. We can challenge gender norms and learn so much about ourselves in the process.

"There is a stigma in derby, one that is probably left over from the spectacle of the sport of the 1960s and '70s ... [but] it is more organized and more strategy now."

R. Nadean Carson (Bomb Shelley), 34, is the team's captain and has been involved for six years. She's a geotechnical engineer and business manager with ECS Mid-Atlantic and says, "I have found that these two parts of my life are quite compatible with each other, and have actually been beneficial to the other one." She enjoys being "involved with the business of the sport, and [helping] make it a successful business and sport."



Dan Smith

**Roller-high fives at match end**

She says she has “found it to be a great tool for a business development manager. I use my work with roller derby as a conversation starter and have found that people are interested in learning more about it when I bring it up. Let’s be honest, no one can forget someone that tells them they play roller derby.”

Injuries, mostly bruises and joint problems, are a part of the sport, but occasionally, there’s more to deal with than that. Says Nadean, “I broke my leg [recently] at practice, and had to be out of work for over a week. Luckily, I was able to work from home for a portion of the time, but it will certainly limit my mobility for the next few months.” Others have managed through the pain and have found sympathy at work.

Jay Vora (Fro Down) is 23 and one of the few men involved. He works as a clerk and data entry specialist at Maple Leaf Bakery and recently finished an associate’s degree (Business IT) at Virginia Western. He is an official and says, “Roller Derby is one of the few sports where two teams can go toe to toe for an hour and then go grab a beer together afterwards. I’ve gained many friends over many states, and some out of country. Instead of spending my weekends at home, I travel all over the place wherever I’m needed to referee a game.”

Dana Averill admits it: “I am ... addicted to derby and have built a lifestyle around it; that would be hard to change for me. I hope that I will never have to.” 



Dan Smith

**Emily Winters**



Dan Smith

**Roller derby referee Jay Vora**



Ross Laguzza: "One too many theaters."

## 'A freedom that is addictive' >

### Executive Summary:

*Actor Ross Laguzza has found his bliss and it is not in his successful business. It's on another stage altogether.*

By Dan Smith

It took Ross Laguzza a good while to recognize the value in the frivolity of his youth, an avocation that could easily have been lost to neglect.

Ross, who is well known to the theater community in the Roanoke Valley, basically gave up on acting while pursuing his PhD, building a business reputation, starting a company (R&D Strategic Solutions, which has 30 employees and clients in every state) and living a life on turbo-charge. It took a while, but he figured it out. One day, in the middle of his long commute to work in Houston, he pulled over to the side of the road and had a clear moment. "This isn't what I want," he heard himself say. So, he and his wife Kris and their two kids moved to sleepy Fincastle where he found an acting gig with a community theater group—Attic Productions—and the acting bug had taken a chunk out of him again. "Once you re-open that door ..." he said, knowing he didn't have to finish the sentence.

Laguzza, 53, but with the visage and physique of a healthy 40-year-old, spends his business hours advising companies, "applying psychology to real-world

business problems. We help businesses think through exposures, decisions, priorities and the messages they are sending. We are a clinical psychologist to companies." This is a specialty-specialty that few others are involved in. In fact, when Laguzza was looking for a way to express himself in the doctoral program at the University of Nebraska, he designed a curriculum so singular that it was literally that: he was the only student in it. He had picked up bachelor's and master's degrees on the West Coast, where he lived.

Putting all that education in the bank took a lot of time and work, but he got there. All the while—especially during that intense period from his early 20s to about 30—he occasionally missed being the class clown, the go-to actor,

which he had been since he was 8. “When I was a little boy,” he recalls, “I’d go in front of the crowd at a movie theater—this was before ‘pre-feature content’—and do what I thought was comedy. I’d always try to garner as much attention as I could.” In high school and through his undergrad days, he was a standup comic.

These days, he’s still getting in front of the crowd—as director of Big Lick Conspiracy, an improvisational group, and as an actor with virtually every theater group in the Valley at one time or another. At the very moment of this interview, he was preparing to act in two different plays (one with his wife, Kris, who is an actor and a director) and had his improv schedule (which includes No Shame Theater) in the back of his mind. (Even his children are in theater. One just graduated with a theater degree and is working in it in Richmond.)

Almost none of this pays him or his wife, a fact that is sometimes acute. He points out that he “could be more successful by some objective measures” in his profession were it not for his avocation, but in his best psychology voice, he says, “The only way to win is not to play. My older brother sold all of his belongings a few years ago and lives on a boat in Seattle. He’s happy. I win when my priority is the theater ... That sounds strange to a lot of people.”

Especially his clients who are driven Type-As. “This wouldn’t make sense to [his clients]. They even find it hard to believe I live here instead of in a large city. There’s no reason to be here other than that we like it.” He says success is “a treadmill. There’s never an end to it. When you stop defining yourself with [your work] it gives you a freedom that is addictive.”

Big Lick Conspiracy occasionally plays corporate or school system dates, but generally it’s a matter of splitting the take at the door and that’s not much. The only theater in Roanoke that pays, says Ross, is Roanoke Children’s Theatre, so “it’s not enough to survive” with just the acting. Still, swing a cat in Roanoke and you’ll hit an actor, a fact that has both an upside and a downside.

“We probably have one too many theaters,”

## In Brief

**Name:** Ross Laguzza  
**Age:** 53  
**Company:** R&D Strategic Solutions  
**Location:** Roanoke  
**Background:** New York State native, bachelor’s and master’s degrees earned on the West Coast with a PhD from the University of Nebraska. Active in community theater since he arrived here 13 years ago. Wife Kris and two daughters also in theater.

says Ross. “I’m not suggesting that anybody quit, but the pool of talent is small and often we’ll have two different, good productions going at the same time, which we will very shortly at GAMUT Theater and Studio Roanoke. People don’t have enough money to go to all the productions” and some, frankly, aren’t well done. Still, the pool of actors being trained is large and some good ones are emerging, he says.

Community theater in Roanoke, he says, is relaxed and does not lend itself to the ambitious actor who wants to stretch himself, except on occasion. “Audiences are generous here,” he says. “The attitude is, ‘We’re all in this together and we’ll let that go’ when it’s not as good as it could be. I love that spirit, but for a serious actor, it is difficult.” While theater is not always good here, he says, “It is always interesting.”

Improvisation, his speciality, requires good mechanics and considerable discipline and rehearsal. “A lot of people wonder how you rehearse improvisation,” he says, “but you have to prepare for the unexpected.” That means basics, fundamentals and a lot of work. But not the kind that pays with anything beyond satisfaction. 

*(Note: Front Editor Dan Smith is scheduled to appear as part of an acting group that includes Ross Laguzza Saturday, July 7 at 8 p.m. at Hollins University Theatre.)*

# Hole in one, first time out >

## My View

By **Dan Smith**  
Editor

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

**Excutive Summary:** *Neil Sagebiel, the Floyd writer, made a hole-in-one with his first stroke, at least partly because of an agent who knows something about marketing.*

It has been a dream couple of months for Neil Sagebiel. His first book, *The Longest Shot*, was published by Thomas Dunne in May and by early June the New York Times had gushed about it. Neil, says The Times' reviewer Bill Scheft, "makes a strong bid to create shelf space for himself alongside 21st-century golf literati like John Feinstein, Mark Frost and Don Van Natta Jr." That's pretty good company for a guy whose primary notice had been with Armchair Golf Blog.

Neil lives in Floyd, having moved across the country from Seattle for "a newer, slower lifestyle, a downshift and a place to raise our [two young] girls." He was a freelance copywriter, ad copywriter and worked for the Seattle Times in its creative department, all low profile jobs that take a lot of skill, but don't get one's name in print. His skill is evident in his book, which is clean, straight-forward and without a lot of literary frills. It was a good way to approach this story, which is so strong that it doesn't need anything but a direct telling.

I met Neil at the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference in January, and he immediately mentioned his new book. That's not unusual at a writers conference. It is unusual that he had a major contract and that the book is causing quite a stir on a number of levels. His success is what the 150 or so writers who attend the conference each year are looking for. Few achieve it, though at this conference, I'd put our success rate against just about anybody's.

Neil says he was "thrilled about the positive review. Like the reviewer notes, I, too, was (am) an underdog. Getting a book published by a major publisher these days is extremely challenging. What kept me going was that I knew it was a great story—I never lost faith in the story idea."

Getting a book published by a traditional publisher today is one of many alternatives for writers (just like the major labels are among options for musicians), but it remains the gold standard. Writers want that contract and the money and prestige that come with it. Some can be quite successful with the alternatives and a contract with a publisher guarantees nothing, except that some people will pay a little more attention to your book. All publishers, of course, are not created equally. The big houses promote their books; the small ones and the academic presses don't. They pretty much expect the writer to do that.

The book deal, says Neil, "was the most obvious challenge. As a first-time author, every step of the process was new to me. I chose to try to attract a traditional publisher, so I needed



continued on Page 54

Summer School  
in Session >

By Tom Field  
Publisher

On Tap  
from the Pub

The jazz standard croons, "Summertime, and the livin' is easy."

Okay. If you say so.

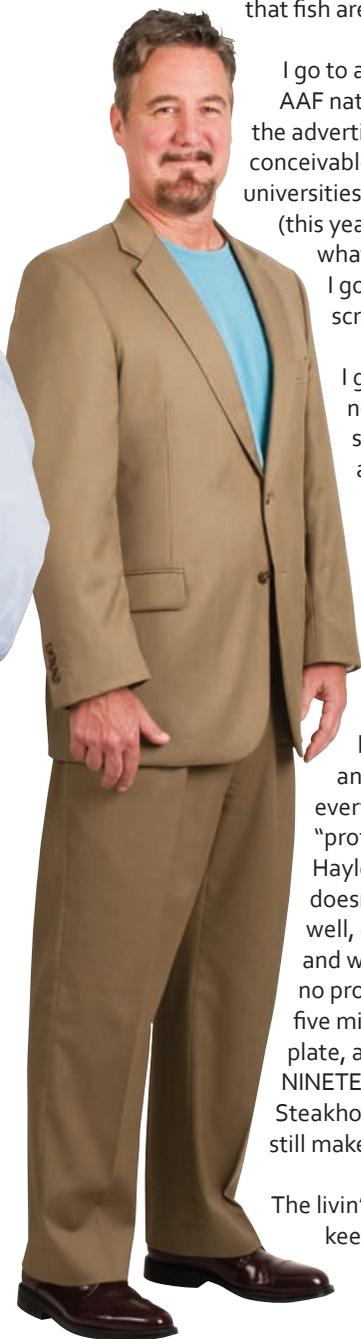
This summer it still feels like school. If "fish are jumpin'" the line only serves to remind me that fish are grouped in schools. Learnin' is everywhere. I can't escape it.

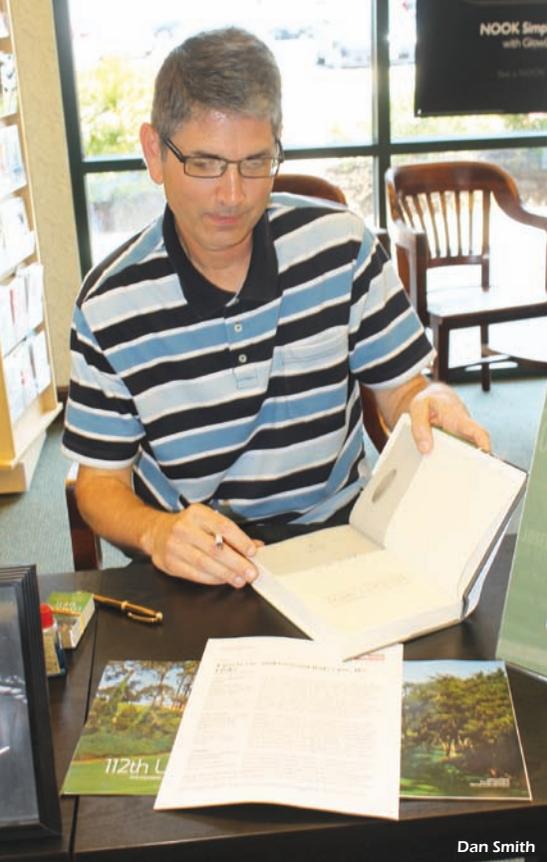
I go to a conference, thinking I might release. Instead I absorb. The AAF national conference in Texas is a compilation of the best talent in the advertising profession. And if hearing all that expert advice on every conceivable topic isn't enough, they march the sharpest teams from universities across the stage to competitively pitch a strategic campaign (this year it was for Nissan, and the University of Nebraska won, beating what I thought was the best effort by our own University of Virginia). I go to Austin dreaming of tacos and tequila. I return with enough scribbled notes to fill a ten-gallon hat.

I go to a quick three-day beach trip with the family. I read a two-bit novel about Spring Break written by a dude from Florida. That read so fast, I was forced to look for another book. My only option was a spare book in my wife's beach bag. Another two-bit novel about a family living in a New England beach house, written by a gal from New England. The lesson? Men and women really do think differently. Who knew sex in the northeast was merely one sentence long, preceded and followed by pages and pages of great sensitivities... Meanwhile, in the southeast sex is pages and pages, preceded and followed by... well, nothing really.

I go to a simple lunch. This is the one chance I actually get a steak by direct permission, because my wife and daughters take me, and it's Father's Day. Hayley orders her steak medium. She cuts up every bite-sized piece in advance. I'm not allowed to do that as a "professional" though that would be my preference, because just like Hayley, I prefer to work—then play. This time it backfires. Hayley doesn't realize until she begins to take her first bite that the steak is... well, quite a bit more red than she prefers. The waitress keeps checking and will not leave poor Hayley alone. After Hayley insists that there is no problem because the steak was prepared exactly how she ordered it, five minutes later the manager approaches the table. He demands the plate, and magically converts Hayley's steak to a medium well. ALL NINETEEN INDIVIDUAL LITTLE STEAK PIECES. The restaurant: Longhorn Steakhouse at Valley View Mall in Roanoke. The lesson: A business can still make something right when there was nothing wrong to begin with.

The livin' may not be easy just because it's summertime. But the lessons keep jumpin' at ya'. Like a slippery fish taco off a hot plate in July. 





Dan Smith

Neil Sagebeil at a recent signing.

## Smith / My View

from Page 52

a literary agent and a terrific book proposal just to get in the game. The *Longest Shot* circulated twice in New York and beyond over a two-year span. I had two agents—the first one essentially gave up. I also received over two dozen rejections, all pretty typical

for the publishing industry from what I've heard and read."

Finally, he landed a deal and "I was paid an advance, but ... I didn't necessarily anticipate a nice payday. I've read a lot about publishing through the years and understood that it's a difficult way to make money, even if you get a book deal from a major publisher (in this case, St. Martin's Press). This was something I really wanted to try just to see where it would go. I tried not to have expectations. I did know I had discovered a tremendous story. I never lost faith in the story idea, which kept me going." (The book is reviewed in this month's Books section.)

His first few chapters were good enough to land the book deal, he says, which is unusual for a rookie. But, as he said, this was a compelling story about an underdog, a struggling legend and hero and their times (the mid-1950s). It's a good story.

Neil, who played golf in high school and junior college, didn't find success with the book until he landed on his second agent, one who wanted him to completely re-write his book proposal—and not the book. It was a matter of the old ad guy learning to market his own work. At the next writers conference, Neil will talk about that aspect of publishing, one that often goes ignored ... like most first-time book writers. 

# Reach Out!

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## Letters

I look forward to receiving my copy of the VBF because I know the cover story will reveal some critical analysis on an issue of local importance such as the supermarket industry (June). It's important to highlight and dig deep into overlooked economic sectors of the regional economy so readers can better understand and act on the information provided.

**Stuart Mease**  
**Director Undergraduate Career Services**  
**Pamplin College of Business, Blacksburg**

As your "cover girl" for June, I found out just how well-read Valley Business FRONT is in our community. I got so much positive response about my cover photo (which I'm taking with a grain of salt), but also about the article itself. In typical FRONT fashion, your cover story was well-researched, well-written, and demonstrated a real grasp of what is going on behind-the-scenes in industry in this region.

It takes a long time to get to know the business community as well as you do, to be able to see beyond corporate media releases to the heart of the real story. In my work, I need that in-depth insight. Thank you, FRONT.

**Fran Ferguson**  
**Virginia Museum of Transportation**

I felt compelled to send you a note of thanks for how well you keep our Roanoke Valley citizens informed. Receipt of your monthly magazine is a highlight of the month for me, because I know I will learn more exciting things about what has and will be happening in the community I love. The insightfulness, creativity and appropriateness of your articles and editorials are superior. The magazine, coupled with your moreFRONT emails, your fromtheeditr.blogspot and the vbFRONT website are of great service in creating economic activity and development.

**John A. Garland, P.E.**  
**Roanoke**

Thanks for keeping print journalism alive. Our local daily newspaper carries fewer and fewer real articles, but more and more wire-service pieces and high school prom photos masquerading as "news." When I pick up the FRONT, I know I'll find original reporting and original photographs on every page. I'm so glad you had the courage to create a workingbusiness model for a strong local magazine. Please keep it up

**Keith Finch**  
**The Creekmore Law Firm PC**  
**Blacksburg**

Your business reporting remains at a consistently high level, and I appreciate the fact that you cover more than just the numbers and "inside baseball" trends and that you have an understanding of and feel for business as it is practiced in this region. Yours is a valuable tool to those who go to work every day, hoping our products and services are the best they can be. FRONT is a local business with a local understanding and you can see that reflected on every page of every issue.

**Jay Turner**  
**Turner Long Construction**  
**Roanoke**

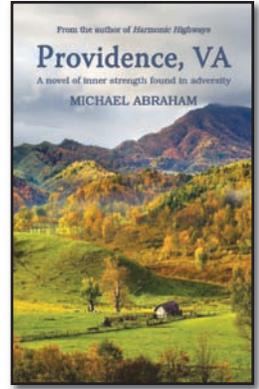
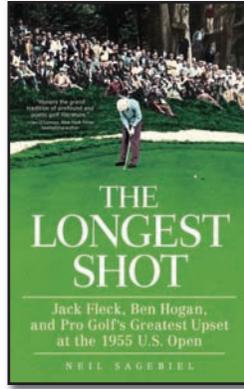
I have recently been introduced to Valley Business FRONT magazine, and needed to take a minute to let you know what a little jewel your publication is. Everything from its content to its size, color and layout, and talented writers is unusual and makes it an interesting read. There is a unique stamp on every page and a storytelling voice that sets it apart from competitors. I will be an avid fan for years to come.

**Leah Weiss**  
**Lynchburg**

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

## Books @ the FRONT >

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



### *Match for the ages*

Neil Sagebiel, a first-time-out author from Floyd, met aging Jack Fleck a few years ago, fell into conversation and the resulting friendship has resulted in the worthy *The Longest Shot: Jack Fleck, Ben Hogan, and Pro Golf's Greatest Upset at the 1955 U.S. Open* (Thomas Dunne Books, \$25.99). It's a book with an academic press title, but hardly an academic press's dull approach to one of the most surprising—and overlooked—upset victories in American sports history.

At the time of the 1955 Open, Fleck was a virtual unknown, at one point nine strokes behind the leaders and Hogan set the standard. But Fleck clawed his way back to a tie in regulation and won in overtime in a match whose descriptions by Sagebiel will have you on the edge of your seat, golf fan or not.

This is a fine read in the tradition of *Seabiscuit* or *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, a couple of good books about underdogs, comebacks and intense competition. Read it and understand that, as we keep insisting, some of the best authors around are in our back yard.

—Dan Smith

### *Lessons learned*

It would be only partially accurate to say that Blacksburg-based author Michael Abraham (a FRONT contributor) has “done it again.” True, his readers have come to expect a local setting, crisp prose and evidence of his understanding of and enthusiasm for Appalachian culture, most especially the music. In his newest book, *Providence, VA* (Pocahontas Press,

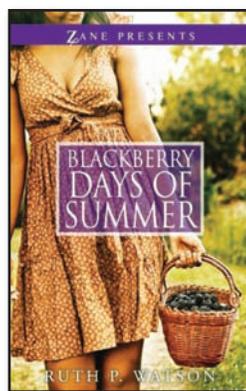
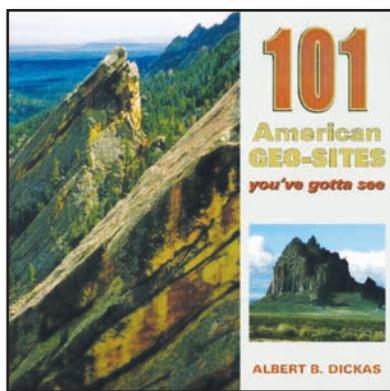
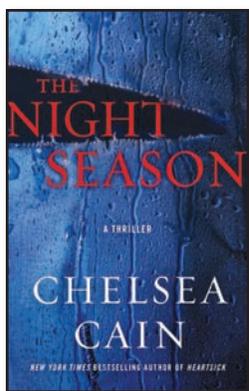
\$17.95), Abraham has indeed stayed close to home. This time, though, he's ladled in a strong dose of imagination and at the same time managed to weave a cautionary tale.

The plot is simple: a young girl ready to pursue a career as a violinist travels to Southwest Virginia for the Old Time Fiddlers Convention and delivers a spellbinding performance of her own before getting trapped by a freak event that brings the electrical grid down. Caught in a culture that bears almost no resemblance to her upbringing as the daughter of a wealthy New Jersey family, she learns (and so does the reader) a great deal about a raft of issues: sustainability, human kindness, how crisis gives birth to violence, and, of course, the healing power of music. In short, that best of all combinations—a story that turns the pages and a writer who knows how to make his point without wagging his finger.

—Rachael Garrity

### *Killing season*

Chelsea Cain, the queen of female serial killer thrillers, returns with her fourth Beauty Killer novel, *The Night Season* (Minotaur Books, \$24.99). Portland, Ore., police detective Archie Sheridan, one-time victim of the Beauty Killer and head of the serial killer task force, and newspaper reporter Susan Ward at first think the flooded Willamette River is giving up drowning victims after several bodies and skeletons, one more than 60 years old, turn up. The medical examiner upsets that premise; the victims were poisoned before their bodies were thrown in the river.



Portland once again thinks it has a serial killer on the loose. Archie and Susan worry that Beauty Killer Gretchen Lowell, in maximum security prison, somehow is involved in these murders. If not Gretchen herself, is this a copycat killer or a protégée gone rogue? The wild ride to solving these new crimes leaves Archie and Susan in peril and the reader wanting the next installment.

—Betsy Ashton

## Geological surprise

Any resident of Southwest Virginia, native or transplant, has no problem remembering to look at or talk about how visually rich the landscape is. But a volcano? No, a super-volcano, one that spewed forth what may well be the largest eastern United States eruption in the last 500 million years, depositing ash over an estimated 965,000 square miles from Vermont to Nebraska and Mississippi? With the help of a book by Blacksburg geophysicist Albert “Bert” Dickas—*101 American Geo-sites You’ve Gotta See* (Mountain Press Publishing, \$24)—and a sense of adventure, you can walk down a rail bed in a remote part of Lee County and grab a fistful of this ash.

Known as the Milbrig Ashfall, this is but one of many potential “wow” moments for the intellectually curious traveler in Dickas’ volume. Some are no surprise, but a host of others weave together a story of the Earth and its rumblings, shakings and earliest inhabitants. The book includes at least one site in every state. Great Falls and Natural Bridge are the other two in Virginia. It also begins with an introduction that explains in terms both easy to understand and wonderfully

without a lot of jargon how the study of geology has revealed early earth history.

—Rachael Garrity

## ‘Quick, captivating read’

Ruth Watson’s *Blackberry Days of Summer* (Strebtor Books, \$15) is a post-World War I murder mystery spun around the lives of two African American women. One, 15-year old Carrie, learns the hardship of growing up in segregated Jefferson County, Va., and is determined to avoid the same mistakes of her birth mother. The other, Pearl, is a 30-something night club singer in D.C. who regrets having her husband home from the war. She longs to be with her lover, a sharp-dressed drunk who has moved into Carrie’s life as her lazy lecherous step-father.

Throughout the tale, Watson handily weaves thought-provoking social issues of the day including Jim Crow laws, Negro League baseball, and back-woods abortions. She spins side stories with authenticity and unapologetically creates high-strung tension between sinners and church-goers alike. This is a quick, captivating read to be included on the summer book list. Some mild sex and profanity.

—Jennifer Bowman

**(The reviewers:** Betsy Ashton is a Smith Mountain Lake-based writer. Rachael Garrity is a freelance writer and business owner in Blacksburg. Jennifer Bowman works for Cox Communications in Roanoke. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT.)



Tom Field

## Clean Horses >

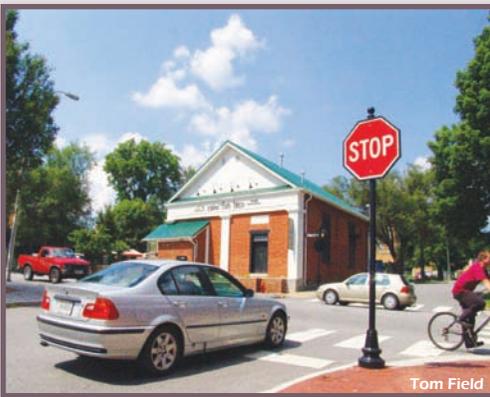
The entire Salem Civic Center complex transforms into a horse-lover's paradise June 18-23 as the **Roanoke Valley Horse Show** celebrates what has been called the longest running professional sporting event in the Roanoke Valley (since 1972). Canopies, trailers, boot-wearing crowds, and of course, horses take over the scene; including the need for baths in near triple-digit temperatures, as two young equestrians manage above.

## Food Talks >

The Public Relations Society of America / Blue Ridge chapter and **American Advertising Federation / Roanoke** club shared their June professional development lunches on June 21 at Hotel Roanoke to co-host Glenn Kent, Ph.D and his presentation on "The Supersizing of America: The Psychology of Decision Making and Influence of Mass Media." Kent demonstrated how food is strategically marketed in grocery stores and restaurants and to homes and the individual. More than one attendee noticed fewer desserts were fully consumed at this particular program.



Tom Field



Tom Field

## Blacksburg Eats >

"7 days. 16 restaurants. One town." That's how the first annual **Blacksburg Restaurant Week** was promoted by Downtown Blacksburg Inc. and The Blacksburg Partnership for its culinary culture showcase the week of June 18-24 to stimulate visits during the town's slower summer months. **Cabo Fish Taco** on South Main Street was one of the participating venues.

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



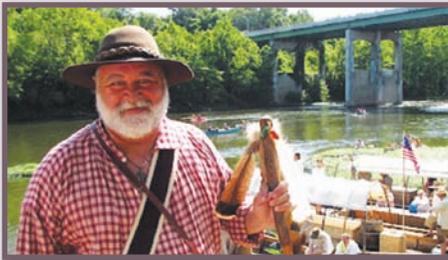
## New Rotary >

The new **Rotary Club of the Blue Ridge's New Generations** group for younger members, which was chartered in March and already has 40 members, met June 29 at 202 Market in downtown Roanoke. President **Ellie Hammer** of Merrill Lynch climbs up on a stool and brings the meeting to order. Watching are **Cassandra Carin**, **Ben Crew**, **Rene Reiner** and **Alecia Nash**. In the other photo, Treasurer **Joe Schaben** talks to **Bonnie Cranmer**, **Leah Cassell** and **Alecia Nash**.



## Batteaus Launch >

Floating from Lynchburg to Richmond over about eight days, the **Bateau Festival** launched on June 16, replicating the commercial river route of the mid-19th Century, before the railroad took over. The boats gathered at Percival's Island (just off downtown Lynchburg) in late morning, before a large gathering of well-wishers and participants, including **Jeff Taylor**, the voice and image of the festival.



## Summertime in Salem >

Summer outdoor concerts abound in FRONTregion, including the popular **Salem After Five** band series at the farmer's market. **Project 4** and **The Kings** perform for a sizeable crowd on June 22.



# CONTRIBUTORS

**Michael Abraham** is the owner of The Threshold Center, a shell center in Christiansburg and co-owner (with wife Jane) of publisher Pocahontas Press. He has written several books, the latest of which is the novel *Providence, VA*. [bikemike@nrnunwired.net]

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**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. [harshbrgr@aol.com]

**Mary Crockett Hill** is the author of several books, most recently *A Theory of Everything*, winner of the Autumn House Poetry Prize and an educator. She lives in Elliston. [marycrockett.hill@yahoo.com]

**Rebekah Manley** is a master of fine arts graduate of Hollins University in Children's Literature. She lives in Roanoke and is a Minister to Youth at St. John's Episcopal Church. She is the Roanoke Christian Singles Examiner for examiner.com. [rmanley@hollins.edu]

**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]

**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]

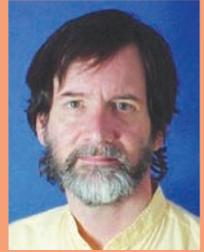
**Kathy Surace** is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years. [kssurace@aol.com]

**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]

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



Randolph Walker

June 2012 >  
Contributor of the Month

Randolph Walker recently returned to the FRONT stable of freelance writers and he returned with a fireworks show of both quantity and quality. Randy (as he was once known) has a perfect business writing style that mixes good writing with a "boil it down" mentality that tells you the story quickly and in an entertaining manner. His work is memorable and in the June issue, Randy was all over the place with stories on a lawyer-journalist, hospitalists and food demonstrators. That's quite a range and all of the stories are quite good. This is Randy's first Contributor of the Month award, but we bet it won't be his last. By the way, you can see Randolph Walker frequently performing in the region as a musician and singer. You can read Randy's current and back issue articles at vbFRONT.com

“  
I missed the  
twisty roads

— Page 41

## Veterans among Us >

They've been called the "next greatest generation." Veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are returning home with skills such as leadership and decision-making, as well as mechanical, information technology, medical and other types of training that can transition into the civilian economy, and they're entering the workforce in the Roanoke and New River Valleys.

Right now, the recent veterans—those who've served since 2001—account for just under 20 percent of the region's 40,058 veterans, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006-2010 American Community Survey. Look for both the number and percentage to steadily increase in the coming years.

Beyond the impact on the workforce, the recent veterans bring with them physical and psychological challenges, which will affect the region's medical and social

services providers. This comes at a time when the World War II vets are reaching their 80s and 90s and their compatriots from Korean and Viet Nam continue to age, leave the workforce and need additional medical care.

The younger vets in the region, not surprisingly, are found in greater percentages in the college communities of Montgomery County and Radford, and in the area's urban core of Roanoke City. The suburban and more rural areas are home to a higher proportion of the older vets. On the whole, the proportion of older vets is much higher in the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas (81.5 percent) than in Virginia (65.8 percent).

Veterans of all ages account for 9.4 percent of Virginia's population, and 8.5 percent of our region's. Just for localities, Botetourt, Craig, Pulaski and Roanoke counties, top the state's percentage.

—By Anne Piedmont,  
Piedmont Research Associates

## Veteran Population

	Veterans in the Population	% of Vets Serving Before 2001
Botetourt County	10.4%	82.2%
Craig County	10.8%	93.1%
Franklin County	8.8%	89.0%
Roanoke County	9.6%	81.6%
Roanoke City	8.6%	79.2%
Salem City	9.1%	81.3%
<b>Roanoke MSA</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>82.5%</b>
Giles County	9.3%	85.2%
Montgomery County	5.7%	75.2%
Pulaski County	10.9%	82.8%
Radford City	4.8%	75.7%
<b>Blacksburg MSA</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>79.3%</b>
<b>Combined Region</b>	<b>8.5%</b>	<b>81.5%</b>
Virginia	9.4%	65.8%



**James Glass: "My whole business model is based on getting me on every job."**

## It'll take longer and cost more >

### **Executive Summary:**

*James Glass does not equivocate. The former literary magazine publisher and bike repairman says good construction—the kind that lasts—comes at a price.*

**By Mary Hill**

There are some topics that don't normally come up when you talk with most building contractors. Things like Ivan Illich's political treatise *Energy and Equity*, Pascal's law, entropy, and the categorical imperative

of German philosopher Immanuel Kant.

Clearly, James Glass is not most building contractors.

It should not be surprising, then, that for many years, James Glass was not a building contractor at all. Rather, he started in business as the publisher of the small literary magazine *Window Thoughts*. "I liked arts and literature," he says; however, he quickly found out that the business of arts and literature is often paved with potholes.

When his publishing company went under, James got a job in a busy bicycle repair shop—an experience which started him on the path toward his current career. "What I actually learned most in the bike

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE

physics and philosophy—clearly set JGCo apart from the standard building company. Most notably, in a market that demands faster and cheaper everything, James tells his customers up front that his projects might well take longer and cost more.

“Building to code is the cheapest, easiest, lowest,” he says. “My work focuses on the other end of the spectrum ... Value in my metric does not involve ‘cheap.’” Another noticeable difference is James’s resistance to growing his business beyond the jobs he can personally handle. “The [company’s] projects will change, but the size will not,” he says. “My whole business model is based on getting me on every job.”

This system may not exactly be the norm, but it suits James, whose forward-thinking ideas about energy are at the foundation of his work. After all, the emphasis here is not on growth, but sustainability. James therefore focuses on reclaiming and reusing materials whenever possible in his building projects. He argues that while using recycled goods is easier, the recycling process itself drains an enormous amount of natural resources, so reusing materials is more efficient.

Similarly, when bidding for a remodeling job, James considers the overall efficiency of various approaches before recommending solutions. Customers “might come to me because they have a plumbing problem [that requires stripping a wall] ... but it’s a categorical violation of energy management not to replace [substandard] wiring when you already have the wall out,” he says. Such considerations cost more, and James has sometimes lost bids because of that fact. “My value system drives my business,” he says, and then adds wryly, “[but] my value system isn’t always profitable.”

That’s not to say he’d do it any other way. “Now that I have these interests [in energy equity], I pursue them passionately. I don’t get distracted by shiny things,” he says. Or in the words of the immortal Immanuel Kant, “Morality is not the doctrine of how we may make ourselves happy, but how we may make ourselves worthy of happiness.” 



“  
”  
My value system drives my business, [but] my value system isn’t always profitable.

—James Glass, JGCo

Mary Hill

business was science, the science of repairing machines,” he says, “... and physics is the same in the known universe,” regardless of the specific machine.

In the early 1990s, James relocated from his home state of Wisconsin to Roanoke in order to be closer to his ailing mother. The move gave him the impetus to apply what he’d learned about mechanics to a new venture. “I’d become bored [with bikes], but I liked machines, so I moved on to cars,” he says. In Roanoke, James operated a specialized Saab repair business until 2009 when his building business, James Glass Company (JGCo), was born.

A few key elements—besides talk of

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT

### Banks

Valley Bank has named **Kevin Meade** executive VP and COO. New executive VPs are **Andrew Agee, Mary Hundley, Edward Martin** and **Connie Stanley**.



Harris

National Bankshares Inc. in Blacksburg has named **Michelle Harris** corporate auditor.



Brookins



Feury

SunTrust Bank, Western Virginia has named **Harvey D. Brookins Jr.** vice president and regional commercial banking team manager. **Carol Stackpole** has been named vice president and commercial client

services manager for Western Virginia. **Jared Feury** is the new senior vice president and regional business banking team manager.

MainStreet Bankshares of Martinsville has named **Freda Scott** a loan officer and **Richard Prillaman** vice president of credit administration.

**Larry Hurt** of Franklin Community Bank in Rocky Mount has been named a member of the Virginia Society of CPAs board of trustees.



Lewis

### Credit Unions

Freedom First Credit Union has named **Gregg Lewis**, Executive Director of the Community Alliance for Energy Efficiency (cafe2), to its Board of Directors.

### Mortgage Banking

HomeTown Mortgage in Roanoke has named **Dan Corey** vice president and mortgage loan officer.

### Wealth Management

First Wealth Management in Roanoke has named **Julie Williams** senior trust operations clerk.

## LEGAL FRONT

### Firms

Anderson, Desimone & Green in Roanoke has named **Holly Lorek** director of administration and **Liz Whitney** director of client relations.

## WELLNESS FRONT

### Clubs

The Botetourt Athletic Club in Daleville has named **Jason Bunn** fitness manager. **Jenna Bartlett** is the new wellness development director at the Roanoke and Botetourt Athletic Clubs. **Aaron Washington** is the new site supervisor at RAC Xpress.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT



LeClaire

### Construction

Thor Inc., a Roanoke general contractor, has named **Maryanne L. LeClaire** controller.

**Albert Constable** has been named co-owner and general manager of Paul Davis Restoration of Roanoke and Lynchburg. **Dave Gochenour** has been certified as a mold

supervisor and master plumber and **Melissa Gary** is a new job cost accountant. **Jim Harrison** is the new senior estimator.

## EDUCATION FRONT

### Post-secondary

Salem Schools has named **Mandy Hall** supervisor of business. **Mike Sebolt** of the system has been elected to the Virginia Society for Technology in Education board of directors.

## CULTURE FRONT

### Certifications

Christiansburg Aquatic Center employees have been certified as aquatic facilities operators. They are **Terry Caldwell, Allison Zuchowski, Wayne Hunter, John Linkous, Joseph Champion** and **Lauren Woodcock**.

## OTHER FRONTS

### Corrections

The New River Valley Juvenile Detention Home in Christiansburg has named **Joseph Young Jr.** superintendent.

### Exterminating

**Kristi Woods Crutchfield** of Superior Exterminating in Roanoke has been

## Have a career announcement?

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

awarded the Associate Certified Entomologist professional designation by the Entomological Society of America.

### Government

The City of Salem has named **Mike Crew** director of its financial software migration project.

### Organizations

The Blue Ridge Women's Center in Roanoke has named **Katie Fagan** director of development and advancement.



**Williams**

The West End Center in Roanoke has named **Rob Dean** of Frith & Ellerman Law Firm in

Roanoke to its board of directors.

**Tori Williams** of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce has been elected to the board of directors of Roanoke Valley Cool Cities Coalition.

### Wine

**Patrick Spicer** has

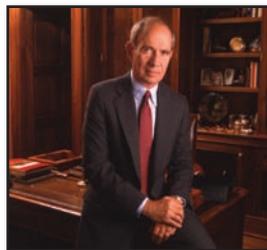
been named vice president of brand management and purchasing at Roanoke Valley Wine Company. **Tim Yaddow** is the new brand manager.



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# FRONT Notes



**Crystal Tower Building**

*More downtown apartments*

With the addition of Khans Builders and Contractors' 70 apartments in its recently-purchased

**Crystal Tower Building**

in downtown Roanoke, the number of recently-opened or under construction units will rise to 240, giving the area a crowded look. Developers Faisal and John Khan (father-son) paid \$1.3 million for the Crystal Tower, down from an original price of \$2.25 million.

The building has 78,000 square feet and will be broken into mostly one-bedroom apartments. It was built in 1931 as the Ponce de Leon Hotel.

a group of locals, which happened. However, his status was reconsidered by the new members of the board and he won the appointment.

Trimming hours for a number of employees had been considered.

*NRV on Forbes list*

The **New River Valley** has been named to Forbes' list of the 10 "Best Small Cities for Jobs." The Blacksburg-Christiansburg metro ranked 5th nationally against 242 MSAs with less than 150,000 jobs. According to Forbes.com, rankings were based on recent growth trends, mid-term growth,

*Larowe selected*

Michael Larowe, the controversial figure in the board takeover of the **Bank of Floyd**, has been named CEO in a surprise move. Larowe was at the center of considerable negative discussion during the campaign to take over the board by

*Rowe cuts jobs*

Elliston's **Rowe Furniture Company** plans to trim the number of employees working in its manufacturing facility. A news release said, "We believe it is best to keep as many employees as possible working at a more full time level."



## 3rd Annual **SECOND RUNWAY**

Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, Jefferson Center, Roanoke  
5pm - 9pm, show begins at 7pm

**GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY!**  
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long-term growth and regional momentum. These indicators were assessed using employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics from November 2000 through January 2012.

#### *Now the Fralin Museum of Art*

The University of Virginia's Art Museum will henceforth be known as the **Fralin Museum of Art**, in part because of the donation of 40 pieces of American art from Heywood and Cynthia Fralin of Roanoke. The Fralins

have been deeply involved in the Taubman Museum of Art in Roanoke, as well.

#### *Marathon means \$\$*

The third annual **Blue Ridge Marathon and Half Marathon** in Roanoke recently generated \$377,000 in economic impact, according to a new study. The 1,092 registered runners of America's toughest road marathon spent money as well as energy, making this year's race. To date, the event has contributed more than \$1 million to the local economy, according to organizers.

*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.

A post-race survey determined that the April 21 races created \$248,876 in direct new sales activity, plus an additional \$128,322 in indirect and induced spending—up 11.2 percent from 2011. Activity surrounding the event will support 4.9 jobs in the regional economy for

the period of a year.

#### *Earns certification*

**Sunapsys Inc.**, a control system integrator in Vinton, recently passed its Control System Integrator Association certification audit for the third consecutive time.

So much more.

**vbFRONT.com**

- > **TowneBank Moves into Roanoke Market**
- > **Tech's New Budget a Third Less Than a Decade Ago**
- > **Virginia Tech Research Spending Continues to Rise**
- > **MedExpress, LewisGale Sign Agreement**
- > **Economic Developers Meet at Virginia Tech**
- > **New Survival Kit from Mountain Shepherd School**
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- > **Roanoke-Based Shenandoah Life Exits Receivership**
- > **Business Grads at Tech See 'Bright' Outlook**
- > **Commentary: Roanoke Chamber Subverts 'Buy Local' with Magazine Deal**
- > **City Market Vendors 'Expanding' Up the Street**

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

# FRONT Notes



## Breakell Inc.

### Breakell sued

Often-honored Roanoke general contractor **Breakell Inc.** has been sued by Hanover Insurance Company because it is "unable to perform or complete the performance of ... work" it was awarded. The jobs are a \$2.5 million

wastewater plant upgrade in Pulaski County and a \$3.9 million Greene County athletic field renovation.

Breakell has been consistently honored for its green building projects over the past few years.

### Layoffs at Tread

Botetourt County's **Tread Corporation** in the East Park Commerce Center laid off a number of workers in June temporarily. The company has 170 employees and though the number of layoffs was not specified, it was reported to be

near 100. The company announced an expansion of 100 jobs about a year ago.

### tba best in show

**The Becher Agency** (tba) won best of show at the 2012 Virginia Public Relations Awards in May. The

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Roanoke agency was recognized with two awards for its work with the City of Roanoke to create and promote the Eat for Education initiative—an award of excellence in community relations and best of show for public relations programs.

*Brooks closes*

The Brooks Food Group's corporate headquarters Bedford facility has closed, leaving 119 people without jobs. The company, which makes foods for fast food restaurants throughout the country, is in the process of trying to sell the business. Brooks has a second facility in Monroe, N.C.



**WVTF Public Radio**

WBEZ Chicago Public Radio and WHYI Public Radio in Philadelphia where she led award-winning news teams and creative projects. She has also worked in public and commercial television, as well as print journalism. In 2004, she co-founded Lucid Dream Productions where she worked as

writer, editor, producer, and communications consultant.

*Company hiring*

**UnitedHealthcare**, which has 450 employees in Roanoke, plans to add nearly 100 in the near future. That will begin

with the addition to right at 50 in the Roanoke call center. The company works with Medicare and other retirement insurance and is part of the UnitedHealth Group of Minnesota.

*Compiled by Dan Smith*

*WVTF opens new bureau*

**WVTF Public Radio** and RADIO IQ has opened a New River Valley news bureau and hired veteran journalist Robbie Harris as bureau chief. Harris is the former news director of

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

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Ameriprise .....	71	Just Right Audio Visual .....	71
Beliveau Estate Winery .....	71	Lumos Networks .....	70
Berryfield .....	71	LewisGale Regional	
Blue Ridge Copier .....	34	Health System .....	4
Brambleton Imports .....	71	Mountain Lake	
Carilion Clinic .....	BC	Conservancy and Hotel .....	33
Controllers, Etc. ....	71	Professional Network Services .....	39
Corrigated Container Corp .....	3	Renaissance Computer Service .....	71
Davis H. Elliot Company .....	71	Rife + Wood Architects .....	30
Fantasy Creations .....	71	Spectrum Design .....	69
Global MetalFinishing .....	71	StellarOne .....	27
Goodwill Industries		Valley Bank .....	2
of the Valleys .....	66	Greg Vaughn Photography .....	65
Kathleen Harvey Harshberger		Wheeler Broadcasting /	
School of Protocol .....	41	WVBE .....	25
HomeTown Bank .....	37	Woods Rogers .....	28
Hunting Hills Country Club .....	43		

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