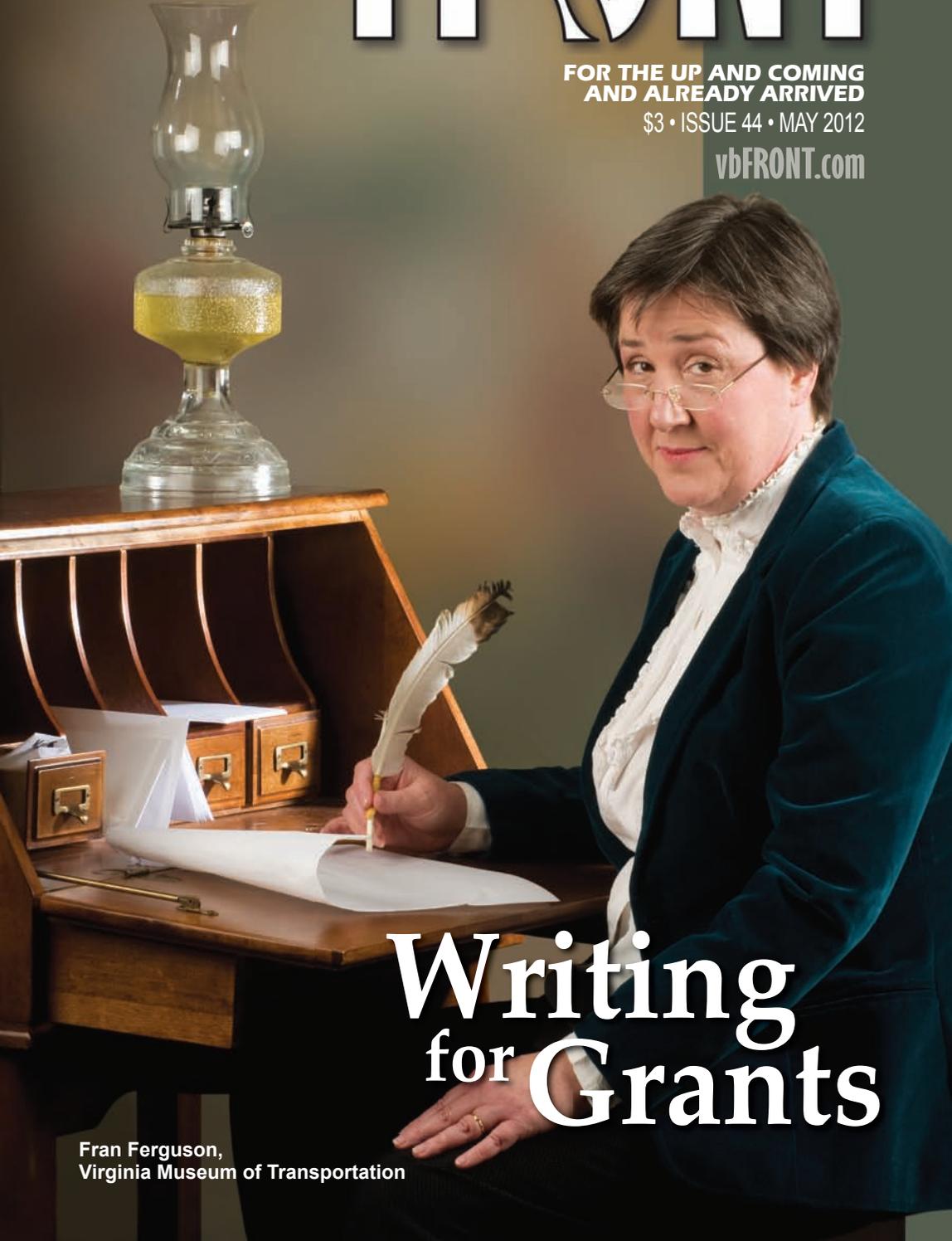


Valley Business FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 44 • MAY 2012

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Writing for Grants

Fran Ferguson,
Virginia Museum of Transportation

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ellis L. Gutshall".

Ellis L. Gutshall
President and Chief Executive Officer
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Some of the best business being conducted these days is the handiwork of non-profits who have been forced into business models in order to survive. You can look around and find superb examples that businesses could emulate: Goodwill Industries, Roanoke Rescue Mission, Total Action Against Poverty, the Roanoke Symphony and others.

A little more than a decade ago, the Virginia General Assembly began getting out of the culture business and the government of the U.S. has followed that lead. Many have mourned the loss because the arts has a civilizing effect, but others have not. They are the people who question government's role in culture.

Fact is, though, whether you're for or against government involvement, there's not much of it any longer and the arts and culture organizations and the social nonprofits have had to figure out how to survive. They've done it the way they always did with innovation and no small amount of grit and determination.

In the May cover story of Valley Business FRONT, Alison Weaver takes you through some of the steps, the challenges and the successes of the nonprofits, especially as applies to writing grant proposals, a key component. It's a good read and it's certainly instructive beyond the nonprofits.

Tom Field



Dan Smith



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Approximate size of tumors when discovered by mammography

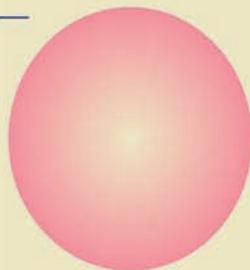
Average-size lump found by — **yearly** mammogram when past films can be compared.



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Cover photography of Fran Ferguson by Greg Vaughn Photography. Art direction by Tom Field.

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

Editorial Advisory Board

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS



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Greg Vaughn



Alison Weaver

“

Several reviewers noted that they'd seen comments on groups' Facebook pages that made them cringe

— Page 15

“

If it's not broke, I break it

— Page 60

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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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Writing for Grants



The art of the grant >

Executive Summary:
Roanoke-area nonprofits have discovered that a poor economy can make for strange bedfellows when it's time to bring home the grant money.

By Alison Weaver

With about 650 nonprofits vying for grant money in this region of Virginia, competition can be fierce. But instead of being divisive, the grant process has fostered new collaborations of even the most unlikely partners.

"The last three-year period, starting with the economic downturn of '08, caused a marked change in nonprofits such that I've never seen," says Alan Ronk, executive director of Foundation for Roanoke Valley and a 30-plus year veteran in the granting/development business. "It forced nonprofits to take a hard look at their missions, scale down and maybe even reinvent themselves."

Fran Ferguson, development director of the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke, describes the past couple of years as "really difficult. Many funders have switched to [funding] health and human services. Those of us in arts and culture can't begrudge that."

Resources >

GuideStar (guidestar.org) provides information on every nonprofit, including lists of who gave and how much.

Grants.gov lists federal grants available.

Council of Community Services' Nonprofit Resource Center offers grant-writing

workshops and technical assistance (www.councilofcommunityservices.com/programs/nonprofit-resource-center).

Foundation for Roanoke Valley's website (www.foundationforroanokevalley.org) offers links to dozens of nonprofit- and grant-related resources.

COVER STORY



One way the museum has not just survived but actually thrived is by joining with other groups to seek funding. “Almost everything we do, we have partners,” Ferguson says.

Partners in the rebuilding and expansion of VMT’s aviation gallery include NASA Langley Research Center, Carilion Clinic Life-Guard, ITT Night Vision (now ITT Exelis), the Civil Air Patrol and interns from Roanoke College and Virginia Tech. “They bring expertise and make everything we do better,” Ferguson says.

At Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, executive director Beth Pline says limited funding opportunities have led to “some really rich kinds of collaborations.”

A recent production of “Firebird” combined the energies and talents of Southwest Virginia Ballet and the RSO’s Youth Symphony. Another project was backed by a donor who wanted to fund music at the Taubman Museum.

As budget cuts reduced nonprofit staffs, RSO pooled funds with seven other arts organizations to pay for a shared IT employee at Center in the Square.

Share the wealth—or else

Those who hold the purse strings on grant dollars say they increasingly look for collaborative projects, in an effort to get more bang for the buck and share pieces of the grant pie.



Greg Vaughn Photography

Fran Ferguson of Virginia Museum of Transportation plays our 18th Century scribe on this edition’s FRONTcover. She’s not drafting the U.S. Constitution, but these days the task could seem just as daunting when trying to secure a little money for non-profits.



Dan Smith



There’s nothing worse than reading a lousy, poorly written grant.

—Beth Pline,
executive director,
Roanoke Symphony
Orchestra

Executive directors (from left) Rhonda Morgan (Arts Council), Susan Jennings (City Arts) and Beth Pline (Roanoke Symphony) work together at a coffee shop.



Good writing is good writing. You must marshal your facts and present your agenda as clearly and persuasively as possible. But each grant application is different, with different formats and different requirements.

—Dan Radmacher, communications director, Appalachian Mountain Advocates

Dan Radmacher: “You must marshal your facts and present your agenda as clearly and persuasively as possible.”



Keith Holland, who oversees the administration of HUD grants for the City of Roanoke, faces a 34 percent reduction in funding for HOME grants for the upcoming year. “It’s tougher and tougher for organizations to go it alone,” he says. “We encourage grant-seekers to work together. We look to see what kind of leverage they can bring.”

At Roanoke Women’s Foundation, Kandy Elliott and Jan Garrett say the group’s grants are designed for maximum impact. “We especially love it when organizations can use the money to leverage one another,” Elliott says.

Garrett says a 2010 RWF grant to FREE, a nonprofit group that refurbishes durable medical equipment, involved eclectic collaborators such as Carilion Clinic osteopaths, Goodwill and Cycle Systems, a company that recycles all manner of scrap metals. “They’re odd partners, but they’re doing amazing things.”

Survival grants

Historically, asking for funding for operational expenses was the kiss of death for a nonprofit. “I think that changed five or six years ago when we started to see a trend where really great organizations that do great work needed help with operating expenses,” Ronk says.

The Taubman Foundation, created by Ambassador Nick Taubman and his wife, Jenny, recognizes that dire times can bring even the best-managed organizations to their knees. One of the foundation’s focuses

‘Good writing is good writing’ >

Dan Radmacher was in the newspaper business for much of his career and was editor of the editorial page of a daily paper in the region until recently. He left there to pursue his passion: the environment. As communications director for Appalachian Mountain Advocates, one of Dan’s jobs is to apply for grants to help with the organization’s work in fighting mountaintop removal.

It is, he stresses, a different kind of writing for him. “At this early stage, I’ve mainly worked on grant renewals,” he says. “Those are easier in one sense because you have the original proposal to work from. But you



Dan Smith

Salem Museum's John Long: Grant meant expansion.

is to fund sustainability. "It's a way of encouraging them to get their houses in order," says Charles Bryan of Bryan & Jordan Consulting LLC, the firm that administers the Taubman grants. "Use the money to make your institution more financially stable, pay down debts, strengthen revenue streams."

Museum director John Long of Salem Museum and Historical Society says a sustainability grant from Taubman Foundation was crucial. "Their grants will even fund debt-reduction, too. That's just unheard of."

Despite the economy, the Salem Museum was able to secure

“ ”

In this economy, there are a lot of foundations stressing the human side of things. Arts and culture tend to drop down the list.

— John Long, museum director, Salem Museum and Historical Society

don't want to copy that verbatim, so the challenge becomes restating the same goals in new ways." One of his first original grants was "to purchase a high-def video camera to produce content for our website."

Now, "I'll be looking at a variety of different grants in the future. The challenge is two-fold for our organization: We are primarily a law firm, and many foundations hesitate to fund litigation. I am hoping that they may be more amenable to funding some of the communications work I'm planning. We focus on coal mining, while much of the funding right now appears to be focused more on later stages of the coal lifecycle: i.e., electric production and coal ash disposal."

There are differences in the two types of writing he has practiced, he says, but "the

basic skills are the same. Good writing is good writing. You must marshal your facts and present your agenda as clearly and persuasively as possible. But each grant application is different, with different formats and different requirements. Creating a cohesive narrative flow can be more difficult depending on the format of the grant."

Dan says grants are not do-or-die at the moment, "but if the organization is to succeed in the long-term, we believe that needs to change. This situation will give me time to develop the skills and contacts needed to figure out how to do this right." He's planning some formal training and "I've also purchased a couple of books and participated in a couple of webinars."

—Dan Smith



Dan Smith

Transportation Museum's Fran Ferguson (from left) with Courtney Plaster and Peg McGuire, whose jobs were financed with grants Ferguson wrote.



We don't want a lot of gobbledygook. The Roanoke Women's Foundation values clearly worded, concise applications.

—Kandy Elliott, co-founder,
Roanoke Women's
Foundation

funding for a recent expansion that doubled its space. "It's generated lots of excitement. Visitation is way up—we had 10,000 to 12,000 last year," Long says, compared with 6,000 or 7,000 annually before the expansion.

"When you fund a program, you get a program," Ferguson notes. "When you fund capacity, you get so much more."

A grant from the Taubman Foundation enabled VMOT to add marketing and public relations staff (Courtney Plaster and Peg McGuire), leading to triple the number of visitors and sky-rocketing sales in the museum's gift shop and online store.

Roanoke Women's Foundation also doesn't shy away from helping organizations meet basic budgetary needs. "We are one of the few organizations that funds operating expenses," Garrett says, and Elliott adds, "Don't invent a

Circle of giving >

In 2005, seven women banded together to create the Roanoke Women's Foundation, a philanthropic endeavor based on the concept of pooled giving. The formula is simple: members each make an annual donation of \$2,100 and then vote on which organizations they'd like to fund. There are no meetings to attend.

Although the concept is simple, the results have been huge. The foundation has doled out more than \$1.2 million over seven years.

Co-founder Jan Garrett said she had no idea what to expect the first year. "I was gunning for 25 people. I said, 'Can you imagine? We'd have \$50,000. Wouldn't that be wonderful?'" Instead, they recruited nearly 70.

The foundation solicited grant applications from a range of nonprofits and invited the winners to a luncheon. "Everyone knew they were getting some kind of grant, but they didn't know if it would be \$500 or \$2,500," recalls Kandy Elliott, another co-founder. "When we announced the first award of \$43,000, there was an audible gasp. No one could believe it."



Dan Smith

Kathy Guy of Gamut Theatre: Other lives.

project to get funding. We understand if you need money to keep the lights on.”

Squeezed out?

Some smaller nonprofits say they can only dream about tapping the grant market.

Kathy Guy co-founder of GAMUT Theatre with Miriam Frazier, says many grants apply only to organizations with paid staff members or operating budgets of more than \$100,000. “We totally fall through the cracks. Do you change your dynamic so you qualify? You risk changing



You don’t have to have a professional grant writer. If you know the project and are passionate about it, it’ll catch our eye.

—Jan Garrett, co-founder,
Roanoke Women’s
Foundation

Each year, the foundation, which has 126 members, selects two to six organizations to receive minimum gifts of \$30,000. The largest gift to date is \$100,000. “These are large-impact gifts that can truly change an organization,” Jan says.

The RWF operates under the umbrella of the Foundation for Roanoke Valley, which provides administrative assistance and expertise. Members include single, working women, well-known community activists and stay-at-home mothers from across the Roanoke Valley. “It’s not a closed sorority; you don’t have to be invited to join,” Kandy says.

It’s also entirely democratic. A committee reviews the grant applications and selects 10 or so for further consideration. Foundation members then vote on their favorite project. “It’s one person, one vote. Your vote’s the same as everyone else’s,” Jan says.

“You can never guess how the voting is going to turn out. We just want the members to make smart, thoughtful decisions,” Kandy says. “Giving out the awards is the most joyful day to me in the whole year.”

—Alison Weaver



The all-time biggest problem we have is that it's very difficult to find grants for animals.

—Dorothy Runion, president and director of operations, Roanoke Wildlife Rescue

your direction in order to create a project to land a grant.”

For now, the alternative theater has decided to stay small, producing three shows a year on a budget of \$10,000 to \$12,000. “Development is a full time, 60-hour a week job and we have other lives,” Guy says.

Like Frazier and Guy, Dorothy Runion of Roanoke Wildlife and Rescue fantasizes about being able to afford a grantwriter. Her organization provides treatment and care for wild mammals that have been injured, orphaned or displaced. “If we had a skilled grantwriter, our goal would be to move this facility out of my home,” she says. “We live upstairs and everything else belongs to the animals.”

She has crunched the numbers and estimates it would increase the agency's operating expenses



Dan Smith

Liz Belcher: Apply later. Good advice

Tips to improve your grant's odds >

Veteran grant reviewers have quite a few war stories to tell about the grant requests they see.

Overall, they say, the quality of submissions vastly improved with the advent of computers. “The ones we got last year were surprisingly well-written,” says Charles Bryan, whose Richmond firm administers the Taubman Foundation grants. “None came across the transom handwritten or in pencil, for example.”

While most of the errors aren't egregious, “Anything that slows down the process, is confusing or contradictory can harm an application's chance of success,” says Alan Ronk, executive director of the Foundation for Roanoke Valley. Here are some guidelines:

Follow directions. The primary peeve cited by reviewers is applicants' failure to follow directions. Follow the guidelines on the number of words, type size and margin size. Don't put your proposal in a binder unless it's requested. “We just have to go through and disassemble them,” sighs Ronk, who's spent three decades writing and reviewing grants. Be sure the pages are numbered, and don't include photos or brochures unless requested. Bells and whistles don't impress reviewers; they tend to annoy them.



Build relationships with the grant organization and the people in the organization. It's always worthwhile.

—Liz Belcher, coordinator, Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission



Dan Smith

Dorothy Runion of Roanoke Wildlife and Rescue: Home shared with the animals.

Pay attention to the basics. Misspellings, grammatical errors and garbled sentences distort your message and reduce its effectiveness, yet every reviewer cited these as common occurrences. Don't rely on your own proofreading skills; ask at least one or two other people to read the application. What seems clear to you may confound another.

Less is better. Provide the information requested as succinctly as possible. A proposal bloated with superfluous information doesn't make your case more persuasive. "I see those come in and I groan," Bryan says.

Ditch the boilerplate. Reviewers were unanimous on this one. Don't write a generic grant and shop it around to various foundations. Make sure the application is specific to the guidelines of the funder you're applying to. Ronk recalls getting a cut-and-pasted application that contained another foundation's name throughout.

Double-check your math. Be sure numbers on the budget sheet match the numbers in the text. If you say you plan to buy 30 book bags at \$12 each, make sure the figures add up to \$360.

Mind your web presence. Expect reviewers to visit your organization's website. Make sure all links are working and be sure the mission statement matches the information in your application. Be especially careful

with pages on social media sites. Several reviewers noted that they'd seen comments on groups' Facebook pages that made them cringe.

Do your homework. Peruse the funding agency's website and read the entire application and guidelines before beginning. Don't waste your time—or the agency's—by applying for a grant if you're outside the stated geographical service area or simply not a good match.

Attend training workshops. Find out if the agency offers training or informational workshops. Many do, and they say they keep track of who comes.

Call before applying. Most of the reviewers say they welcome inquiries. Give a brief overview of the type of funding you're seeking and see if the agency thinks it'd be a good fit. Liz Belcher, who writes grants for the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission, says this can be highly effective. "In one case, when I called ahead, they said, 'It's not a good idea to apply this fall. We've already committed all of our funding.' I waited until spring and got \$100,000."

Follow-up. Regardless of whether you get funded, keep in touch with the agency. Provide updates on progress, photos of completed projects and invite grant officials to special events such as ribbon-cuttings.

—Alison Weaver



Christina Koomen

City of Roanoke's Keith Holland stays away from newbies.

from less than \$24,000 a year to \$180,000 to move from its three-acre site on privately owned land in Roanoke County.

Ferguson agrees that it takes experience and large amounts of time to find, research and write grants. "One Transportation Enhancement Grant, I probably spent about a month on that one, and didn't do a whole lot more than that," she recalls. "It wasn't overly onerous; there were a lot of valid questions and data required: preliminary

Kandy Elliott announces \$50,000 grant for the food bank in March.



Dan Smith



Dan Smith

Alan Ronk: "Anything that slows down the process, is confusing or contradictory can harm an application's chance of success."

architectural drawings, aerial maps, contractors' estimates and so on. We put a lot of effort into that one because we wanted to hit it out of the park."

"It's not an easy process," Garrett acknowledges of the Roanoke Women's Foundation grant-submission process. "It takes a lot of time, but we want to be as sure as we can that it's going to be used appropriately. We're not talking about \$500; our minimum grant is \$30,000."

Many granting organizations flat-out won't consider funding start-ups. Holland says the city's HUD grants don't apply to new entities. "We're looking for someone with a history of success. I would suggest a start-up work with an established group" to obtain funding.

"It's not that anybody's against start-ups," Bryan says, "but they're risky business."

The Foundation for Roanoke Valley provides seed money, Ronk says. "We fund a lot of smaller organizations. We don't typically support a brand-new entity still in the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status, but come see us as soon as you get your IRS letter [designating nonprofit status]."

And for goodness sake, learn to play well with others. There's money in it. 

“ ”

We're not here to turn people away. On the other hand, we're not in the business of throwing money away.

—Dr. Charles Bryan,
Bryan & Jordan
Consulting LLC

“ ”

There's been a dramatic sea change in what nonprofits are going to have to do to remain viable and grow.

—Alan Ronk, executive
director, Foundation
for Roanoke Valley



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:

Bridal showers have changed over the years, but they remain an integral part of many weddings.

Bridal showers (a brief history) >

Summer is traditionally the most popular time for weddings, and before the wedding comes the bridal shower. Although the bridal shower has its roots in the dowry, an ancient practice whereby money, goods, or lands were brought into the marriage by the bride, it is not the same thing at all.

Today's bridal showers come in all forms and would be hardly recognizable by the bride of the 1890s when the tradition in the U.S. was borne among the upper classes. The bridal shower was originally a spontaneous, informal gathering. Friends arrived without warning and brought gifts. The name "shower" might have arisen from the custom of putting the gifts in a parasol (a fancy umbrella) which when opened, showered the bride with presents. By the 1930s the custom was widespread in the United States. Showers were usually held about a month before the wedding, in the afternoon (remember ladies usually didn't work outside the home) or in the evening.

By the middle of the 20th century, planning guides and advice on special themes and games flourished. One thing remained unchanged though: the shower was given by women for women. In the past, most showers outfitted the kitchen and the bedroom. This was probably because women were traditionally cooks, homemakers and, well, you know the rest. It was not good form for mothers, sisters or close family members to hold the bridal shower. It was considered offensive, even greedy, for family to solicit gifts for family. That custom has also changed over the decades, although this writer agrees with the convention.

Today, the bridal shower may take many different forms, and it is really up to the hostess and the bride to decide the theme. Some showers go completely over the top, with huge meals at fancy country clubs, and expensive presents. Others retain the more simple tradition of good friends getting together, bringing simple presents, and honoring the bride.

- Showers traditionally do not have the formal etiquette like that of a wedding.
- Bridesmaids or close friends usually are hosts.
- The purpose is gift-giving, so everyone is expected to bring a present.
- Invitations can be issued informally, by mail, e-mail, e-vite or telephone.
- Themed showers are popular, e.g. linen showers, gourmet cookware, or even lingerie showers.
- Couples showers have become popular, and men now are often included in the festivities.

A happy thought: If you are invited to the shower, you can expect an invitation to the wedding. 🍷

'Who Knows the Most?': A game >

Dear Anne: "I don't know" is not a sentence I enjoy saying in front of a meeting of co-workers. One of my jobs is to find potential product, service and market opportunities for our company through preliminary research. Note "potential" and "preliminary." If the company wants to pursue an opportunity, I become as expert as possible. If it doesn't, I don't waste time learning more. Whenever I make a presentation on these opportunities, there's a guy, at about the same level as I am in the company, who always asks a follow-up question that includes a term I don't know. It's like he collects jargon just to use for this purpose. He would be great at The New York Times crossword puzzle, but he's not great to have as a co-worker. I've tried explaining that my work is preliminary, defending my lack of deeper knowledge, introducing my report with, "This is, of course, an overview." Nothing I've tried stops him. What can I do?

Dear Potential: Who Knows the Most is played in organizations everywhere. The object of the game is to compete for, and to win, real or perceived power in the hierarchy by decreasing the real or perceived power of others. Defeating others one-by-one works, but there's a bonus for one-before-many. Your co-worker has introduced an interesting category of game pieces: vocabulary words. How cute.

Knowing that probably everyone else at the meeting notices on some level what Mr. Vocabulary is doing and thinks he's a jerk probably won't help. Yes, we all know that Mr. V is insecure, but he's still annoying. Telling you that tomes have been written about group dynamics and that this guy's behavior is classic will also be of little comfort. That it's the group facilitator—probably your boss—who needs to address this group member's behavior, not you, will be of less comfort, since that means your boss isn't as good as she should be. Pointing out that your corporate culture allows time for power plays rather than strategic plays will be a real groaner since that directly impacts revenue, which directly impacts your salary and benefits.

Mr. V's behavior, your boss's behavior, your corporate culture—all are beyond your direct power to control. You can, however, monitor what you think and what you do. Here's the underlying game dynamic to Who Knows the Most: no one ever wins. Someone always knows more than someone else. Paradoxically, that is your competitive advantage. Plus Mr. V's predictability. Have your narrative in mind and be ready when he says, "Was that DRY'd?" or "Is that participating deferred?" State the simple truth: "I'm sure someone knows the answer to that," and continue with your presentation. He won't stop. If you don't stop, though, he doesn't stop you. 🐾

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



Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:
Stand your ground
and learn how to
deal with the jerks..



Fit body, calm mind, great image >

In this column I often discuss the importance of appearance as a tool in your professional arsenal. Your wardrobe is an important part of the first impression you make in the workplace. However, no matter how high quality your clothing might be, nothing can replace a good foundation—a fit body.

Spring, with its fresh produce and warm temperatures, is a great time to reassess your typical diet and fitness level—and start an exercise regime that will showcase your wardrobe to perfection. It isn't even necessary to lose weight. Just regaining muscle tone and an overall higher fitness level will work wonders in your appearance.

Fitness and a streamlined menu can enhance your life in several ways. They will:

- Give you more energy.
- Make you feel calm and sleep better.
- Allow you to regain your focus.
- Give you a sense of accomplishment and well-being.
- Help you regain a sense of control.
- Give you attainable goals.
- Help you look younger and likely feel happier.

Don't like to diet? Simply reduce excess fat, refined carbohydrates and sugary drinks that sap energy and add pounds – then just add exercise.

How do you start an exercise regime and where? Joining a gym gives you access to machines to build muscle strength and stamina—even at late hours when you might avoid exercising outdoors. You can supplement your gym schedule by jogging outside when convenient. Visit a few of the gyms in our area. Each has its own personality and strives to meet the needs of their particular clientele, with something for everyone—at every price point. Ask friends or work associates what gym they recommend and why.

Consider hiring a personal trainer to target your needs and to avoid injuries. A trainer will assess your overall health and limitations, recommend a course of exercise, and can advise you on how to build strength without creating bulky muscles.

After selecting a gym, set a realistic routine that is achievable and start slowly to avoid injuries and burnout. Overdoing in the beginning is a common cause of failure to stick with a fitness plan. Choose a convenient time of day to work out and stick to it. If you miss a few days, forgive yourself and get back into the routine. Remember, any exercise is better than no exercise. 

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
*It's time to tone and to
refine your total look.*

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Rachael Garrity

Paul French: "It is a highly personal service."

'Work as it's meant to be done ...' >

Executive Summary:

Managing wealth involves a lot more than pushing paper around and Paul French at Plott & French in Radford extends the definition even more.

By Rachael Garrity

There are certain semantic affectations in today's business world that set the teeth on edge—sanitation engineer for garbage collector being perhaps the most often quoted. And then there are those that, when they're understood, actually mean something. So it is with "wealth management."

Paul French, who with his partner, Mary Plott, is in a wealth management business, is quite earnest when he describes his profession. "If one [and he does say "one" instead of "you," in a fluid British baritone] does this work as it

is meant to be done, it involves quite a bit more than investment advice.

"We are focused on providing the full range of services that will help our clients handle their money in ways that meet not just current, but future needs, and extend well beyond a decision regarding what to invest in. It is a highly personal service, and one that even includes helping to build relationships with other professionals, such as attorneys and accountants, who can enrich the process."

"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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French did not start his professional career by concentrating on financial services. Having grown up in Ipswich, slightly more than 75 miles northeast of London, he received a degree in chemical engineering from Exeter University, where he met his wife, Janet. Today she serves as the administrative associate for Plott & French, which is housed on First Street in Radford, just off the New River.

For the next two decades, his professional pursuits centered on manufacturing firms and took the couple first to Belgium, then Canada, New England, and Tennessee. Over that time, he moved from the production side of the operations to marketing. By 1990, he had landed a position as vice president for marketing with Arcade, the company that invented what is known as the "Scentstrip," that aromatic shiny portion of inserts in high-end women's fashion magazines. Arcade was sold in 1994, and the new owners wanted French to move to New York.

"I had a young family," he remembers, "and a large metropolitan area simply had no appeal."

Instead, he became chief operating officer of Magnox in Pulaski, a division of a Japanese company that manufactured iron oxide (rust) used in laser printer ink and in audio tapes. And then, as many professionals who have met with early career success do, he became interested in going out on his own.

"I thought long and hard about what I wanted to do, about something that would both put bread on the table and help people," he muses, leaning forward on his desk and tenting his fingers. "It occurred to me that I'd been involved in a wide range of financial decision-making in my various jobs, and that I'd spent a good amount of time on my own investment and estate issues. The base

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was there; I simply needed the training.”

In 1997, he officially began his financial services career, first as part of an American Express franchise. Then, in 2005, he and Plott, who also had been affiliated with American Express, decided to collaborate on an independent operation.

A good decision, given the crises that have followed since then?

“Absolutely,” he insists. “Frankly, the 2000-2003 period was much rougher than this most recent one. I believe our industry has learned how to handle these crises better, and I know we have. Part of it is skill, but another important part is that we have a better, more varied pool of investments from which to choose.”

The bulk of French’s clients are either professors or small business owners,

most of whom are either retired or expecting to retire in the not-too-distant future. And most have come to him as referrals from clients or professionals.

He devotes a significant amount of time to working in leadership positions with community-based organizations—Rotary International, Lions Club, YMCA—and professional alliances, such as the New River Valley Estate Planning Council. Even his “leisure” activities have a helping focus: witness the fact that he bought a boat largely to be able to work with the United States Coast Guard to help improve safety at Claytor Lake.

In sum, French may be an expert in the kind of wealth that carries a dollar sign, but it’s obvious he is not ready to give up on what is often called “the greater good.” Not just Wall Street, not just Main Street—and definitely not Easy Street. 



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A real potential for violence >

Executive Summary:

Don't think for an instant that "it can't happen here" because it can and it does.

By **Johna Campbell**

OSHA defines workplace violence as "any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting," which covers a lot of area. Business leaders are concerned because they can clearly recall situations in the work environment that fell into these broad categories.

They are right to worry as the Department of Labor estimates that "nearly two million American workers report having been victims of workplace violence each year." Sadly, the New River Valley has seen more than its fair share of workplace violence in the past few years.

Victor Cardwell, attorney and partner at



Dan Smith

Victor Cardwell: "Conflict must be dealt with in a healthy way."

Woods Rogers in Roanoke points out that it's crucial for managers to be assertive in dealing with issues. He says that many mid-level managers didn't grow up with

partnership

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Johna Campbell

Kathy Claytor: Show employees you care about their safety.

the same level of violence that we're experiencing in the workplace and may hold a sense of naiveté and denial regarding the potential for violence.

Cardwell says, "Violence occurs that is within the scope of employment, and sometimes when the violence occurs outside the scope of employment," the employer may still be held liable for the actions of employees. "Courts have limited the situation when an employer may be liable for the wrongful acts of its employees, generally holding that acts that are purely motivated by personal interests or that are outrageous in nature are to be considered outside the scope of employment."

There can be liability involved when a jury ties together any previous incidents in the workplace to a serious and violent incident. They often assume that the owner or manager should have known that something could happen. Leaders must believe that they've done all they can to minimize risk. Cardwell says employers have additional potential liability and can be held responsible for negligence in hiring, retention, security and failure to warn others about the dangers associated with an employee.

Aside from liability, Cardwell says there's a bigger reason to deal directly with potential violence before it happens. Bullying and bad behavior are disruptive and create dysfunction at work. People can't perform and it becomes a quality control issue.

When situations start to erupt, says Cardwell, managers often wonder, "If I address the issue, will the employee be mad at me? Will I make things worse?" Cardwell warns, "Conflict must be dealt with in a healthy way. Don't offer anyone the opportunity to Monday morning quarterback after issues have gotten out of hand."

Kathy Claytor, head of Human Resources at Corvesta Family of Companies believes early intervention in support of a healthy culture is the key to preventing workplace violence. She suggests the following

guidelines for building a culture of respect.

- Managers must take the issue seriously and go overboard to protect people.
- Make hiring and retention decisions so that the culture retains the company values.
- People listen to each other and are open to getting feedback.
- Show employees you care about their safety.
- Recognize good work.
- Focus on how work is interrelated and people work together toward the common purpose.
- Meet goals without sacrificing people.
- Enjoy what you do. Don't take yourself too seriously.
- Focus on people and work relationships.

Business leaders are responsible for output, quality and customer care and they must keep a finger on the pulse of the employees, understanding where the issues are and work hard to keep everyone safe. All this must be done while keeping a keen eye on the bottom line. It's not a job for the faint at heart. 

Made for TV doc >

Executive Summary:

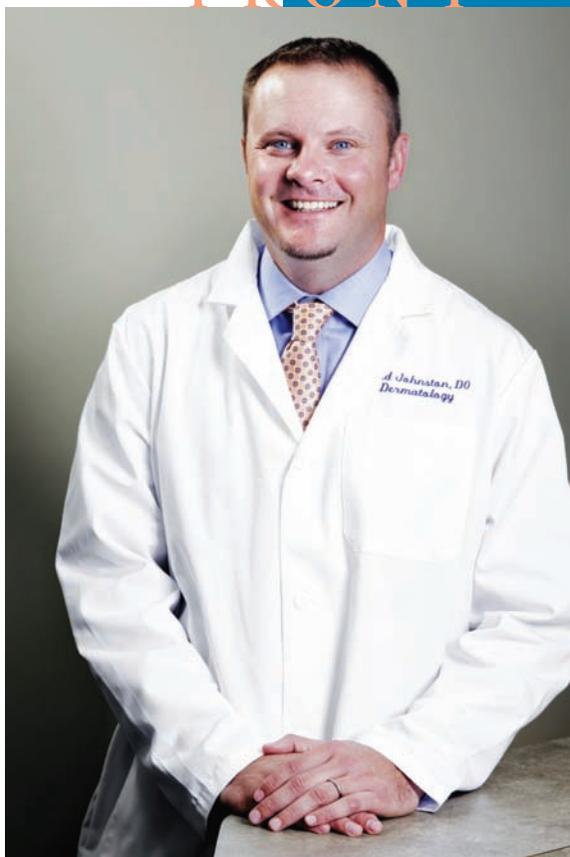
Former pro football player Chad Johnston of Blue Ridge Dermatology seems to be the prototype for the kind of medicine man we used to love and to trust.

By Rachael Garrity

The contemporary health care system is not often praised in America. It is, we are wont to say, “seriously broken.” Then along comes a practitioner who gives the lie to that claim.

Meet Chad Johnston. Young, unassuming, so focused on what kind of care he wants to deliver to his dermatology clients and what kind of life he wants to live outside his simple, but comfortable office, he almost seems as if he could be part of a new TV series.

The son of schoolteachers—one a coach and the other teaching English—Chad grew up in Peterstown, W. Va. He played football (quarterback) at West Virginia University, then for the Carolina Panthers after graduation. By the time he decided on a medical career, he was already married and had a child. He completed his training at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and went back to Morgantown to do his residency, fully intending to take over an orthopedic surgery practice when a cousin retired. Then, his



Chad Johnston: “No career is a good career if you go into it strictly for the money.”

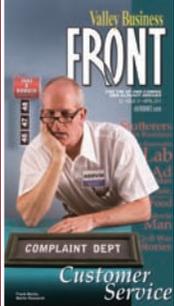
rotation in dermatology changed all that.

“I realized, of course,” he smiles, “that this is a competitive field, but as I’ve told lots of young people, no career is a good career if you go into it strictly for the money. You need to do what you like, and I really love my work.”

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



Coming Up...

June 2012

Grocery Stores

In the June FRONT, we go far beyond the "paper or plastic" question when it comes to grocery stores. Here's a business we drive by every day (and many of us visit several times a week) and probably take for granted. What's the state of business like for grocery stores in our region? In June, we take you inside... the grocery store.

July 2012

Volunteering

Volunteer opportunities in the region are growing as non-profits' budgets shrink. Business and individuals are contributing a great deal to keep vital services thriving. Raise your hand... we'll call on you to read our FRONTcover story on volunteering in July.

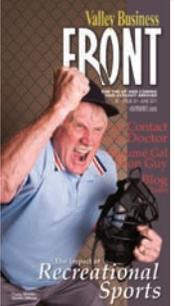
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Once he'd finished his medical training, Chad and his wife decided that Blacksburg would be a good place to rear a family, and he joined a local group practice. Then last year he was ready to go out on his own, found space in an office building facing Montgomery Regional, and launched River Ridge Dermatology, a full-service practice that some patients say feels more like a health club than a medical office.

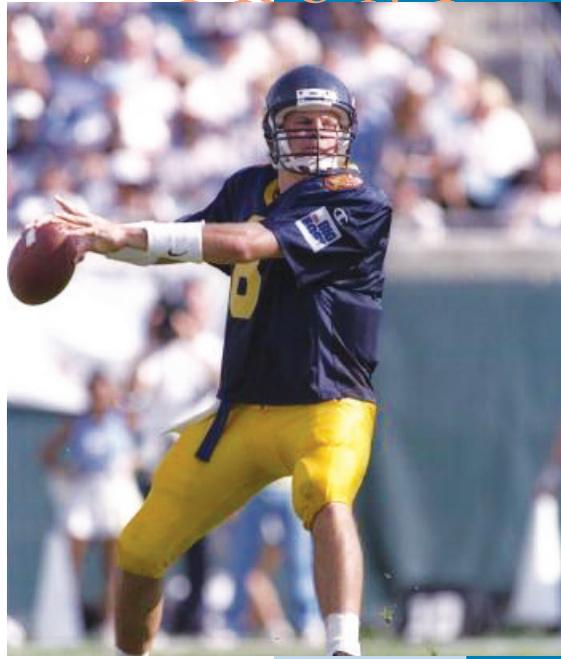
How's that? For one thing, there are no shelves of medical records. As Johnston explains, "We have access to an electronic medical records system that is incredibly efficient, which is not yet true across the board in general medicine or even some other specialties. Since it's web-based, we didn't have to incur a lot of expense installing and maintaining a server. The files are maintained in two different locations, to make sure the information is secure, and our practice management information, which is also web-based, feeds directly into the system."

Since the system is designed to work on a touch screen, Johnston's staff members use iPads for data entry. The time it takes for payments to be posted is significantly reduced, patients have the opportunity to view their own charts and update the kind of information that traditionally resides on a clipboard presented at the front desk, and photos—a crucial element of much of dermatological practice—can be shot via a smartphone and downloaded directly. No printing, no scanning, no problem.

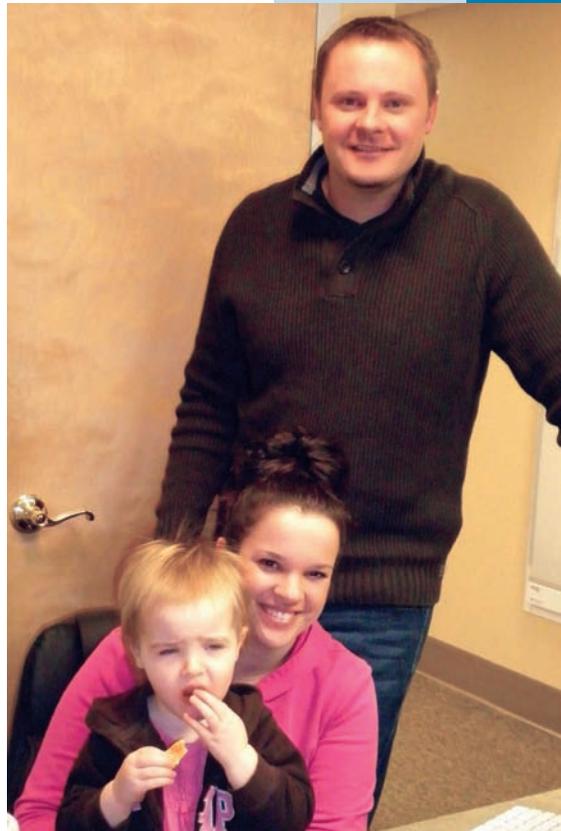
Meanwhile, Johnston is taking advantage of that increased efficiency to set aside some time to be out of the office and contribute to the community, not to mention to his family. A football coach at Blacksburg Middle School, he's passionate about attending whatever athletic events any of his three children—two sons and a daughter, ranging in age from 7 to 14—are involved in.

"They won't ever be this age again, and if I'm not there now, there is no other chance," he says, firmly.

Asked if he hopes to continue a solo practice or expand, he responds with characteristic candor. "Of course, I'd welcome the idea of having the right person join us, but I surely don't want to grow for growth's sake. Patients come first."



Chad Johnston at West Virginia as quarterback.



Chad Johnston with his family.

It was Yogi Berra who said, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up someplace else." Not to worry in the case of Chad Johnston. 



all photos: Michael Miller

Intern Matt Baer (from left) and MoGo Mobile founders Daniel Burgess, David Payne and Matt Dunleavy work on their software from their cramped quarters in one of Payne's spare rooms.

Augmented reality gets ... real >

Executive Summary:

MoGo Mobile's augmented reality will give you a look at what doesn't exist yet and other faux scenarios, thanks to a Radford U. professor and two of his students.

By Michael Miller

Imagine that you are building a new home. You walk onto your lot, which is still covered by weeds and brush. You take out your smart phone, tap on a special application, and then hold the phone up in front of you like a small window. The camera in the phone creates a display of the lot as you see it in front of you, with the architect's rendering of your finished house superimposed on the lot.

As you stroll around, you see the sidewalk in place, the landscaping already mature. There are drapes in the windows and a car in the

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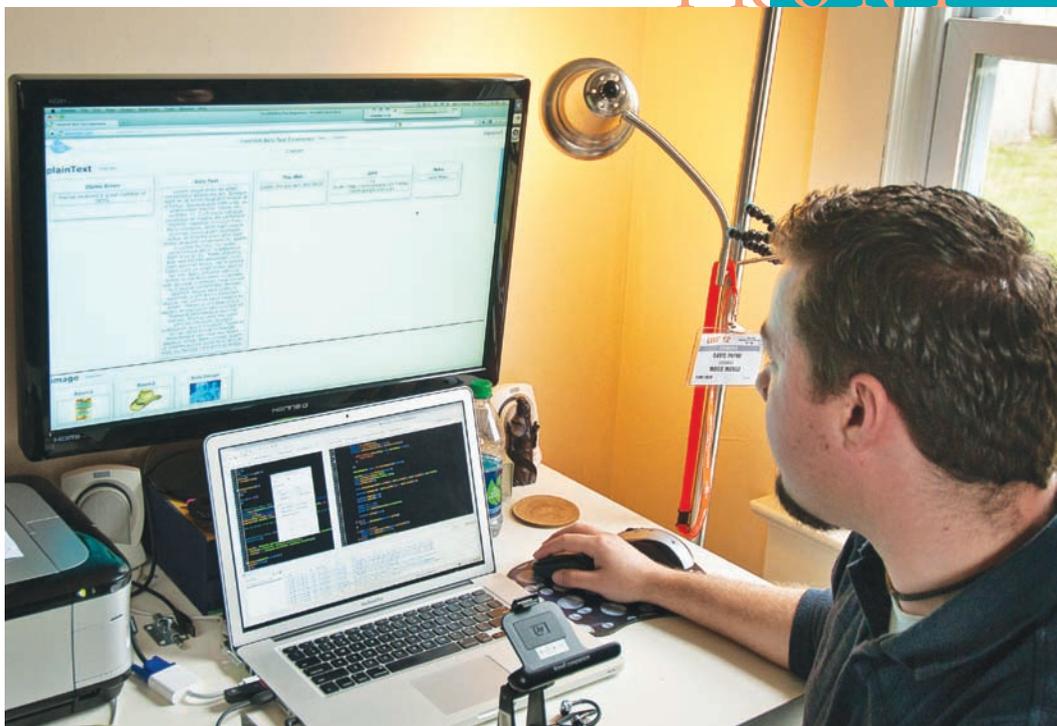
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Children's Etiquette Classes forming for the Summer



David Payne works on the final version of the Fresh Air augmented reality platform.

driveway. You make a mental note to ask the builder to push the structure about 10 feet back so there will be more room for those apple trees you want in the back yard.

This virtual excursion is made possible by a concept called "augmented reality," and beginning this summer, a regional company, MoGo Mobile, will bring it to a smartphone near you.

MoGo Mobile is the brainchild of Radford University Assistant Professor of Instructional

Technology Matt Dunleavy, who started the company about a year ago with two of his undergraduate students.

Dunleavy joined to Radford from a post doctoral position in the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where he cut his teeth on augmented reality applications on handheld devices. After his stint at Harvard, Dunleavy began to look for a faculty position. "I was looking for a moderate sized university that was not solely focused on research," he says, "and Radford was just that."

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Virtual snake eats virtual mouse on a smart phone.

When Radford took him on as assistant professor of Instructional Technology, he was provided with some initial funding to set up the simulation laboratory. But he was soon able to augment that funding with a \$500,000 NSF grant to explore ways to utilize augmented reality in education.

Two of his early students in the lab were Daniel Burruss and David Payne. They both transferred to Radford after completing associate degrees at New River Community College, and they showed particular aptitude in developing the applications for the augmented reality scenarios. Their success in the lab provided the impetus to take the technology to market, and MoGo Mobile was born.

Doing a startup is never easy, but Dunleavy had a few extra hurdles to jump because

Radford had never seen an invention disclosure before, nor had it any processes in place to set up a technology license. "Radford's been very supportive of our efforts," says Dunleavy. "We had to work through the challenges together. It was a new experience for all of us, but we were very successful."

And success is obvious by any measure. MoGo Mobile will release it's first product early this summer. The product is called Fresh Air, and it is a web-based development platform that allows users to construct the augmented reality experience using a simple and intuitive interface similar to a graphical editor. Essentially, it's like creating a multimedia experience with user-defined content and story line, complete with specified way points synchronized to a GPS location placed geographically using Google Maps. It's incredibly simple to use, and content is pushed immediately out to the individual smart phone or tablet.

Applications are almost limitless. Any situation where visual elements can be superimposed on a real-time scene is a candidate for this technology. Imagine a computer fantasy game played not from a chair in a dorm room, but in real time on the trail to the Cascades.

Imagine learning civil war history by watching a battle unfold before your eyes as you stand on the field at Manassas.

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Tech Scoop

Handling security threats at Tech >

Executive Summary:

Those potential attacks on our computer infrastructure are a high priority for one department at Virginia Tech, Hume Center for National Security and Technology.

By Michael Miller

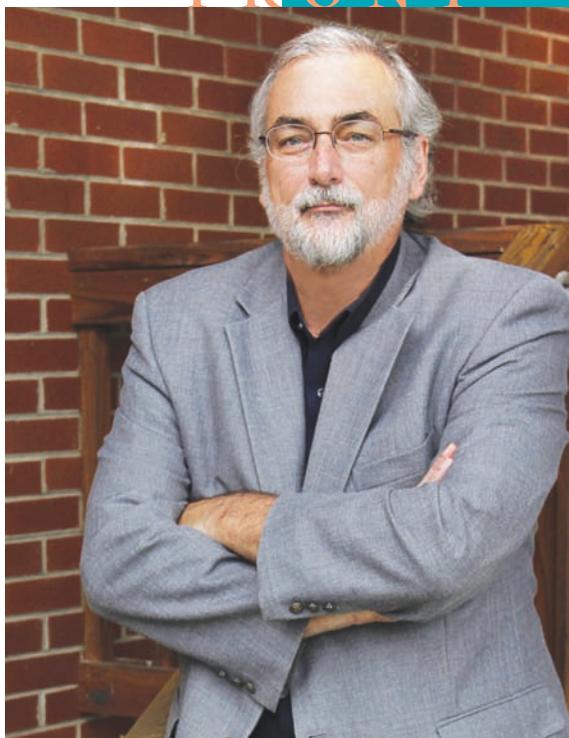
Most of us now have several devices connected through a wireless network in our homes. My printer even connects to the internet so that I can print directly from my phone or tablet, no matter where I am, by sending attachments to a special e-mail address. Cool.

At least I thought it was cool until I learned that this setup bypasses the security password on my wireless network and opens my whole system up to hackers. Surprise!

If you think I was surprised, imagine how surprised the government of Iran was when a similar vulnerability in the equipment that controls the centrifuges that are refining uranium for their “peaceful nuclear energy program” was used to command them to run so fast they destroyed themselves.

Did you realize that many of the computers we purchase are now being assembled in China, and that at least some of them come with spyware embedded in the chips so somebody can monitor the activity on your computer? We’ve become so dependent on computer technology that our largest security threat today may take the form of an attack on our infrastructure from within the system.

These are the sorts of problems that are being tackled by the Hume Center for National Security and Technology at Virginia Tech. Named for its benefactors



Michael Miller

Ted and Karyn Hume, the center manages research programs that focus on cyber security at the national level. Their mission is to train a new generation of leaders who understand these threats.

The Hume Center brings together a number of assets from Virginia Tech to research solutions to these security issues, including circuit design, software development, next-generation internet protocols, antenna design, and even social networking and cyber law. By bringing all these elements to bear on the various security problems, they try to stay a step ahead of the bad guys.

While still in its infancy, the Hume Center is already having a large impact. One of its early technologies can identify intrusions in computers by monitoring the “fingerprint” of power being consumed at key points in the circuit. Excessive power consumption indicates unauthorized activity and serves as an alarm. It’s very simple and very effective—so much so that spinoff companies are already forming around the technology so it can be implemented rapidly.

I’m actually feeling a little better, so maybe I don’t have to toss my printer when I get home tonight. 



all photos: David Perry

Work Spaces

German efficiency >

Executive Summary:

Worker comfort and environmentalism are priorities at Martin's German Service in Roanoke County.

By David Perry

"Building this building was a monster civics lesson," says Keith Martin, owner of Martin's German Service, which opened in southwest Roanoke County in 2004 after 15 years on the other end of town. "It's insane what you have to give away to satisfy the county."

But he complied and with that behind him, Martin is proud of his workspace's German-like efficiency. "The shop space is incredibly compact and efficient," he says. "We've got it all dovetailed so when I'm working on a car and we need to stop and wait on parts, there's a place right across the shop behind it."

The shop also enjoys some unique climate





Keith Martin of Martin's German Service

controls, including air conditioning, and a "large" fan. "There's a company out of Kentucky called 'Big Ass Fans,'" says Martin. "They get a lot of flack for their name." Martin has a 12-foot diameter Big Ass Fan which slowly rotates from the ceiling of his shop. "It's brilliant. It helps when the [air conditioning] is on, it helps when the heat is on, and it helps when nothing's on."

The fan company "has done a ton of research and knows how much air you can move before it becomes annoying," Martin says. "This thing is silent and instead of having little fans moving air fast and having that noise and speed problem, they move a lot of air slowly."

Martin also touts his environmentalism. "We're a green business," he says. "We capture all of our oil and we use it to heat [the facility]. All the metal parts we separate and send to Cycle Systems. All of our cardboard we store and take to Cycle Systems."

He even recycles his oil filters. "It's actually legal to put those in the trash," he says, "but we chose a long time ago to pay to have them disposed of."

And of course, the whole operation is about recycling at its core. Says Martin, "We take broken cars and fix them so you can continue to use them." 





Dan Smith

Connie Hale, her mother Reba and her partner Carla George

In Brief

- Name:** Connie Hale and Carla George
- Business:** Buffalo and More
- Type of Business:** A restaurant and retailer of local, ethically-raised buffalo and lamb
- Location:** Riner
- Founded:** 2008
- Initial Challenge:** Buffalo and More is the third in a series of buffalo-centric businesses in this space. The first owners, Jim and Jan Politis opened a retail store in 1995 to sell the meat of the buffalos they raised. The second owner, however, “really damaged the name” with extremely poor sanitation and business practices, says Connie. “A big part of the initial opening push was to convince people who had liked the original restaurant to give us another try.” More often than not, one day’s skeptical diner is the next day’s regular.

Food for the heart and soul >

Executive Summary:

Buffalo and More in Riner is the realization of a dream with a backdoor entry.

By Sarah Beth Jones

Buffalo and More is the kind of restaurant that connoisseurs of hole-in-the-wall dining go nuts over. Though it sits on Highway 8 in Riner, it’s all but hidden by its dark exterior, subtle signs, and the gas pumps in the parking lot. Inside, diners can take their pick of a hodgepodge of seating: cafeteria tables, yard sets and one bar-height four-top. The wall art is homey and quaint, and includes the sign reading “Remember:

Stressed is Desserts Spelled Backwards” and a knee-high buffalo statue that often wears seasonal attire.

Of course, rough can be charming but there has to be a diamond within to sustain a business. That’s where the food appears. True to its name, Buffalo and More has a wide menu that includes beef, chicken, pork and veggies, but focuses on healthier, locally-raised buffalo meat. They’re making really tasty meals—juicy burgers, slow-cooked buffalo barbecue and brisket, and unforgettable hotdogs topped with chili—with a meat that is 75 percent less fatty than beef.

Owner and Chef Connie Hale says it’s the healthier option that transformed the space from a standard family restaurant to the restaurant of her dreams.

“People are aware of the health benefits of



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Dan Smith

Buffalo Creek store exterior

buffalo meat and I feel like we're helping people live healthier lives," she says.

Connie and her partner Carla George came across the restaurant for sale in 2008, 23 years after Connie graduated from Radford University with a bachelor's in nutrition and the dream of some day owning her own dining establishment.

Standing outside a fence containing Connie and Carla's herd of 42 buffalo (and four donkeys) Connie says that being a restaurant owner has "totally surpassed anything I could have ever imagined."

For one, Connie never imagined a farm-to-table establishment. In fact, it was only when their local buffalo supplier decided to retire that they considered adding farming to their business.

The herd has been in Connie and Carla's care since November 2011, living and growing in rolling pastures just yards from where Montgomery and Floyd Counties meet.

"I don't see dollar signs when I look out there. They're our family," says Connie who notes that each of the buffalo has a name.

Carla is the first to admit that it took her time to adjust to the idea of not only eating

the animals they care for, but also making use of their horns, hides, hooves and so on.

"I've really come to see it as a sign of respect," Carla says when speaking of their goal of finding ways to use as much of each animal as possible. "I think I've wrapped my head around it now."

A one-time associate director of the Hickory, N.C., YMCA, Carla now splits her time between tending the herd and working in the restaurant with Connie.

She tells a story of being in the pasture with the buffalo when she heard the low rumbling growl of the most antisocial animal of the bunch. Fearing an impending stampede, Carla ran for the gate but, in her panic, couldn't open it. Imagining that the buffalo was in mid-rush, she turned around only to find that Buffy, the apparent queen of the herd, had stepped between her and the wayward buffalo.

Before anyone gets the idea that Connie and Carla's ethics have left the restaurant overly virtuous, it's worth noting that the "stressed" sign hangs over a case packed with cakes and pies made by Connie's mom, Reba.

After all, buffalo meat might be good for the heart, but chocolate chess pie is food for the soul. 



All photos: Becky Hepler

Phil Louer: "It was like a hurricane blew in."

Clogging and the 'pop operation' >

Executive Summary:

Phil Louer discovered a love of dance, a knack for building and a place to live at about the same time. His Happy Hammer and the Hoorah Cloggers emerged from it all.

By Becky Hepler

It is the iconic Blacksburg story: traffic-addled NoVA refugee finds serenity in Southwest Virginia and forsakes urban ways to go native. In 1968, Arlington native Phil Louer enrolled at Virginia Tech; soon thereafter the youth revolution finally got to Virginia and before it was over, Phil had a whole new way of looking at the world.

So he shucked the business major and took up sociology and carpentry, developed a taste for old-time and bluegrass music and settled into an Appalachian way of life.

The music took him to the Union Grove Fiddler's Convention and there he saw The Green Grass Cloggers for the first time. "It was like a hurricane blew in," he says. "There

was so much energy in such a choreographed way. I was totally enchanted." Even better, this style of dancing could be found in Blacksburg as well.

The Hoorah Cloggers (www.hoorahcloggers.com) are a group of likeminded people who meet every week to dance and to teach others how to do this high-energy art form. At one point, anywhere from 50 to 100 people would show up and in this arena Phil thrived, becoming a certified instructor and one of the main dancers whenever the troupe performed in public, such as the very first Deadwood Days, the forerunner to Blacksburg's summer festival, Steppin' Out.

Dancing even helped Phil find his wife. In 1998 at a Summer Jamboree presented by the Hoorah Cloggers, he noticed a new dancer, Anne Elise Thomas, a Blacksburg native who was going for a master's degree in ethnomusicology at Brown University and looking for a thesis topic. The two joined forces and spent the summer checking out any and all music festivals, where Anne Elise began to study the connection between dancing and community. The premise of her thesis was what Phil had been saying all along, "Dancing is the purest expression of community, people working together in joy."

After finishing the thesis and publishing some

articles from the research in it, Anne Elise was invited to speak at various conferences and she always took Phil along to demonstrate the steps and to answer questions about dance. After finishing her studies, she returned to the New River Valley and married Phil. She worked for a time in the Appalachian Studies program at Tech, but is a full-time mother to two young daughters.

To support this family, Phil is a custom home builder. After finishing school, he worked with several contractors in the area, but within a short time, he thought he could do this on his own, so in the late 1970s he started The Happy Hammer. He even built his own house.

"The Happy Hammer is a small mom-and-pop operation," he says. "So small, maybe it should just be called a 'pop' operation." Even so, he has a wide network of contacts so that he can sub contract all the necessary elements, serving as the overseer of the process. "It amazes me," he says, "you take a pile of wood and with energy and creativity, you make a home for a person. It's so satisfying."

Phil specializes in high end, custom built homes with many "green" features. While the housing market collapse has cut into that some, he still is finding work, including his current project, a home for the owners on the property of their horse training facility.



Phil Louer with his wife Anne Elise and the house he built

As a sideline, Phil is also a dealer for North American Gem Carvers, representing six artists working in semiprecious stones.

"You're providing a service," he says, "and in this economy, you have to be humble and willing to work with people. But you also have to give them good information and guidance to keep them from decisions they may regret later." 📖



Phil Louer (inside right) with some subcontractors



Amy Pendleton: "The only reasonable thing to do."

Teaching children with children >

Her concern grew and she began to spend her teacher planning hour volunteering to mentor pregnant teens. While this passion

Executive Summary:

Some people build something out of nothing because their heart tells them it's the right thing to do. Amy Pendleton's Perinatal Education Center shows her to be of those people.

By Johna Campbell

Amy Pendleton is founder and sole employee of the Franklin County Perinatal Education Center, but she didn't grow up thinking that this is what she'd do with her adult life. She was led here by happenstance.

Her story begins in 1987 when she was a high school teacher. While she was in the hospital having a baby, she discovered that one of her students was across the hall from her giving birth to her first child. Amy spent a lot of time over the next several days understanding the needs of young new mothers. The issue was how much was not being done to teach and offer guidance to at-risk future and current moms in Franklin County.

In Brief

Name: Amy Pendleton
Age: 56
Title: Executive director
Organization: Franklin County Perinatal Center
Location: Rocky Mount
Quote: "Children are our future and someday we'll be dependent upon them. We must take care of them."

Background: Born in Massachusetts and after completing her bachelors degree she moved to Rocky Mount. She taught in the public school system for 13 years then moved on to work for the local hospital helping educate women about their pregnancies. Amy is certified in multiple areas including child passenger safety technician, CPR Instructor, grant writer, and Doula. She is also a lactation consultant. In 2011, the Center served 4,300 people on a budget of just over \$30,000.

eventually landed her a position in the local hospital, ultimately, the programs and the position were eliminated.

Amy's passion remained. She lost her job on Oct. 31, 1999 and the Franklin County Perinatal Center was created the next day. Amy describes this move as "the only reasonable thing to do." She was supported by her husband and the community in this decision. Her journey has been fraught with pitfalls and stumbling blocks. The people in Franklin County and beyond have donated money and personal support to help.

Like many entrepreneurs, Amy talks enthusiastically about her passion. The beauty of her story is that, much like childbirth, she doesn't recall the pain but constantly relives the joy of overcoming obstacles. When she had the initial thought

of creating the center, a couple overheard her describing her challenges and offered to help incorporate and establish the organization as a non-profit. In the recent past, as she faced the burden of finding yet another building to rent to house the organization, an anonymous donor appeared with a \$250,000 check to cover purchasing a facility.

Amy is a full-fledged member of the "glass is half full club." She's been the sole employee for the Perinatal Center since 1999 and she's never received a paycheck. While she would like to someday be able to draw a modest salary for her work, she insists that the reward is the joy she from the work.

She lives in what she describes as a modest house on top of a mountain. She lives and breathes the Perinatal Center. 

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Mary Hill

Chris Gryder in his studio. His unusual method of casting objects from silt molds gives his pieces distinctly evocative textures.

The sultan of silt >

Executive Summary:

When the economy turned bad on the new architect, Chris Gryder decided to become an artist. And he's done very, very well at it.

By Mary Hill

Question: What does a newly trained architect do when the housing market goes bust?

A) Get married. B) Head for the desert. C) Join an experimental community creating a space-age metropolis out of river silt and concrete. D) Become an internationally sought-after public artist.

For Chris Gryder, the answer was E) All of the above.

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vbFRONT.com

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"I told myself, 'I'll go through school, do what I'm supposed to do, get good grades, and there'll be a job waiting for me out there,'" says Gryder. "But if an economy is trying to sour, architecture is the first place that a recession is going to hit."

After several years of struggling to land architecture work in Boston and Chicago in the late 1980s, Chris found himself laid off and at loose ends. But if necessity is the mother of invention, then recession is sometimes the soul sister of success.



Chris Gryder's artwork

When the unemployed Chris and his girlfriend Sheila Guarnagia (see *Valley Business Front* January 2012) decided to marry, they received as a wedding gift a



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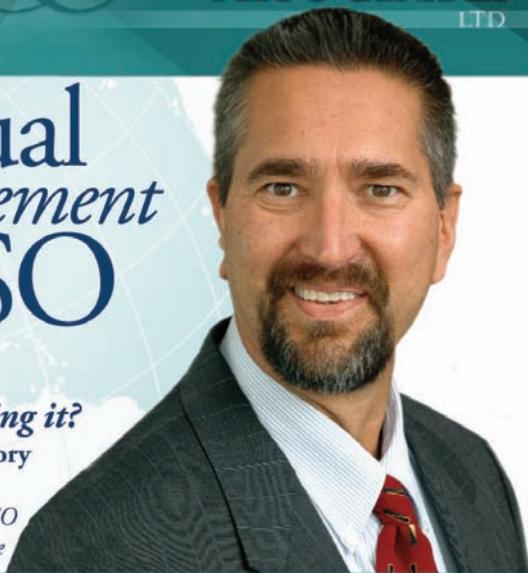
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five-week building workshop at Arcosanti, an Arizonian desert compound committed to visionary architect Paolo Soleri's idea of ecologically attuned urban development. (And yes, a number of Arcosanti's innovative structures were formed by heaping up huge piles of river silt and channeling concrete over the mounds.)

Chris and Sheila decided to stay after their initial workshop to live and work at Arcosanti for the next five years. It was there that Chris learned the process of slip casting (pouring liquid clay, or slip, into a mold to create an object) and

developed a passion for ceramics.

After leaving Arcosanti, Chris earned a Masters of Fine Arts in Ceramics from Rhode Island School of Design and began working the art show circuit. "Those types of shows are a sort of boot camp for artists," he says. "I had to figure out how to transport my work, design a display, talk to customers, sell the work—everything."

At the time, Chris was creating "sculptural vessels" (in laymen's terms, seriously fancy pots) and focusing on selling to individual



Mary Hill

collectors. He found a new business model, however, when he branched out into "relief panel wall assemblages" (seriously fancy wall tiles). Around 2002, an art consultant approached Chris about creating an assemblage with larger tiles to fit a specific space in the main lobby of a Pfizer Pharmaceuticals research facility in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"Doing that piece for Pfizer opened up a lot of doors for doing commissioned work," says Chris. "It was clear to me that was the way to go."

Chris used a network of art consultants to secure commissions from hotels, law firms, universities and hospitals across North America. "There was a six to seven year period when I could hardly keep up with the work," he says. Chris credits that success to his ability to design accurate renderings, fit unusual spaces, offer a clear pricing structure,

and create non-representational (but still "understandable") pieces. "People know what a tile is," he says. "It's less intimidating than some other kinds of fine arts."

With the recent economic downturn, however, much of Chris commissioned work has tapered off. He's found himself yet again in the position of needing to adapt his business plan in response to an altered financial climate. Instead of making one-of-a-kind commissions, for example, he has started to offer limited editions for retail. He's designing smaller works to fit in residential as well as business spaces, and he's returned to making vessels. In addition, he's using social media to help network with art consultants, selling work over the internet through high-end home decorating websites, and teaching workshops. "It's a new model for a bad economy," he says. 

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Banking the 80 percent >

My View

By Dan Smith
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *"Soft" skills are what employers want. Develop your primary interest, but spend time learning about the most important side of you in your job.*

Garry Norris, the human resources professional and former IBM executive, was talking the party line, the establishment meme. Twenty percent of your attractiveness to a company, he said, is based in your "hard" skills. That's expected of you. But it's the 80 percent—the "soft" skills—that get you hired and push you up the ladder.

The hard skills constitute your basic competence. The soft skills set you apart as a leader and a producer. They tell the world you can be trusted to give your best all the time, that you want to learn, that you can interact with other people, that you are confident and not just competent.

All things being equal with the 20 percent, says Express Employment Professionals' Norris, the 80 percent will get you the job every time. It will get you the job sometimes when your 20 percent is slightly deficient, because the 80 percent offers significant competence.

A room full of people at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center listened in early April at FRONT's Best Foot Forward style/etiquette conference as Garry and three other high-level business professionals talked about what it takes to succeed in business. There were not many surprises, but there was a great deal of information, specifically and directly offered. The note-taking was furious.

My brother makes a living teaching business executives how to lead and how to relate to others. He says that the most significant failures among those leaders—often the most learned and technical among them—is dealing with people in a productive manner. "They've just never taken the time to learn it," Sandy says. "It has never been a priority and their base skills are so good that businesses put up with them, sometimes to their detriment."

He talked of one high-level engineer he was contracted to coach one-on-one and the man was resistant from the instant they met: "I don't have time for this crap," he said bluntly. Sandy smiled. "And your company doesn't have time for your attitude. I'm being paid a lot of money to help you understand where you are falling short and the simple fact is that if I leave and you haven't improved, you are right behind me going out the door." That got the guy's attention and they were able to work successfully together.

The "soft" skills are vital. Sales people know about them. At least the successful ones do. Glad-handing is a marginal soft skill, but genuine interest in clients is a mature soft skill, one that registers success for the sales professional and for the client. Working together in teams is a soft skill and it is

continued on Page 50



Backstage
Happenings >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap
from the Pub

Grant writers. Now there's a crazy lot if there ever was, am I right? I've often told myself if I ever want to just get plum wild out-of-control, I want to go to a party where there's nothing but grant writers in the room. What happens in a grant writing conference—*stays in a grant writing conference*. Lock up your children, throw away all your recording devices, and make sure your shots are up to date. There's no telling what will happen when you're surrounded by the crazy men and women who write proposals for funding.

The great literary epic adventures portray the leading protagonists as heroic larger-than-life warriors, who often sit high on their steeds, holding the bloody severed head of their enemy, shouting at the troops, commanding them to sacrifice their lives in order to truly live. Of course the television commercial for Capital One credit card also shows this. And yes, I find that equally inspiring. I just want to charge up and off of my couch, grab my silver Capital One card, and swipe it through the air just like William Wallace and his sword as I order my Washington Redskins snuggie on the QVC shopping channel at 2 in the morning.

The hero holding the severed head is who we see.
It's who we want to see. He's doing something we all want to do.
He's commanding attention.

But somewhere, off in the troops, or back at the camp, is the blacksmith who fashioned the hero's sword. There's the stable hand who prepared the horse for battle. The cook, the nurse, the cobbler.

Our hero would be pretty embarrassed if his sword couldn't slice a ripe tomato. He'd look funny if his boots were too large for his stirrups. And if the severed head he held high was merely a head of cabbage, because he didn't trust his map-maker and simply raided a garden instead of the enemy fortress—well it just wouldn't be quite as inspiring. The whole scene wouldn't exactly rally the troops to charge the hill and slay the enemy.

Heros come from heros.

We need our little spectacle-wearing scribes, sitting at their desks in the back room, burning the midnight oil, putting out a call for action. A preamble to rallying the troops.

Actions great and small all begin with a word.

Whether that word comes from a sincere friend whispering something in your ear, a innocuous little comment on a Facebook posting, a scrolling sentence on a teleprompter, or a plea for a dollar on a grant proposal, it doesn't really matter. It does no good to sit high on your horse in front of the troops if you have nothing to say. 



Smith / My View

from Page 48

increasingly important in complex work settings where nobody can possibly know everything. Asking for help and giving it willingly are soft skills that could potentially be a threat to workers without the soft skill set.

In teamwork, we are often asked to give up our own short-term goals, our own spot at center stage so the team is successful. Athletes will tell you that a Super Bowl ring is far heavier and more impressive than an MVP trophy. A lot of MVPs don't have championships.

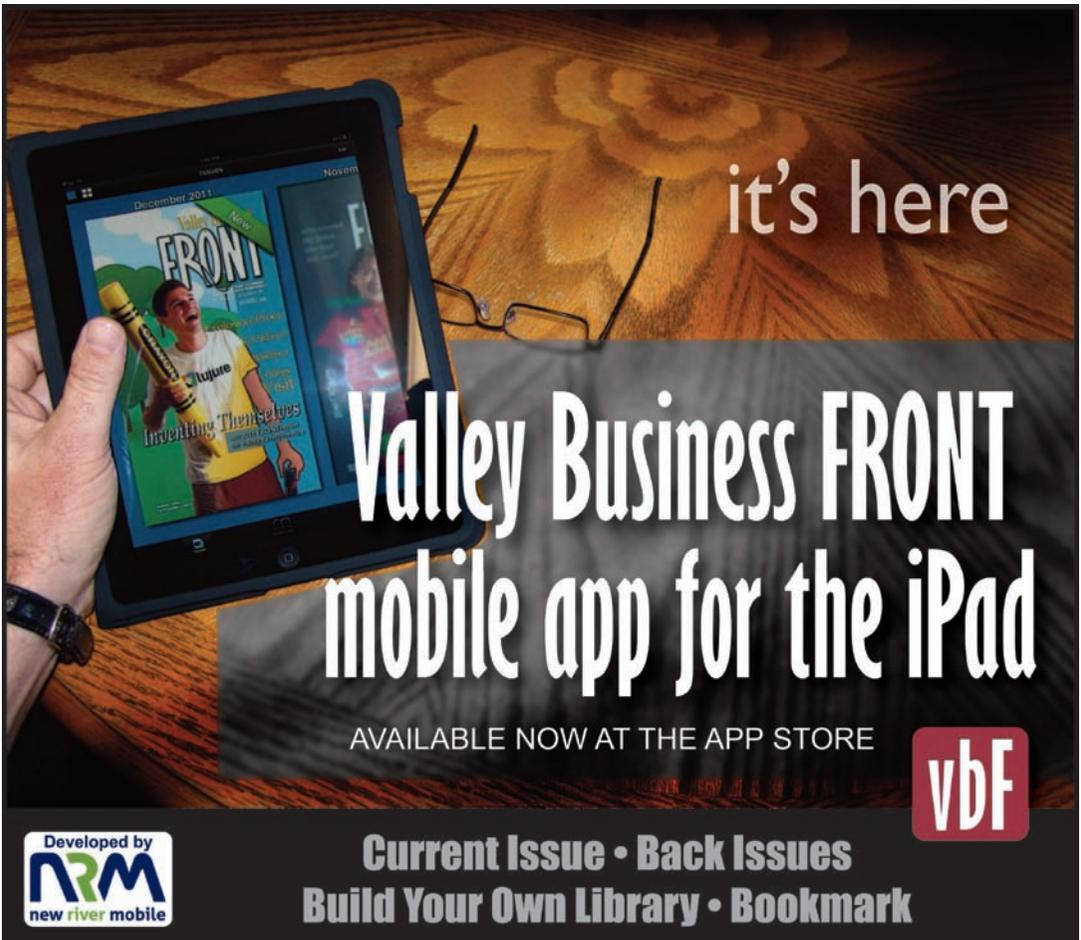
Most champions aren't MVPs. They are team players whose teams win. 

“ “ ”
It's insane what you have to give away to satisfy the county

— Page 34

“ “ ”
It was like a hurricane blew in

— Page 40



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Letters

BFF Kudos

Thanks for your hard work to make BFF 2012 ["Best Foot Forward" Business Etiquette Show at Hotel Roanoke on April 4] a great day. Folks have no idea what they missed!

Jennifer Leake
Roanoke

Zzzzzzz

Check out April's edition of Valley Business FRONT and the wonderful article about my friend Raquel Rothe with the Sleep EZ Diagnostic Center, Inc.! Good stuff!

from John Lusher
posting on Facebook/vbFRONT

Style Not Expensive

[The] Best Foot Forward Style and Etiquette conference, put on by Valley Business FRONT, had Goodwill on the runway! Local image consultant Kathy Lamanca put on a great show that featured the do's and don'ts of dressing for work. Check out the looks she found at Goodwill... the total cost of Alicia's outfit, featuring a Banana Republic top? Only \$8!

from Goodwill Industries of the Valleys
posting on Facebook/vbFRONT

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

“ ”

Don't offer anyone the opportunity to Monday morning quarterback after the issues have gotten out of hand

— Page 26

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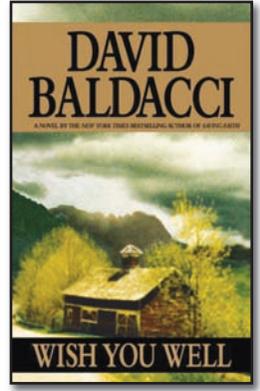
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



Book to movie

History and good story-telling create family drama in David Baldacci's *Wish You Well* (Warner Books, \$5.20 paperback, \$9.99 Kindle). The book, dramatically different from the Virginia writer's legal thrillers, is set among the hills of Southwestern Virginia.

Lou is a 12-year-old girl with her father's love of books. She and Oz, her young brother, must move to a mountain farm in 1940 after their father is killed and their mother left comatose. Great-Grandma Louise lives alone in a cabin with no water or electricity. Determined to protect her brother, Lou fights the school bully and learns to milk a cow. She also finds out more about her parents.

The book takes on the coal, lumber, and natural gas industries to show how companies move into rural communities, use up resources, and leave the population barren. It is a chilling discussion of power.

A movie based on the book is scheduled to begin filming this fall. Alleghany County is one of several localities vying for the film location. Sarah Elizabeth Timmins' Life Out Loud Films, the producer of "Lake Effects," is working on the film adaptation.

—Anita Firebaugh

A life on the New

Storytelling is an art—not a craft, and most assuredly not a science. Rare is the storyteller, though, who can come home after a full day's work, save ½ of his glass of wine from

dinner to take to his office, and sit down before his computer to write almost exactly like he spins his yarns. *The Cool Side of the Pillow* (Penworthy, \$15.95) is Blacksburg's Charles Lytton's second volume of stories about his childhood and early manhood.

It is a delightful romp through life along the New River—fishing, gigging, walking barefoot in the dewy grass, and sitting still for the ministrations of a mother or grandmother determined to dig out the briars earned picking mulberries.

To call this book a memoir would be like calling moonshine an *aperitif*. This is hearty writing, full of raw honesty and laced with a strong sense of the value of a chuckle now and then.

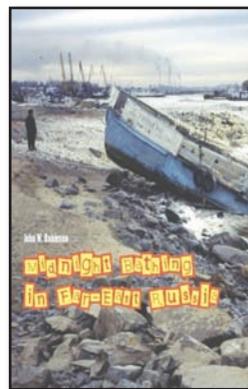
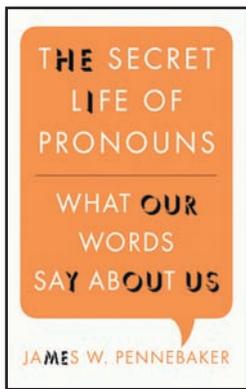
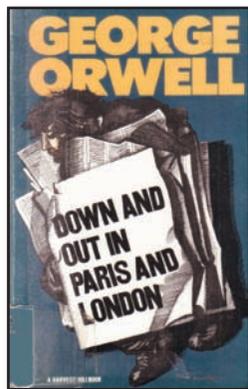
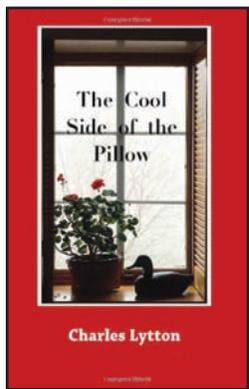
Readers will find it difficult to decide which Lytton loves more—life or the New River.

—Rachael Garrity

An old/new look

George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* (Mariner Books, paperback \$8.48, Kindle, \$7.98) is a timely read in today's economy - if for no other reason than to gain perspective.

This is Orwell's autobiographical narrative of how he survives the dank, wretched underbellies of two European capitals, first as a *plongeur* in the basement of a Paris hotel, then as a tramp in London walking from hostel to hostel, consuming only a cup of tea and two slices of toast per day. Set in



the early 1920s, the author learns first-hand how difficult it is for men to receive charity without forfeiting their dignity and that idleness will destroy a person quicker than disease.

Without apology, George Orwell notes that people also feel they have the “right to preach to you as soon as your income falls below a certain level.” A keen observation in any economy.

—Jennifer Bowman

Writerheads

Those of you who spend a lot of time with words (especially you Writerheads) will love JaMEs Pennebaker’s delightful *THE Secret Life of PronOUNs: What OUR Words SaY AbOUT US*, (Bloomsbury Press, \$28 or \$12.98 Kindle, and that’s what the title looks like on the cover). Much of this book examines how we use pronouns and what the use says about us in some telling, personal and even intimate ways.

This is not a business book (god forbid), but it could be used by people wishing to advance their careers (or their love lives or their friendships or their community involvement). Much of what we say, how we say it and how it is interpreted comes out in our use of pronouns. “I,” “we,” “you,” “they” and the like trip specific wires in both the speaker and the listener and Pennebaker explains the process in some detail—which is never boring. He’s a good writer and a good teacher. Pennebaker is social psychologist and language expert who uses his own research in computational

linguistics (counting word frequency) to demonstrate what language is saying, what it means and how it should be interpreted. Fine work.

—Dan Smith

Connections

You will be uplifted, and if you possess even a smidgen of author John Robinson’s wanderlust, then reading *Midnight Bathing in Far East Russia* (self-published, Nookbook, \$6.99) is also likely to inspire you. This book is more than a collection of the Roanoke dentist’s travel stories; it illustrates a way of travel, a way of life.

As you enjoy adventuring with John, you realize that no matter what lies next, he has a natural way of meeting it, with a smile. How does that work out for our author? I imagine John would say he’s had something else going for him, that we all do, the freely given, unmerited favor and love of God. Grace. And even if you don’t have a spiritual bone in your body, you’re going to be hard pressed to get to the end of this book and not feel like there’s something good connecting us all.

—Robert Issem

(The reviewers: Anita Firebaugh is a Botetourt County-based writer. Rachael Garrity writes and edits in Blacksburg. Jennifer Bowman works at Cox Communications in Roanoke. Robert Issem is a Roanoke-based freelance writer. Dan Smith is editor of FRONT.)



After Hours >

Beckie Spaid of AmRhein's enjoys a light moment at the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce's Business After Hours event March 29 at the Sheraton. She was chatting with **Trevor Berry** (center) and Roanoke College intern **Amanda Horn**. In the other photo, **Beth Garst** of Howl'n Dog Designs chats with **Randy Johnson** (center) and FRONT Publisher **Tom Field**.



Moon Over Hollins >

FRONT Editor **Dan Smith** (here with Hollins University President **Nancy Gray**) was the MC of the April 2 Goodnight Moon Parodies, a group of poems from regional writers based on the Margaret Wise Brown (a Hollins grad) children's classic.



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

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Chamber Expo >

Bart Wilner of Entre Computer Center pins one of his flashing stars onto the collar of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce's **Kristi Sutherland** during the Chamber Expo April 17 at the Roanoke Civic Center. Photographer **Jim Markey** takes a photo of the team at the U.S. Cellular booth. FRONT Editor **Dan Smith** presents 43 editions of the magazine.



CVB's new ID >

WDBJ's **Joe Dashiell** (bottom left) videos representatives of Mill Mountain Zoo at the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau's April 19 announcement of its new identify: Virginia's Blue Ridge. The zookeepers with their large lizard (and CVB President **Bart Wilner** in the background) were part of a grand fashion show designed to show off some of the amenities of the region. Architects **Gwynn Gilliam** (upper left) and **Lora Katz** of the newly formed Gilliam Katz Architecture + Design in Roanoke were among those attending.





Sustainable Workshop >

Cabell Brand of The Cabell Brand Center welcomes about 50 participants at the "Pursuit of Sustainable Living" workshop held April 20 at the Virginia Western Community College

Greenfield Center in Daleville. The daylong conference featured current environmental issues and perspectives from researchers, architects, municipalities, education, environmental organizations and concerned citizens.



Tom Field

FRONT 'N ABOUT



photos: Dan Smith



BFF Affair >

As part of its FRONTburner event series, Valley Business FRONT was host of the "BFF 2012" Best Foot Forward World Class Business Etiquette Conference & Show on April 4 at The Hotel Roanoke. The afternoon featured presentations by **Kathleen Harvey Harshberger**, **J.J. White**, **Leslie Coty**, and **Stuart Mease** on etiquette, networking, communicating, interviewing, followed by a panel of industry experts from **HomeTown Bank**, **Express Employment Professionals**, **Roanoke College**, and **Altizer & Altizer**. Dinner was served (with an introduction to dining etiquette) and the evening ended with a business fashion show by **Kathy Lamanca**.



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Dan Smith is editor and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT. A native of Asheville, N.C., he has been a journalist for more than four decades and has won many journalism awards (writing, photography and design). He is a member of the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame and was a 2009 recipient of the Perry F. Kendig Literary Award. He was Virginia's Business Journalist of the year in 2005. He is the founder of the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference. [dsmith@vbFRONT.com]

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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]



Kathy Surace

April 2012 > Contributor of the Month

Kathy Surace has been our Contributor of the Month several times since we began this enterprise in 2008, but never has her contribution been more significant than it was for our April issue. Kathy not only wrote her anticipated column, but she did our cover story on style. This was one of those rare stories where the only way we wanted to do it was if Kathy would be the writer/reporter, one who would add her own considerable expertise to the conversation. And, as usual, she nailed it. From Day 1 with us, Kathy has been an accomplished writer, something she wasn't even sure she could do. Her insight into business dress is always fresh, assertive and definitive, as was her cover story. Congratulations to a continuing MVP. You can read Kathy's current and back issue articles at vbFRONT.com



No career is a good career if you go into it strictly for the money

— Page 27

Income and poverty >

Low median household incomes and high poverty rates? Not so fast! Don't take the numbers at face value. The numbers behind the numbers are never more important than when discussing income and poverty.

While one locality, Botetourt County, had a higher median household income than Virginia's in the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006-2010 American Community Survey, it is important to remember that the region also has a lower cost of living. According to the Council for Community and Economic Research's 2011 Annual Average ACCRA Cost of Living Index, the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area's cost of living index was 92.4, well below the national average of 100. That means that while incomes are lower, so are the costs of groceries, healthcare, housing and transportation.

On a first glance, it appears that several communities in the region have high

percentages of people with incomes below the poverty level. Don't forget that the region also has communities with high percentages of college students, who typically don't have high incomes. The important take away for local economic developers and policy makers is to turn the students into high wage earners through the attraction and creation of good-paying jobs. A low cost of living is one advantage in this quest.

Higher median incomes tend to be found in the suburbs, with lower incomes in rural areas, the urban core and areas with large numbers of college students. It shouldn't be surprising, then, that the more suburbanized Roanoke MSA has higher median household income and lower percentage of people below the poverty level. The opposite is true in the Blacksburg MSA, home to both Virginia Tech and Radford University, as well as a more rural population.

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

2006-2010 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

| | Median Household Income | Persons Below Poverty Level |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Botetourt County | \$64,724 | 5.6% |
| Craig County | \$51,291 | 7.2% |
| Franklin County | \$45,555 | 13.2% |
| Roanoke County | \$59,446 | 5.1% |
| Roanoke City | \$36,422 | 20.9% |
| Salem City | \$48,828 | 8.8% |
| Roanoke MSA | \$48,032 | 11.9% |
| Giles County | \$41,186 | 15.0% |
| Montgomery County | \$43,229 | 22.6% |
| Pulaski County | \$41,163 | 14.7% |
| Radford City | \$29,155 | 30.8% |
| Blacksburg MSA | \$41,377 | 20.6% |
| Combined Region | | 14.7% |
| Virginia | \$61,406 | 10.3% |
| United States | \$51,914 | 13.8% |



Dan Smith

Chris Desimone at the Gator Gym in downtown Roanoke: "I don't want to get fat and happy."

The fighting lawyer (literally) >

Executive Summary:

Chris Desimone is not satisfied unless he's fully extended and boxing in middle age helps push him toward that goal.

By Dan Smith

Chris Desimone is the first to point out that this is not normal behavior. If he is nothing else, the middle-aged lawyer who never goes to court is certainly self-aware.

Chris grew up without the benefits of a middle-class youth and like so many who enjoy his favorite pastime, he became a boxer. He's played baseball and rugby and recently walked around with shiner that he got ... well, in a church basketball game. It pretty much all boils down to a level of competitiveness that few exert on a regular basis.

That competitive nature, he insists, has made him a lawyer that people can lean on when it looks like the world has landed on their future.

Chris boxed recently in a national masters tournament in Kansas City, a competition that has outgrown its normal showcase paired with other age groups, because there are so many middle-aged boxers. Go figure.

It is the one place where these guys can look around and see people their own ages, not the ages of their children. Chris, for example, generally works out at the Gator Boxing Gym downtown in Roanoke (at the old YWCA) with men from 19 to their late 30s. The masters tournament didn't have anybody in it younger than 35, but that's still a decade younger than Chris, who, frankly, doesn't look like he's in that age group's ballpark.

Chris came by this activity serendipitously as a paratrooper in the Army, a group of tough guys whose normal activity is enough for most. Chris seems to always need one more challenge, he says. "If it's not broke, I break it," he says, a laugh exploding. "I think it's part of the reason I have a degree of success in the law. I don't want to get fat and happy." Fat chance, so to speak.

Chris talks at length about the "tremendous support" of his large family, especially wife Laura who maintains the South Roanoke County castle and herds the kids. "No way

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

I could do this without her," says Chris. He also points out that the children "think it's cool" that he's trying to knock people's blocks off on a daily basis (often about six hours of training).

The kids, in fact, are busy with their own sports: basketball, lacrosse, swimming, dancing, etc. "We're not crazy-competitive people," says Chris. "We don't pound the kids to take part. They're not on traveling teams." But they're pushing the same envelope as Dad.

He's able to take such an interest in his avocation because "I had 90-hour workweeks to establish the business." It is established now and "this is the way I keep my edge. Every business owner, I think, needs to be dynamic." That means they need to extend themselves in ways you might not expect, he says.

The law his firm practices involves "a lot of trust work," including "massive accounts for foreign nations, billions of dollars." Still, with all that work and responsibility, "it's not as mentally exhausting as boxing." But, one would suppose, it gets close. "Boxing is so much more technical than you realize. It takes a great deal of discipline. A

In Brief

Name: Chris Desimone
Age: 46
Business: Anderson, Desimone & Green
Type of Business: Estate planning law
Location: Roanoke, Blacksburg, Moneta
Background: Native of upstate New York, educated at the University of Rochester and the University of Buffalo (MBA, law). Served in the U.S. Army (paratrooper and JAG Corps) for six years, leaving as a major. Boxed in the Army. Moved to Roanoke to be close to his wife Laura's family (she's a seventh generation descendant of the Adams family of Virginia, the one that gave you presidents). Bought the law firm 13 years ago and has taken partners since. Four children ages 15, 13, 11 and 7.

good boxer in a match with a slugging bodybuilder would crush him."

That's the kind of talk boxers like. Even the ones handling people's money. 



Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Insurance

Rutherford in Roanoke has named **Teri Harris** an accounting specialist.

Mortgage

UBS Financial in Roanoke has named **John Hoffman Jr.** vice president of investments.

LEGAL FRONT



Leloudis

Firms

Woods Rogers PLC has named **George Leloudis** as its new executive director.

Leloudis was with McGuire, Wood & Bissette in Asheville, N.C., where he was COO for seven years.

Tom Bagby of Woods Rogers in Roanoke was recently elected president of the Virginia Bar Association. The firm's **Webb King** completed a term as chairman of the association's Young Lawyers Division and was on the executive committee and Board of Governors; **Matt Pritts** was chairman of the Transportation Law Section; and **John Grove** is chairman of the Domestic Relations Section.

Hugh Wellons has been named a member of the corporate department of Spilman Thomas & Battle in Roanoke.

LeClair Ryan in Roanoke has appointed **Michael Gardner** to its legal department.

WELLNESS FRONT



Severson

Chiropractic

Dr. Michelle R. Severson has joined Tuck Chiropractic Clinic in Vinton.

Nathaniel Bishop has been named chairman of the department of inter-professionalism at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine in Roanoke.

Eldercare

Good Samaritan Hospice has named **Linda Manns**, a nurse at Loudon Avenue Christian Church in Roanoke, to its board of directors. The following officers were also elected to the board: **Kathy**



Stockburger

Stockburger of Stockburger Associates, chairwoman; lawyer **Anne Edenfield**, vice chairwoman; and **David English** of Strategic Crossings, secretary-treasurer.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT

Printing

Chocklett Press in Roanoke has named **Tracie Hoprich** a customer service representative.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Architects, Engineers

SFCS Inc. has promoted the following staff in

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Have a career announcement?

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



Pritchard



Matthews

its Roanoke office:
Melissa C. Pritchard
has been promoted



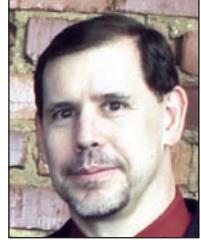
Landes

to vice president;
Winston A. Matthews
is senior associate;
Judy B. Breene,
Brenda Landes,
Aaron Compton,



Satterwhite

David Stultz, Ann M. Satterwhite and **C. Dereck Aplinare** are associates.
Vernon L. Feather has been elected to



Feather

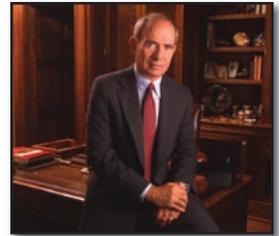
the board of directors.
Martha Chester has been named president of Hughes Associates Architects & Engineers



ADVANCE AUTO



MEDECO



BERTRAM FIRESTONE



BRUCE HORNSBY



ROANOKE TIMES



ROWE

gregvaughnphotography.com

Career FRONT

in Roanoke. **Alan Downie** has been named vice president.

Construction

Lanford Brothers of Roanoke has appointed **Patrick McDaniel** manager of its Bridge Division. **Mike Mitchell** has been named project manager.



Hoel

Thor, Inc., General Contractors of has named **Beth Hoel** assistant project manager.

David Stallings has been named director of sales and business development for Procon in Roanoke. **Shannon Lee** is the new commercial estimator and **Jeremiah Mistele** has been named director of commercial operations.

Housing

Shelia Stump, residential coordinator for SAS Builders in Blacksburg, has been selected 2011 Johnny Haynes Memorial Award/Membership Recruitment winner by the New River Valley Home Builders Association.

Land Trust

Diana Hackenburg



Hackenburg

has been named project manager for the Western Virginia Land Trust based in Roanoke.



Lloyd



Jarrett

Real Estate

Callie Dalton of Long & Foster Real Estate in Roanoke has been named a Hall of Fame member of the firm's Gold Team. As a Gold Team member, Dalton is in the Master's Club, having sold more than \$20 million for seven consecutive years, and over \$225 million in her career. Long & Foster in Blacksburg has added **Jessica Lloyd** and **MJ Jarrett** has joined its New River Valley office.

Clay Taylor has joined Waldvogel Commercial



Taylor

Properties in Roanoke as an agent.

Joe Craft has joined Park Place Realty in Roanoke as an agent.



VanWyk



Comer



Hodges

Justin VanWyk of CMG Leasing in Blacksburg has received certifications in HVAC and EPA areas. **Charlie Comer** and **Mike Hodges** have received pool and spa certifications.

Cornerstone Homes has named **Glenda**

von Dameck sales manager for new homes at Orchard Villas community in Roanoke.

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT



Hockenson

Auto Parts

Advance Auto Parts, based in Roanoke, has named **Markus Hockenson** senior VP for store operations.

Photography

Bruce Muncy of Muncy Fine Photography in Roanoke has been awarded the Associate Fellow of Photography designation by the Virginia Professional Photographers Association.

Utilities

Appalachian Power in Roanoke has named **John Smolak** its economic development director.

EDUCATION FRONT

Colleges

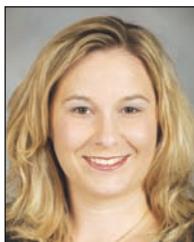
Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business **Dean Richard E. Sorenson** will retire in

July 2013 after serving the college for 31 years. Before being appointed dean and professor of management science (now business information technology) at Virginia Tech in July 1982, Sorensen led Appalachian State University's business school for nine years; thus, he will have been a dean for 40 years.

Health Sciences in Roanoke has named **Catherine Turner** resource development officer.



Sparks



Neff-Henderson

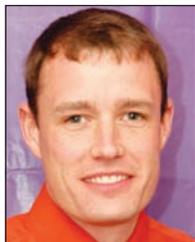
Laura L. Neff-Henderson has been named communications manager of human resources at Virginia Tech.

Ferrum College has named Schewel Furniture Company president **Marc Schewel** its Executive in Residence.

Jefferson College of



Steenburgh



Towers

National College in Salem has appointed three new vice presidents: **Phillip**

Sparks, marketing, **Chuck Steenburgh**, communications, and **Jason Towers**, campus support operations.

OTHER FRONTS

Advertising

David Mikula of Mikula-Harris in Roanoke has earned the professional designation Travel Marketing Professional from the Southeast Tourism Society.



Young

Chambers

Eric Young has joined the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce as manager of administration and public policy.



Brown

Communications

Steve Brown has been named WVTF Public Radio's music director.

Government

Carr Boyd is the new director of emergency services in Botetourt County.

“ ”
It's one person, one vote

— Page 13

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

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Dr. Krishan Tayal and Shane Blanchard, Director of Cardiovascular Services at CNRV

Donation establishes lab

A donation from the doctor who established the vascular lab at **Carilion New River Valley Medical Center** will ensure that the hospital's laboratory technicians have access to the latest research and techniques in vascular ultrasound. Krishan K. Tayal, M.D., of Radford, has pledged \$100,000 to the Carilion Clinic Foundation to establish an endowed fund that will allow vascular technicians at the hospital to attend annual meetings nationwide. The meetings provide education focused on maintaining high standards of quality in vascular ultrasound and information regarding the latest scientific research and new technologies.

CNRV will name the hospital's vascular lab in honor of Dr. Tayal, who is retiring in 2012 after 33 years of service. He was the first vascular surgeon on staff at CNRV and is credited with establishing

the vascular lab, making care more accessible for patients in the New River Valley and surrounding areas.

Turner forms alliance

Blueprint Construction Services Inc. of Sterling and **J.M. Turner & Company** of Roanoke have formed what they are calling a "strategic alliance" to become Turner Long Construction, Inc.

Turner, a second generation general contractor specializing in healthcare, office buildings, educational, industrial, and hospitality sectors has been in business for more than 72 years. J. M. Turner is a second generation privately held company led by CEO James (Jay) M. Turner, Jr. and President Michael H. Fariss. The company has been involved in a number of high profile projects in the region for many years.

Blueprint Construction Services, based in Sterling, is a large general contractor and construction management firm, specializing in new construction and renovation projects for healthcare, data centers, commercial and government clients throughout the Washington D.C., Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia region led by President Boyd W. Long Jr.

Twist & Turns to close

Cynthia Willis, furniture designer and owner of Roanoke's **Twist & Turns**, has retired and closed her retail location after 20 years in business. Willis intends to dedicate some of her time marketing her manufacturing facility as well as continue her work as a design consultant.

Willis will continue to operate her manufacturing facility on Campbell Avenue; designing and manufacturing her one-of-a-kind products.

HQ moving to Roanoke

Southern Coal Corporation, which owns The Greenbrier and Justice Companies among other things, is the new occupant of the Bank of America Building in downtown Roanoke. The company has half a billion dollars in annual revenues and also owns A&G Coal Corp., Sequoia Energy, Premium Coal Company and Tams Management. The



Jay Turner of Turner-Long Construction

company's headquarters is now in Roanoke in the 28,000-square-foot buildings, that is one of Roanoke's recognizable standard-bearers. The company will have about 50 workers in Roanoke eventually. Most are in the building now.

was one of the first businesses to locate in the newly-renovated Patrick Henry a few months ago.

Willard buys 2 properties

The **Willard Companies** of Smith Mountain Lake has purchased Bridgewater Pointe and Bridgewater Grand, two projects in the area that are unfinished. At Bridgewater Point, which is in Franklin County near Hales Ford Bridge, Willard plans to build a 48-unit tower to match one that exists. Grande is a 30-acre commercial property. The price

for both was \$5.6 million.

Pamplin dean to retire

Pamplin College of Business Dean **Richard E. Sorensen** will retire in July 2013 after serving the college for 31 years. Before being appointed dean and professor of

management science (now business information technology) at Virginia Tech in July 1982, Sorensen led Appalachian State University's business school for nine years; thus, he will have been a dean for 40 years.

Under his leadership, the Pamplin College expanded

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.

Uptown Joe's closed

The popular downtown Roanoke doughnut shop **Uptown Joe's** has closed, following the closing of Blue Collar Joe's in Daleville, of which it was an offshoot. The space in the Patrick Henry Hotel is up for lease. Uptown Joe's

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FRONT Notes

student enrollments and academic programs; developed new international, leadership, ethics, and diversity programs; created new advising and career services for students and outreach services for businesses; and completed two major fundraising campaigns that exceeded their goals.

AmRhein's wins

At the recent Governors Cup competition, **AmRhein's Wine Cellars** in Roanoke won a silver medal for its Petit Verdot signature wine. The winery also won five bronze medals for its Pinot Grigio, Cloud-9 new sparkling

wine, Traminette, Petit Manseng, and Sauvignon Blanc.

IA honored by SBA

Roanoke-based **Interactive Achievement**, which builds software used in Virginia school systems to assess students' Standards of Learning progress, has been honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Richmond District Office. It has chosen four executives at the company as Small Business Persons of the Year for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Jonathan L. Hagmaier, C.E.O.; Mary V. Hagmaier,

Director of Corporate Relations; Matthew Muller, Solutions Architect, and Jacob E. Gibson, VP of Business Development will be among the nine people receiving awards May 18. As the winner of the state award, Interactive Achievement will represent Virginia in the 2012 National Small Business Person of the Year competition.

WEBJ7 back on top

WDBJ7 (CBS) in Roanoke, which for many years has had the top-rated local news at 6 p.m., but had slipped in recent months, has again showed an impressive gain. The station achieved a 7.9

Nielsen rating in the 25-54 demographic in February 2012 compared to a 4.1 rating a year earlier.

The newscast has had significant turnover recently with its longtime anchor Keith Humphry retiring and almost the entire sports staff rotating. Most of WDBJ7's newscasts not only trended upward, but several broadcasts doubled and tripled ratings when compared to the February 2011 ratings period.

Luna agreement extended

Luna Innovations of Roanoke and **Intuitive Surgical Inc.**

So much more.

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morefront.blogspot.com

So many FRONTreaders just can't get enough in our monthly magazine. "Give us more!" they say. Well, we say, "OK." Read more stories and latebreaking updates on our moreFRONT blog.

- > Bill Rakes Wins First Lawyer Education Award
- > Partnership Launches Promotion Campaign
- > Women Open New Roanoke Architectural Firm
- > Business in Pictures: Chamber Business Expo
- > Bacova To Re-Open Roanoke Factory Outlet
- > RBTC Hires New Executive Director
- > LewisGale Gets on the Fast Track
- > Battery Breakthrough for Blacksburg Company; Expands Facility

- > J.M. Turner Merges, Forms New Construction Company
- > BFF Style/Etiquette Conference Begins at Hotel Roanoke
- > More Than Business at Business After Hours
- > Cynthia Willis To Retire, Close Twist & Turns
- > Pamplin's Sorensen To Retire in 2013
- > WDBJ7 Dominates Nielsen Ratings Locally Again
- > Foundation Gives 'Food Bank' Another \$50,000

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

have extended their development agreement, which was initiated five years ago. Luna develops fiber optic technology and Intuitive is in medical robotics.

Tough year for bank

For the second straight year, the **Bank of Botetourt** was looking at hard times because of a troubled real estate market. In 2011, though, losses were \$2.9 million, compared to \$117,000 the year before. Property values at Smith Mountain Lake (including "six large credit relationships" with developers and builders) were especially damaging, according to BoB.

Plans changed by bankruptcy

FCTech, an Australian company that had announced plans to locate a plant in Botetourt County, is apparently re-considering because of a Chapter 7 bankruptcy filing. The company filed in the middle of March in Bankruptcy Court in Roanoke.

The company was to have built in the Botetourt Center at Greenfield. FCTech makes fiber optics sensors. It had planned to invest \$3 million in a plant and to hire 25 workers.

\$50,000 gift

The **Roanoke Women's Foundation** has awarded \$50,000 to Feeding America Southwest Virginia to help keep the food

coming. The foundation is a component of The Foundation of the Roanoke Valley. It is the latest large donation in a series from the foundation.

The former Food Bank has been a source of emergency food in the past, but with the uncertain economy that food has been required on a daily basis for many. More than 360,000 people in this region have been termed "food insecure."

The Roanoke Women's Foundation Food Purchase Program offers affordable access to most of the items on the "needed" list. Past gifts from the Women's Foundation have provided 413,725 meals, valued at \$292,008.

Bacova to Re-open

The **Bacova Factory Outlet Store**, which had a run in downtown Roanoke a few years ago, will return to the Roanoke Valley with a grand opening on Tuesday, May 1. Located at 3505 Franklin Road (next to Curves), the 2,600 square foot store will be the area's only exclusive outlet retailer of Bacova Guild Ltd. goods. Bacova is based in Bath County, where it was founded in 1965. The Factory Outlet Store is owned and managed by Jonathon Delumyea. Bacova Guild is a subsidiary of Rocky Mount-based Ronile Inc.

RBTC names ED

The **Roanoke - Blacksburg Technology**



Derick Maggard is the new director of Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council

Council ("RBTC") announced today that it has named Derick Maggard as its new executive director, replacing Cory Donovan, who will leave the area because his veterinarian wife is taking advantage of a significant career opportunity. Maggard will be responsible for the management of RBTC and the implementation of its initiatives, concentrating on serving, promoting, and growing the technology industry in the Roanoke - Blacksburg region of Virginia. Maggard holds a B.A. in political science and business management from Southern Virginia University and is enrolled in the Master of Public Administration program at Virginia Tech.

Partnership campaign

The **Roanoke Regional Partnership** has launched a \$3 million private sector campaign

to further promote the region's economic development initiatives. "Partners In Prosperity, The Next Step" is a five-year initiative in which a private sector goal of \$3 million will be matched by the public sector in the region to fund a \$6 million program of work. The private sector campaign already has raised \$2,205,750, or 74 percent of the private sector goal, from 43 businesses.

Through a program of work that includes business attraction, asset development and image building supported by these funds, the Partnership's goals include creating 3,245 higher wage jobs and bringing in \$200 million in capital investment to the area. "

Compiled by Dan Smith

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

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

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She turned around only to find that Buffy, the apparent queen of the herd, had stepped between her and the wayward buffalo

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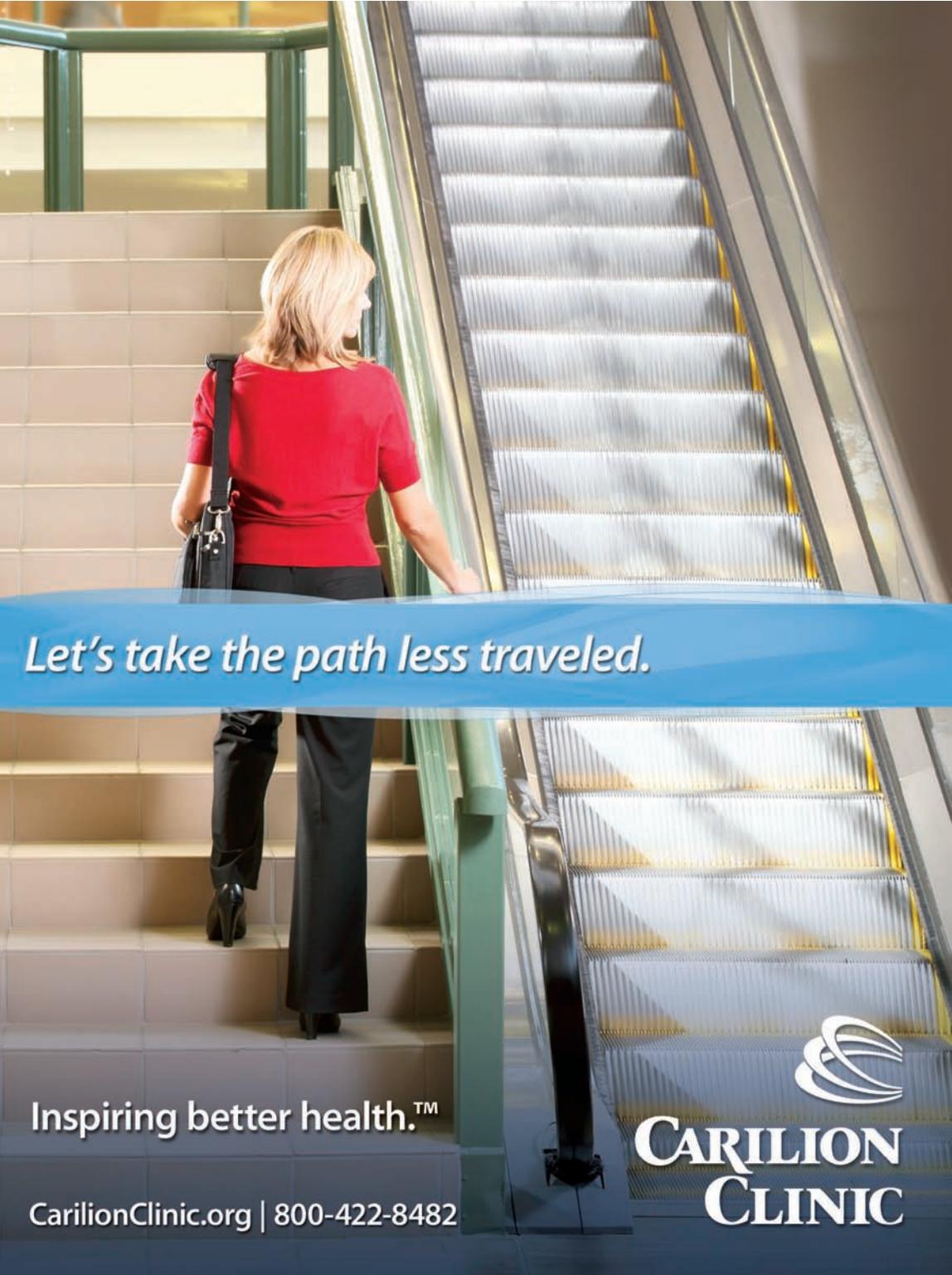


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