



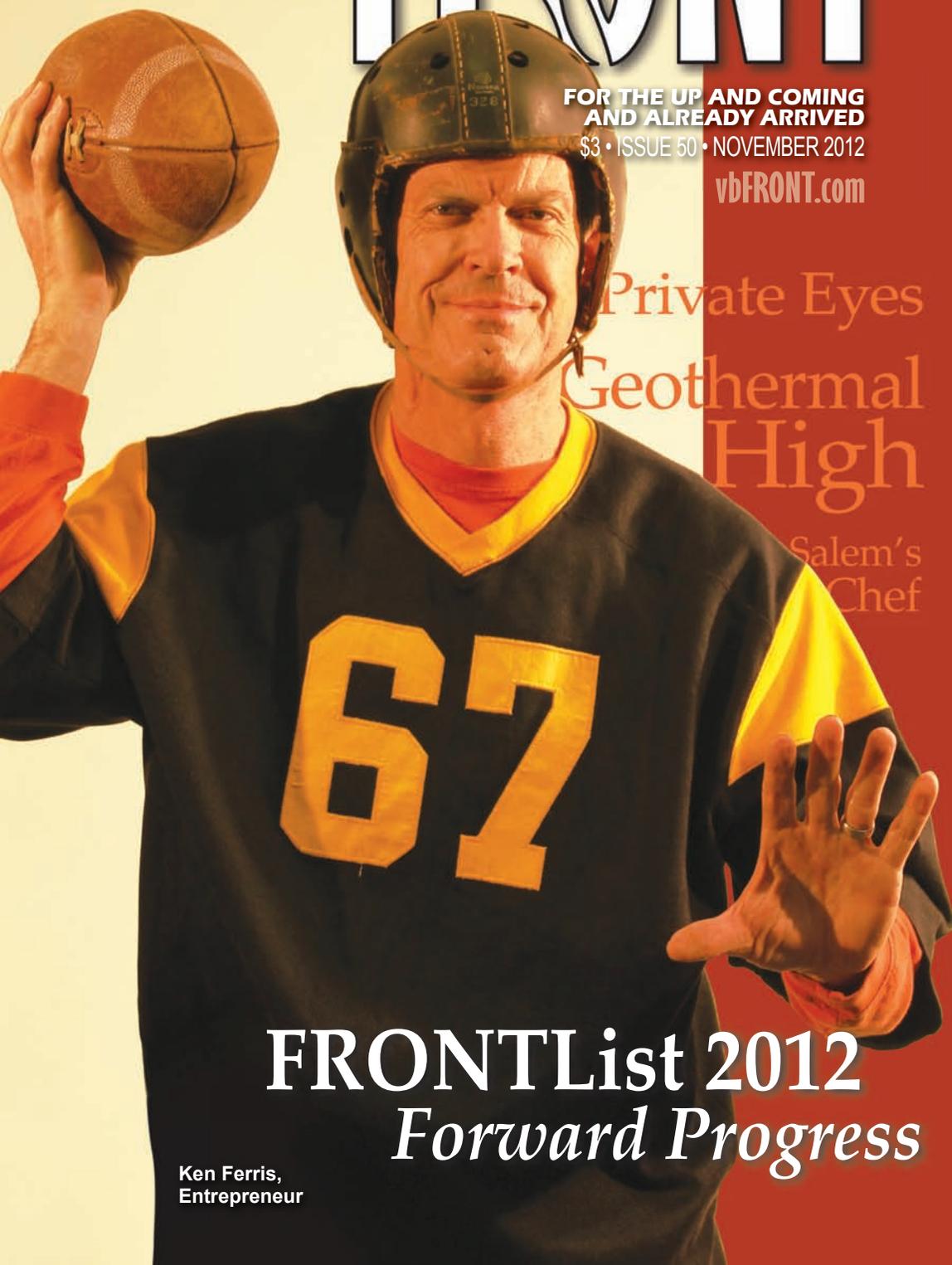
Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 50 • NOVEMBER 2012

vbFRONT.com



Private Eyes
Geothermal
High

Salem's
Chef

FRONTList 2012
Forward Progress

Ken Ferris,
Entrepreneur

Come visit us at our new home

West
Village

Valley Bank 
Mortgage



Valley Bank 
Mortgage



WELCOME to the FRONT

This is our favorite time of the year at Valley Business FRONT because we get to throw around our garlands of praise to the business community as a whole and to the people who make this magazine a quality publication that so many in business—and so many others who aren't—enjoy.

Our business awards are a picture of evolution, changing a bit every year, refining, refusing to be predictable, but always considering the valuable, the innovative, the creative, the strong leader, the great organizer, the person or institution with lasting influence.

So it is with our business professional of the year this year. Ken Ferris objected to the designation at first because, he says, "I don't really head anything anymore." Ken is, of course, being a bit modest, but the fact is that at this moment, he's probably in something of a lull when you consider what all he has done over the years. That tends to happen as we age, but it doesn't take one iota from what Ken has done during his career. He's the very picture of the entrepreneur, the business person who initiates, refines and creates, but doesn't always hang around to see what happens next. Ken has gone from one spectacular bounce to another and if he has been nothing else in his career—and he has—he has been interesting to the point that a college class on him would be a sellout.

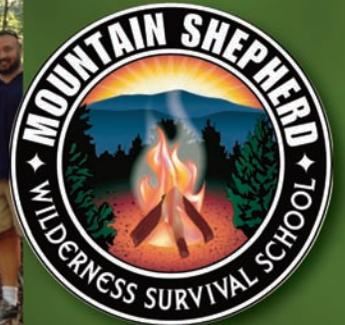
Our own awards for our writers and stories are just fun. There are so many good writers doing good work for us that it is folly to say this or that is the very, very best, but we do it anyway. Such is the quality of people and work we're dealing with that we have felt from the beginning that they deserved their own awards. Wish we could give more of them without diminishing the ones we do give, but that's the very nature of awards. An award is for being No. 1, not for participating. But that is the way of life. In any case, we love our writers and we want you and them to know it.

Tom Field

Dan Smith

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Catawba, Virginia

"An amazing course!
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the challenges of Mother Nature as well as the office!
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Surgeons

(first row, left to right)

Raymond V. Harron, D.O.
Neurosurgeon

James M. Leipzig, M.D., FACS
Spine Surgeon

(second row, left to right)

Gregory D. Riebel, M.D., FAAS
Spine Surgeon

James M. Vascik, M.D., FACS
Neurosurgeon

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Valley Business FRONT

COVER STORY

8

FRONTList 2012

Forward Progress ▶

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Coordinator** Page 60



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Art direction and cover photography
of Ken Ferris by Tom Field.

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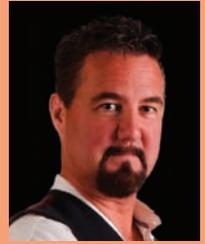
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Anne Giles Clelland



Tom Field



Michael Miller



Anne Piedmont



Leah Weiss

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



Rachael Garrity



Kathleen Harshberger



Andrew Hudick



Gene Marrano



Dan Smith



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen



Randolph Walker

“ little bubbles begin
to gather on their lips

— Page 47

2012 Members

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

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.

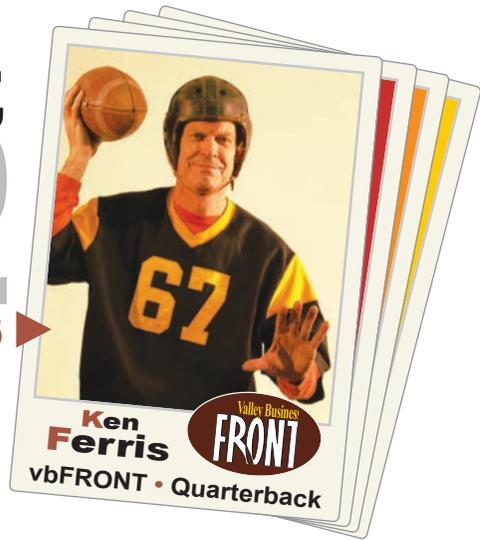
“ your dollar
bill is not real

— Page 31

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Blog: morefront.blogspot.com
Editor's blog: editordan.blogspot.com

FRONTList 2012 Forward Progress



Ken Ferris plays our vintage football card cover, complete with 1940's helmet, 1960's jersey, and 1970's collector card printing. Go long... he'll get it to you.

FRONTList 2012 >

Executive Summary:
Here's a compilation of some of the best and the worst of the past year in our region.

By Dan Smith
and Tom Field

This is our fifth edition of the FRONTList and like the other four, it has developed its own personality. There are, we think, some surprises, some picks of the best of our region you'll cheer and some you'll boo. The list is not meant to be anything but a conversation piece, but what a conversation piece it is!

Who's hot and who's not? Who had a good year? Who didn't? What are the trends in a variety of areas and what are the negative events, companies and executives of the past year?

Read on 'cause here it is:

Executive FRONTLeader

For 30 years Ken Ferris has helped define the new entrepreneur in this region. He is the consummate business professional, founding, then selling businesses and moving on to something else that he can manage, own or otherwise improve.





Tom Field

Ken Ferris

He has been deeply involved with several other developers in recent years, renovating buildings in downtown Roanoke with F&G Properties (and the more high-profile John Garland). In 2009, Wireless Medcare hired him as its Chief Operating Officer to take its VivaCARE product to FDA approval and to market. He has run the products division of Luna Innovations (corporate advisor and president of the Advanced Systems Division and CEO of Luna iMonitoring), vice president at Carrier Access and president of Millenia Systems and was on the founding teams of three different technology companies. He is a co-founder and past president of the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council.

He is a former vice president of product development at FiberCom and was part of the legendary group of engineers let go by ITT in 1983 when it closed its fiber optics division. Those engineers, the subject of a FRONT cover story (Jan. 2010), went on to startling success all over the globe and one won a Nobel Prize three years ago.

At this moment, he is president of Brookwood Mangement Advisors and on the boards of directors of Interactive Achievement Inc. and Nomad Mobile Guides.

Ferris' training is in electrical engineering (Virginia Tech), but he has never let that limit the possibilities in his multiple career moves.

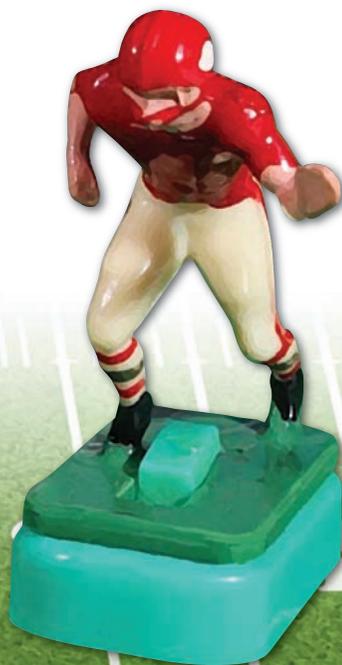


Tom Field

National College

Company FRONTLeader

National College in Salem has seen explosive growth in the past few years, growing to seven Virginia campuses and 30 campuses in seven states. This private business school (which gets a lot of government funding for its students) has been around since J.A. Trimmer founded it as National Business College in 1886 and for most of its life, it was a small, content, barely-noticed institution.





Katherine Walker

Enter President Frank Longaker (who had been a teacher at NBC in Kentucky) in the 1970s and things began changing and growing and the name changed (with the addition of schools in Kentucky and Tennessee, to National College of Business & Technology. Longaker was recently presented the Imagine America Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award

and the college received the TOPS Award from the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities "recognizing its grassroots advocacy efforts on behalf of the college's students."

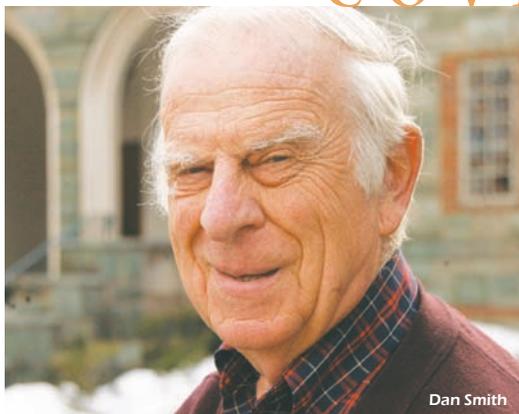
National has been an innovator for years and consistently produces graduates who enter the professions in the region

with sufficient skills to hit the ground running. At a time when this type of educational institution has come under congressional scrutiny for numerous scams, its reputation has remained spotless.

Under the Radar Executive FRONTLeader

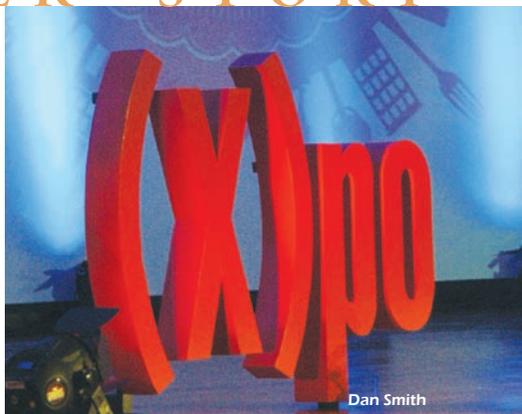
Katherine Fralin Walker's stint as founder of the Batten Leadership Institute at Hollins University has been marked by growth and success. The center concentrates its efforts on creating generations of women leaders for this region and it could not be led by a more appropriate woman than Katherine Walker. She is a board member of the philanthropic Roanoke Women's Foundation and is deeply involved in the community in everything from music to the arts, diversity and education. Women—some of them quite accomplished—often consult with her before making major business decisions because she is so widely respected.





Dan Smith

George Kegley



Dan Smith

Small Cities (X)po

For the Right Reasons FRONTLeader

You'll know this craggy, grizzled, octogenarian's face from our Uncle Sam cover in July of this year. He's **George Kegley** and George, a retired newspaper business writer, is one of the most involved people in the country. His volunteer work—from giving gallons of blood and delivering Meals on Wheels, to active involvement in preservation activities, his church and a variety of other community service projects—is legendary.

George, in short, has made a difference in his community, whether saving a marvelous old building from destruction or giving comfort to somebody who is his age, but doesn't have his energy and commitment. His approach

has always been selfless and tireless.

The Next Big Thing Is Here FRONTLeader

Roanoke's **Small Cities (X)po**, begun in 2011 in Roanoke, has now had two major productions and the extravaganzas are getting better, even though they began with a fantastic bang of national proportion. The (X)po brings together some of the best urban minds in the country, looking for innovative solutions to living in smaller cities. It is an event that has captured national attention and is giving Roanoke a profile as an urbane and creative place to live.

This was the brainchild of the

Ed Walker extended family of creative types and promises to continue to bring Roanoke ever-closer to being a city people think of immediately when the word "innovation" comes up.

Resourcefulness FRONTLeader

The **Roanoke Symphony**, often considered the best operated cultural organization in the region, stuck another feather in its fiscal cap when it finished its recent fiscal year debt free. Much of that accomplishment lies in a simple method of collecting money from subscribers, says Executive Director Beth Pline.

In the past, RSO collected the bulk of its subscription money at the kick-off of its





Tom Field

Neathawk Dubuque Packett

performance season. That meant depending on renewals and the credit involved as the season progressed. The Symphony recently incorporated a monthly subscription system designed to have a steady flow of revenue throughout the year. Pline says the hope is that the revenue stream will help avoid borrowing.

Most Energetic Controversy FRONTLeader

A controversy that has involved political skulduggery and national media attention

is that of the prospect of **Virginia uranium mining** near Chatham. Virginia Uranium wants to spend a lot of money to develop a potential 119 million pound deposit of uranium, valued at \$6 billion. It would employ an estimated 325 people, according to at least one estimate. This is the country's largest uranium deposit and one of the biggest in the world.

The company is primarily owned by Virginians, including the Coles and Bowen families, who have lived on the Southside site for many years. There is considerable controversy

about how safe uranium and uranium mining are and the citizens in the region are divided between those concerns and the prospects of good jobs. This is a tough one.

Coincidence (?) Award FRONTLeader

The local advertising club (AAF Roanoke) was host for a three-state district conference on in August at Hotel Roanoke, which featured an "agency crawl" on Saturday night. During that the 80-plus participants had a downtown walking tour to tba (Thomas Becher Associates) and then to Neathawk Dubuque Packett (ND&P). Four days later, ND&P announced its acquisition of tba, turning the "crawl" into a preview of one agency, essentially.

Industry FRONTLeaders

Valley Business FRONT covers nine industry fronts each month. The following list presents the FRONTLeaders in each sector:





Dan Smith

Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore



Dan Smith

Optima

Financial FRONTLeader

More and more small merchants are using the nifty **plug-on device** that enables credit card transactions from their personal cell phones. Receipts can be e-mailed or sent via text to the consumer's phone.

Legal FRONTLeader

Most Difficult Legal Case: Lawyers at **Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore** in Roanoke could not convince a federal judge that Dorel Juvenile Group, a manufacturer of child safety seats, was responsible for brain damage to a five-year-old girl. GLRM

claimed the seat's design was flawed. They initially sought \$50 million in compensation.

Ultimately, they went after \$200,000 in legal fees and expenses from Dorel after its lawyers "forgot about a batch of documents that should have been produced under the plaintiff's discovery requests," according to a blog post by Peter Veith of Virginia Lawyer's Weekly. The judge ultimately granted \$70,000.

Veith, a veteran legal journalist, says, "Lawyers on both sides complained bitterly about the tactics

of their opponents."

Wellness FRONTLeader

Optima landed in Roanoke about mid-year, dramatically expanding insurance carrier options for businesses who wanted them. So far, it has been a welcome addition to the insurance landscape.

They're like mushrooms: New **"immediate care"** and specialty service clinics (Velocity Care, MedExpress, Doctor's Express) have sprung up all over the region, giving patients an alternative to the emergency room and an open door on nights and weekends when their general practitioner could well be on the golf course.





Air Data Computer from Aeroprobe

Tech/Industry FRONTLeader

Aeroprobe is a relatively new high profile name in the region's technology sector, though the company was founded 15 years ago. The company was pre-merger associate of manufacturer Schultz-Creehan, the brainchild of Virginia Tech engineers Jeff Schultz and Kevin Creehan. Their recent merger brought together Aeroprobe's calibration equipment technology with Schultz-Creehan's manufacturing expertise and considerable growth in physical plant and employment since. It recently announced it will

build a 20,000-square-foot plant (expandable to 40,000 square feet) and the addition of 40 jobs with a \$3.5 million investment. Just before that, it added a state-of-the-art wind tunnel for testing.

Several years ago, Schultz-Creehan was selected as the leader in this FRONT category because of its innovation and its basic corporate plan of operation, which included taking good care of its employees. With CEO Nanci Hardwick (a former FRONT cover model) continuing to pull in accolades, the company recently announced a major expansion and a continued role as a leader in Blacksburg's technology revolution.

Another major expansion occurred at **Heyo** (formerly

Lujure) where 50 jobs are being added and \$100,000 spent on expansion of the social media company. More than 100,000 businesses in the U.S. have used Heyo's services during the past year.

Development FRONTLeader

Downtown Renovations: Not only has the re-development of some marvelous old buildings in downtown Roanoke continued over the past year, it has picked up steam with more than half a dozen new residential and commercial projects that continue to sell out as soon as they are completed. The demand is there because people like John Garland and his partners in F&G Properties), Ed Walker and Bill Chapman continue to see what the rest of us can't: worn out old buildings with a new purpose, updated design and hip standing among the young and the new empty-nesters. They've made money, Roanoke has been updated and a lot of people who like urban living are having that itch scratched.

Let us also note a key





Dan Smith



Dan Smith

Downtown Renovations

expansion: **Virginia Western Community College** is in the process of finishing its first new building in decades, the \$26 million Center for Science and Health Professions. It replaces a 50-year-old building and will open in the spring of 2013. This is a college that, despite growing enrollment and the General Assembly's persistent cutting of its educational budget, continues to flourish under the leadership of President Bobby Sandel.

Virginia Tech is seeing millions and millions of dollars funneled into a number of "major" developments including its

new culture center (nearly \$100 million by itself) and two research labs and the Corporate Research Center's most recent phase. One of the inherent problems with the money spent at Tech on huge projects is that little of it goes to the region's developers.

Retail/Service FRONT Leader

Perhaps the most significant retail trend is the lack of a trend away from bricks and mortar—in many cases. The boxes, malls and small shops continue to thrive in an age of shopping online. A notable exception here is the demise

of the local bookstore. Roanoke and Montgomery County no longer have a corner bookstore, locally owned and often featuring the work of local and regional authors. Only used bookstores remain local.

Two popular Roanoke independent bookstores—Cantos and Ram's Head, which had a long history in the Star City—closed relatively recently, leaving the city with only big boxes. Books for sale at WalMart and the like have thinned the offerings, as well, and if you're going to find what you want, online is most often the resort of the book lover.





Center in the Square

It is a demise, like the small local movie theater that once stood in neighborhoods, that many regret.

Senior FRONTLeader

Crowning Touch, the mover specializing in relocating the elderly, set a standard there and now has moved into several other profit centers that complement the moving. The Roanoke business was successful with its moving business for some time, but eventually expanded to take advantage of what was before it: the downsizing of the elderly. **Crowning Touch** now auctions off goods that clients do not want moved, but which have value—often considerable value. The good business practice is beginning

to spread, spawning copycats. As the population ages, opportunities arise and **Crowning Touch** was among the first to capitalize.

Entertainment at senior facilities is becoming a hot property, as well. Many facilities are booking bands and opening up in-house “lounges” and hiring culinary chefs as their numbers increase because of the aging of the Baby Boom.

Education FRONTLeader

Entrepreneurship: it’s all the rage. From VT Knowledge-Works’ (a subsidiary of Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center) offering of entrepreneurial training, pitch sessions, competitions

and scholarships, to contests at Small Business Development Centers awarding startup capital and services, to state, private and liberal arts colleges extending their curriculums for would-be entrepreneurs, the spring up of activities directed to this segment is notable. As if to further capitalize on the trend, venues and various real estate conversions are popping up all across our region with low-rent “co-working” stations to accommodate new venture opportunists.

Culture FRONTLeader

Center in the Square is preparing for its grand re-opening with \$27 million renovation that has been funded by \$18 million in tax credits and \$9 million in contributions. It will take its place at the center of Roanoke’s arts community with innovations all over its 200,000 square feet, including a new aquarium and a rooftop development that will serve as its crowning touch.

Another CultureFRONT



we're watching is the buzz around the movie being shot in Giles County. Based on David Baldacci's "Wish You Well", the film shows promise, is fortified by Hollywood star power, and involves a lot of people and business in our region.

Our Own Categories

Readers' Choice FRONTCover

Another difficult year to tally, but the "Race Car Driver" featuring Carilion's **Nancy Agee** on the November 2011 edition wins the reader's choice for Volume IV. Coming in second: **Stacy Hairfield** with daughter Abigail, illustrating our story on "parentpreneurs." Guess the ladies won the cover contest this year.

Readers' Choice FRONTContributing Writer

Laura Purcell received the most votes from readers of the FRONT Volume IV. Her excellent story on the state



November 2011 edition of FRONT



Laura Purcell

of unions in our region was most cited.

FRONT out front

Q: On the technology/industry FRONT, what do two (2) of the best stories in 2012 on company development / expansion have in common?

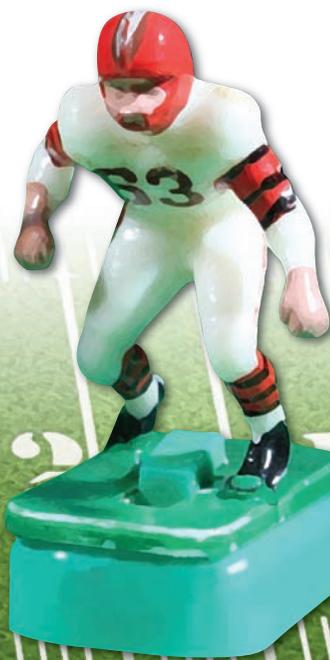
A: Both company principals were featured as FRONT-cover models BEFORE the big news hit.

Nanci Hardwick of Aeroprobe and Nathan Latka of Heyo (Lejure). Both tech companies this year report major

expansions, new jobs, and new business for our region.



Conclusion: Appearing on the cover of FRONT magazine is good fortune. 



Not in FRONT and Other Awards

If you're not in the front, then you're not in the front. Because negative news affects our region just as much as positive news, we present the flipside of our FRONTList. After all, most of the good that happens is the direct result of eliminating something bad. Here are a few to tackle.

Arts struggle

The arts took significant hits in the region because

of serious funding issues. With the loss of government support and individual contributions failing to compensate, closings and model changes were rife.

In recent weeks, **The Taubman Museum of Art** let its director go, got a significant infusion of cash from its wealthy new board of directors and went to free admission. **The Arts Council of the Blue Ridge**, which is nearly four decades old and has nearly always had

funding problems, fired its fulltime staff and went to all volunteers. The failure of **Studio Roanoke**, the edgy, out-front, innovative theater in downtown Roanoke has set back theater in the Star City, which was rapidly becoming known for its adventurous and plentiful theatrical performances. Then a few months later the venerable **Theater at Lime Kiln** in Lexington nearly bit the dust, which would have been a huge loss.

On the flip side, however, **Mill Mountain Theatre** is poised on the verge of its first season in several years—an abbreviated one as it is—and Roanoke's other community theater groups seem to be thriving.

Airport closing scare

Congressman Bobby Scott (D-Newport News) ruffled the feathers of **Roanoke Regional Airport** officials when he suggested the potential closing of the Roanoke Regional Airport due to the requirements



of the budget agreement reached in Congress last year. Airport officials in Roanoke assure travelers that this is political posturing and that the airport is here to stay.

Never-ending renovations

Bless its heart, Roanoke's historic **City Market Building** can't catch a break and the blame here has to remain where it has been for several years: at the feet of Roanoke City Council, which made a bad decision at the beginning and has done little but compound it since. The latest near catastrophe is renovation of the renovation of the renovation. Vendors are unhappy because almost nothing seems to go right in this building (including sales) and the public has not taken to the building again. There is a serious risk here of losing one of Roanoke's treasures if somebody—City Council is a good place to start—doesn't start doing something right.



Roanoke Airport



Center Market Building

Local TV ads shuttered

Roanoke TV stations regularly preempt local advertising spots with national campaign and lobbying ads for the presidential election. The Roanoke-Lynchburg market is only 68th in size in the U.S., but this election season, it was No. 1 in the number of advertisements played on TV—mostly because of the low cost.

Roanoke-Lynchburg expected a \$10 million cut of the national \$3 billion pie and though that doesn't sound like much, \$10 million buys a lot of air time here.

These ads bring in a lot of revenue to TV stations, but they don't make the advertising sales representatives happy, for a variety of reasons, including bumping the ads of a loyal customer for the political ads. 





Getting a handle on lost civility >

According to the Protocol School of Washington, “Civility is a power tool that gives a cutting edge to companies who look increasingly to those men and women who possess soft skills ... knowing proper etiquette in today’s business arena means getting more business for the company profits.”

We hear increasingly alarming stories of incivility in today’s world. Flaming e-mails, incendiary blog comments, cyber bullying, rancorous television discussions, mean spirited political debates, sullen children grunting at parents and teachers, and getting away with it! The list is endless, and we haven’t even touched road rage.

According to a survey conducted by Weber Shandwick and Powell Tate, in partnership with KRC Research, “... an overwhelming majority of Americans Views the erosion of civility in human interaction today as a major problem, and believe the distressing situation has only been made worse by the recession...” and, “The tone of civility is causing Americans to tune out from the most fundamental elements of our democracy—government and politics, news coverage and reporting, and opinion pieces and editorials in newspapers and magazines.”

Faced with this lack of civility, some people are taking direct action. We hear of some deciding not to do business with a company again, cancelling subscriptions to newspapers or magazines, and not watching or listening to certain radio or television shows. Because of a certain anonymity, social networks have become the breeding ground for some pretty upsetting examples of incivility. I have a friend who recently announced to all his “friends” on an online social site that he was no longer going to participate because of the tone of rancor and rudeness that some of the posts were taking.

What to do about this alarming trend of incivility that permeates our society? I think we can all agree that civility starts in the home. Hard as the challenge can sometimes be, parents need to take back the reigns and refuse to accept rude behavior from their children. Social networks, a vast resource for communication and business, would do well to consider methods of making their sites safer and more civil.

CEOs are the mentors and models setting the tone for civility in the work place. They should not tolerate rude and uncivil behavior from their executives or their staff. Their customer service interface is bound to be contaminated, and the savvy business person realizes that uncivil customer service always results in lost profits. Ultimately, to stem the erosion of civility, we may have to rely on the marketplace’s strongest motivator—the profit motive. 

Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:

Our society is increasingly diminishing the role of civility in our daily lives and it’s time we reclaim this essence of civilization.

Fashion fast and cheap >

A recent book by Elizabeth Cline, *Overdressed—The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion*, struck a chord with me. She's right—many of us spend constantly on clothing so cheap that we can wear it a few times and then donate it or toss it. Millions of Americans are shopaholics, addicted to fast, cheap fashion. How did we go from wearing quality fabrics and designs in the early 20th Century to this?

According to Cline, cheap overseas clothing production, the advent of low-cost designer lines at retail chains such as Target, and a phenomena called “fast fashion” used by retailers such as Gap and Penney's are instrumental in this trend.

The concept of fast fashion first surfaced in a Vogue article by Jonathan Van Meter in 1990. Van Meter wrote that Americans wanted fashion that was cheaper and easier to find—and retailers like Gap were filling that need. Retailers had been trying to shore up sales, so they moved from introducing new lines in their stores from four times yearly to as often as every two weeks. New must-have colors were introduced at least monthly, as well. Along with compelling marketing, this created a mindset that we “needed” these new fashions to be in good taste.

By 1996 fast fashion became acceptable when actress Sharon Stone wore a Gap turtleneck with a Valentino skirt to the Oscars and the media dubbed it a success. America was hooked.

Unfortunately fast fashion impacts negatively on us environmentally. Textile production worldwide causes air and water pollution, even if they're natural fibers such as wool, cotton or leather. The quantity of fiber and fabric production takes the biggest toll on our resources and environment. We must manufacture less and use our products longer.

Even thrift stores, textile recyclers and refuse dumps can't keep pace with the excess of cheap clothing we donate or throw out yearly. Mid-West Textile processor, John Paben, notes, “Less than 20 percent gets sold through thrift stores.”

Buying fast fashion is like eating fast food; the satisfaction seldom lasts and soon you crave more. To break this cycle, buy better-quality, classic designs and plan to keep them longer. Mend garments and shoes instead of tossing them. Alter clothes for a perfect fit. Use sewing or crafting skills to create a unique and quality wardrobe.

It will open your eyes to a new way of consuming. 



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
Fast fashion, like fast food, generally isn't much good for you.

The trouble with entrepreneurship >

Dear Anne: I want to become an entrepreneur. Should I?

Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:
Should you take the plunge as a business founder? Know the risks—as well as the rewards—before you give it a shot.

Dear Great Idea: Announcing “I’m an entrepreneur” adds glorified, glamorized mystique to the status of one’s self-introduction at a business networking event. But here’s what they don’t tell you about being an entrepreneur.

Most new businesses are undercapitalized and business operations are paid for from personal funds, either from savings withdrawals or through a spouse’s or partner’s income. Products and services take time to develop, so months pass without revenue. If passion, rather than market research, drove the entrepreneur into business, the market needs to be “educated” about the value of the product or service. A marketing strategy, then its execution, takes more months. Desperate scrambling begins to replace idealistic dreaming in order to make the company profitable.

Not only is the entrepreneur not contributing to the household’s wealth, she is siphoning off income, which decreases the quality of life for all, or draining reserves, which puts the household at increasing risk. The most supportive spouse or partner won’t ask, “When are you going to make money?” but that seven-word question gains magnitude with every month, then every year that passes in the three to five or more that it can take for a company to generate a profit. Paying for a dinner out, buying gifts, making the small purchases that can tend a relationship become hardships. Entrepreneurship



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and romance are terrible roommates.

"How's your company doing?" an entrepreneur is asked. "Great!" the entrepreneur answers. The vast majority of new businesses fail within the first five years. Telling the truth, "Not as well as I thought it would!" risks all. Who wants to buy from, or invest in, a company in trouble? Even though it's okay to be in trouble during the first five years because 99.9 percent of new companies are, having to hide the truth and, essentially, be a liar when answering, is incompatible with integrity and grinds and grinds at morale.

Entrepreneurs don't receive salaries. They're trying to create the very means to generate salaries, both for themselves and others. Reacting to "I had a hard day at work" spoken by a person with a salary must be guarded against by the entrepreneur since such utterances can provoke envy, resentment and hostility. A person with a salary has a world view about work and money that the entrepreneur no longer shares. Isolation haunts entrepreneurs.

Note: The question I've answered is hypothetical because entrepreneurs with great ideas don't ask if they should start companies. They've already started them, usually sporting names that will result in cease and desist letters from the trademark owner. Passion is a driven thing.

Entrepreneurs start companies. Five years or more later, if those companies make it that long, if those companies are profitable and produce salaries for their founders—and if they have achieved the ultimate business success of generating enough profit to create jobs and salaries for employees—heroes are running them. 



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Financial Matters

Life in the fast lane >

Executive Summary:

Lying and cheating have become an acceptable way of life.

By Andrew Hudick

As you read this, the 2012 Presidential Election is complete. I hope your team won (as long as it was the same team I voted for) but if not, you will still need to embrace our new president (as I will) and publicly support his efforts. In order for the financial recovery to continue and housing prices to firm up and

none of them was. Politicians use wordplay to imply a fact that is a fiction. This lying is a form of cheating.

Your Federal Government engages in various forms of fudging including the way it calculates inflation and how it finances growth (by printing more money). Your dollar bill is not real; it is simply a promise to pay. If you have been to the grocery store lately you will not believe that the 2012 rate of inflation for the United States is 1.4 percent as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Is this form of lying also cheating?

The housing crises has been researched and written about by many astute financial writers. There were many documented lies involved in this housing scam including those committed by lenders (allowing a homeowner to take out a loan he could not repay), by the loan applicants (who would lie about their personal income and assets in order to get the loan for the home they could not afford), and by the



Your Federal Government engages in various forms of fudging including the way it calculates inflation and how it finances growth (by printing more money).

the financial markets to continue to grow we will all need to work together and cease the negative interaction and lying that seem so commonplace.

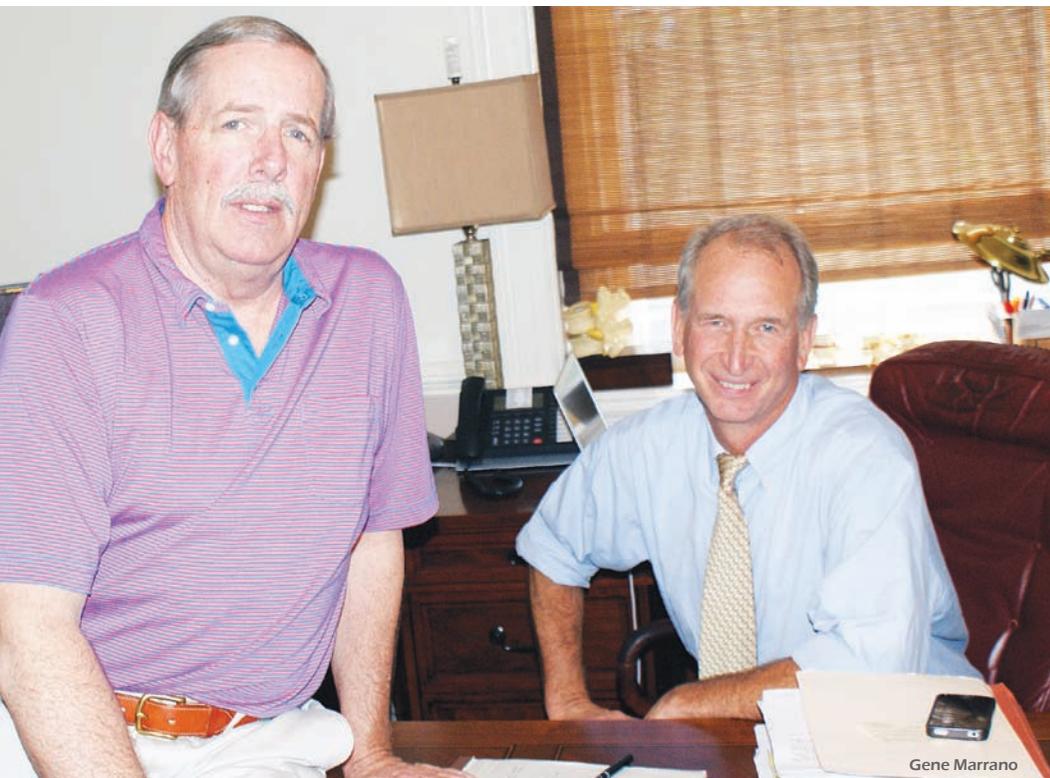
Do you find yourself taking a shortcut to get something done? Do you follow any professional sports? Major League Baseball, professional cycling, the NFL and the NBA have all had some form of recent dirtiness associated with them. Cheating and lying in sports is not necessarily new but it is certainly much more visible in today's media driven society.

After you watched the negative political ads that were on television the past few weeks, did you perform your own fact-check of the ideas presented as one party slandered the other? How many ads were 100 percent correct? I submit to you that

mortgage agencies who implied every American should have a home mortgage and own a home. Absent the truth there were some dire consequences. Many Americans are still paying for these lies.

In spite of the lying and cheating, the U. S. economy continues to grow. The stock market has grown a large percentage this year. The interest rate program instituted has created very low loan rates for those who qualify. If bad news promotes profits and growth, would positive news promote greater profits?

We have four years to live under this newly-elected president. I hope we can do so with less lying and cheating and negative news. I will try to do my part to make only positive and truthful comments. Will you? 



Gene Marrano

PI Pete Sullivan (left) with attorney Gary Lumsden.

Private eyes are watching you >

Executive Summary:

The life of the real Private Eye is not what you see in the movies, but their work is vital to law firms.

By Gene Marrano

Private "Eyes" ... gumshoes ... dicks. Humphrey Bogart as Sam Spade, chasing down the Maltese Falcon, Jack Nicholson as Jake Gittes in "Chinatown," James Garner as Jim Rockford in "The Rockford Files." When you think of private investigators, Hollywood's vision likely comes to mind. Reality is most often quite different.

Law firms employ private investigators to do some of the background work needed for cases. Gary L. Lumsden, a veteran Roanoke attorney who specializes in family law, says he has been using PIs for years.

"I use them primarily in domestic cases, for obvious reasons," says Lumsden. Lest someone think the goal is to find something

dramatic that makes a big splash in court, Lumsden says, "The information is primarily used for leverage to get to a quick, fair, equitable resolution [rather] than to embarrass someone and beat up on them; although that is necessary [at times]."

Lumsden's law firm will also use a private investigator in certain criminal cases, "if the time and complexity warrant it and it is beyond what we can do ourselves." The PI might interview witnesses and take pictures. "When I feel that a witness may be important to a case, we want someone independent of our office to conduct the interview so [investigator] can be called [to testify] should the witness recant," says Lumsden.

For his office, using outside investigators is also a function of not having the time to do some of the legwork internally. "That depends on the size of the case or the volume of the evidence." Time permitting, Lumsden will go to crime scenes, the site of an arrest or the locations of a seizure and take pictures, measurements, etc., or send someone from his office.

That's where keeping it in house, rather than using an outside investigator, provides "a perspective that is hard to gain through pictures or verbal descriptions from someone

else," says Lumsden. When he uses a private investigator, he employs Pete Sullivan, a former Roanoke City police officer, almost exclusively. "[I] have for many years," he says.

Sullivan Investigations deals with a number of local attorneys. Pete Sullivan, a retired detective, dealt with many of those same lawyers while in law enforcement. For Lumsden he works mainly on criminal cases: poring over police reports, looking at crime scene photos and autopsy reports, reviewing search warrants, looking for clues that might help one of Lumsden's clients be proven innocent. He will also interview potential witnesses that Lumsden might call to the stand during a trial. "There have been numerous murder cases," recalls Sullivan, who gets more involved with domestic issues for other attorneys. "A lot of times you're trying to keep a person off death row."

Other jobs are much tamer, like working with lawyers representing insurance companies that are fighting claims filed against them. There's not a lot of that cloak and dagger stuff. "It's not like it is on TV at all," notes Sullivan, "although I certainly have sat there with a camera and binoculars before." Sullivan estimates he has worked for around 30 attorneys since retiring from the police force 13 years ago, in Virginia and elsewhere.

Attorney King Tower at Spilman, Thomas & Battle's Roanoke office says his firm uses private investigators at times, but usually from a PI firm located outside the Roanoke Valley. ST&B will also use its in-house paralegal staff for some digital sleuthing, using the Internet to help track down people and information.

"If it's out there on the Internet we usually

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Gene Marrano

King Tower: "Doing things inconsistent with his injuries."

don't go outside [the firm]," says Tower, who specializes in employment law. He has used PIs to track down people, often former employees of a company he might need as a witness or for an affidavit. PIs are also used at times as process servers, tracking down elusive people and delivering subpoenas.

In one worker's compensation case an investigator shot videotape footage of a man who was claiming to be incapacitated. That person had moved to Illinois. Tower was representing the employer. "He was running a car detailing business, climbing up on SUVs and doing things inconsistent with his injuries," says Tower. A fee for these services might usually run in to the hundreds of dollars.

Family and domestic law attorneys (like Gary Lumsden) are more likely to use private investigators, according to Tower. Hollywood's version of the Private Eye may not track down guys cheating Worker's Compensation by detailing cars, but in the real world that's typical of the way lawyers might employ them. 

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Randolph Walker

VelocityCare's Dr. Barbara Harmel: "We may have a few things that they don't necessarily have."

Bridging another medical gap >

Executive Summary:

Commercially-branded urgent care centers, popping up in the Roanoke and New River Valleys, offer occupational medicine, among other services.

By Randolph Walker

Matt Thomas, 18, was suffering from a stuffy nose and sore throat. He went to VelocityCare on Electric Road in Roanoke, where a test for strep throat turned out negative. Why did Thomas choose an urgent care center? "Because they're close and they're faster than my regular doctor," he says with a weak and scratchy voice.

Urgent care is not new in the Roanoke Valley. PCA, a multispecialty physicians group, offers urgent care at its clinics on

Apperson Drive and in West Salem and Daleville. At Community Hospital, Carilion operated an urgent care clinic, although that unit has shifted to a combination of primary and urgent care.

What's new is the coming of stand-alone, commercially-branded urgent care clinics: MedExpress, Doctors Express, and VelocityCare. All offer walk-in treatment for minor illnesses and injuries seven days a week, plus occupational medicine services targeted toward businesses.

"In a way it's new, in a way it's not," says Dr. Steve Osborn, family practice physician, lead doctor and co-owner of the Doctors Express franchise in Roanoke, which opened in December 2011 at Towers Mall (www.doctorexpressroanoke.com). Probably the biggest advantage of an urgent care center is the extended hours, says Osborn, who previously worked for LewisGale Clinic and LewisGale Physicians.

MedExpress (www.medexpress.com), headquartered in Morgantown, W.Va.,



WELLNESS FRONT

If a patient needs follow-up at a primary care facility, MedExpress will make the appointment for him, says Derk. "We try to work closely with all the local health care entities. LewisGale in particular shares a vision of patient satisfaction with MedExpress."

VelocityCare has three distinct business lines. In addition to acute injuries/illnesses and medical testing, "our third line is our occupational medicine division which we are rolling out right now," says Kim Roe, senior director of the department of emergency medicine at Carilion Clinic. "Drug screenings, DOT [Department of Transportation] physicals, workers' comp injuries, things of that nature."

VelocityCare works with Carilion's occupational medicine department. "We're like an extension of them to some extent with VelocityCare."

has 85 centers nationally, with locations on Electric Road in Roanoke, West Main Street in Salem, and in Christiansburg. Doctors are employed by MedExpress.

"Urgent care is definitely seeing a resurgence," says MedExpress spokesman Gary Derk. "The patient demand for access to convenience continues to grow."

Carilion opened VelocityCare in part to bridge the gap between primary care and the emergency room, and in part to "decompress" the emergency room, Roe says. In fact, ER visits have not dropped since VelocityCare opened. "We have for whatever reason seen an increase." Otherwise, the VelocityCare locations are "meeting or exceeding expectations right now."

The cost of an urgent care visit "can be

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Randolph Walker

Heather Weatherford of VelocityCare checks Matt Thomas

anywhere from a third to half of the cost" of an ER visit, says Roe. At PCA, urgent care patients are charged a primary care co-pay, rather than the higher urgent care co-pay or the even higher co-pay patients face when choosing the emergency room, says Dr. Edwin J. Polverino, physician and PCA president.

Urgent care clinics do not claim to replace emergency care. The VelocityCare website (www.velocitycarebycarilion.com) lists symptoms and complaints to help patients decide whether they need to go directly

to the emergency room. For symptoms of heart attack or stroke, uncontrolled bleeding, sudden severe pain, head trauma, poisoning, or coughing up blood, patients should still go to the ER.

For milder problems, urgent care is appropriate when primary care is unavailable. Urgent care clinics offer more services than some primary care practices, such as X-rays and laceration repairs, says Dr. Barbara Hormel of VelocityCare. "We may have a few things that they don't necessarily have." 

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Tech Scoop

Do you want fries with that? >

Executive Summary:

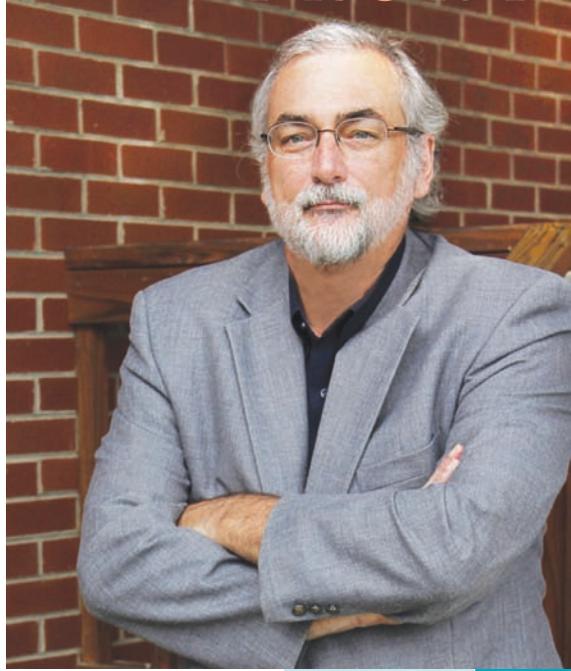
That new coating for your fries increases shelf life, but what's it doing to the good old French fry?

By Michael Miller

OK, maybe not, but it is a day when the world as we knew it changed forever. Why? Because that's the day the National Starch and Chemical Company was awarded a patent on a process for coating fried foods with a starch solution. And when I say "fried foods," I mean French fries.

Fast food chains use pre-fried frozen potatoes that are then dumped into a deep fryer for their second go in the hot oil. This double frying results in a crunchier outside and fluffier inside to the crispy little critters, rendering them indescribably delicious. However, you may recall that fries back in the day quickly took on the consistency of potatoey-noodles once they were out of the fryer for 10 minutes or so. As a guy who worked his way through high school flipping burgers, I can tell you that we lost a lot of money throwing away droopy fries that we had cooked but could not serve.

Then the fast food industry discovered the starch coating, and French fries have never been the same. Using the process in that patent, they now coat the par-fried potato sticks with a solution containing about 20 percent potato starch, sometimes with rice flour and corn flour and various other flavoring ingredients, before they freeze them. So, when that pimply-faced teenager dumps them into the deep fryer at Burger King, they come out with this nice, crusty appearance that will last for at least 30 minutes under a heat lamp, and you, the unsuspecting customer, will never know the difference.



Michael Miller

Except for people like me, that is. See, I noticed when the fries started sporting their new and improved skins, and, frankly, I was appalled. I hate that artificially crispy shell that leaves a nasty coating on the inside of my mouth. But more importantly, I just don't like the taste. Like tomatoes and apples, this process improvement has taken away the essence of the tasty original item and traded it for shelf life.

Now, I can't be sure, but there are some fast food purveyors who may have succumbed less to this practice than others. I know that McDonald's and Wendy's still serve something that looks and acts like a traditional fry. Hardee's fries look like real ones, but they remain just too crispy for too long, so they must have the coating as well. I don't eat at burger joints often enough to do a thorough review, so that will have to suffice.

And before you say it, I am not going to give up my fries. After all, Thomas Jefferson brought them to the United States from France and served them to his guests. By all accounts they were the new haute cuisine of the 18th Century.

And I for one would never do anything in opposition to the expressed intent of one of the Founding Fathers. 



Northside High system under construction

Letting the earth heat and cool >

Executive Summary:

A number of major facilities in the region are using geothermal technology to the delight of their bottom lines.

By Gene Marrano

It's difficult sometimes to wrap one's arms around the concept of geothermal cooling and heating but here's where it starts: using the constant temperature of the earth just below its surface, around 52 degrees, to help bring down cooling and heating costs.

It involves well drilling and higher upfront installation costs, but reasonable payback periods and reduced maintenance requirements makes geothermal ideal for large-scale facilities.

That includes schools like several in Roanoke County that have been retrofitted with geothermal systems: Northside High School (the first, about seven years ago); Cave

Spring High, Mount Pleasant and Masons Cove elementary schools and the newest, Cave Spring Middle School, which reopened this past summer after a year of rebuilding.

Test wells were drilled first "to see if the earth [could] support the system," notes Marty Misicko, director of operations for Roanoke County Schools. Ground that features too many caverns and voids in the soil below doesn't work, because sub-surface solid ground or rock is used to help insulate water that runs through piping to remove heat from the facility or to provide heat. "The best thing we can hit is solid rock or solid clay dirt," says Misicko.

Spectrum Design in Roanoke worked with Roanoke County schools on several geothermal projects. Company President John Garland says the firm cut its teeth over a decade ago on a school in Rockbridge County. "Their utility bills stayed the same after they doubled the size of the building," Garland recalls. Rule of thumb he adds is a three- to five-year payback on installation of geothermal systems. The Heartwood arts center in Abingdon and a remodeled Town of Blacksburg municipal building are other recent Spectrum geothermal projects.



Gene Marrano

John Garland (left) and Mike Rakes

Mike Rakes, who heads up the civil engineering department at Spectrum, says the number of wells to be drilled and how deep they must be sunk “depends on the geology.” The piping system that runs through those wells must remove enough heat or provide enough cooling.

“Its [about] thermal conductivity—you have to have about 200 feet of linear well for each ton of cooling,” Garland says. Larger

buildings that require 100 tons of cooling may easily need a hundred or more wells—at 300 feet deep each or more. “Owners understand there are larger upfront capital costs,” says Rakes.

Where a geothermal system cannot provide enough heating and cooling, hybrid units are available that can provide alternative ways to help, perhaps on very warm or extremely cold days. Hybrid units may

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Northside High School's geothermal system

also be found at times in residential geothermal systems, which are typically designed without the deep wells. Garland sees "a lot of future," for the technology.

Upfront costs are more because hundreds of wells may have to be dug, but not having to pay natural gas, heating oil or electric bills makes geothermal attractive to revenue-strapped school systems like Roanoke County. Misicko says the county is saving

several hundred thousand dollars per year per each school where geothermal has been installed. A series of smaller heat pumps takes the place of a larger chiller/boiler system.

Think of a garden hose says Misicko, when trying to understand geothermal, maybe one a mile long. It goes into the earth, loops around continuously through a series of water wells and then comes back up. A pump sends water into the building at 52 degrees. Fans or heat pumps use that water to heat or cool.

Heat drawn away from the building is sent back down in to the earth to be re-cooled. In a typical chiller-boiler system some sort of fuel would be used to heat or cool water; with geothermal the earth itself helps do the job.

Misicko expects the geothermal systems to pay for themselves in five to seven years. Roanoke County was first in the region to use them. "The School Board is completely sold on it," says Misicko. 

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Owner Scott Switzer of the Blue Apron in Salem

Calling signals at Blue Apron >

Executive Summary:

Scott Switzer uses some of his former quarterbacking skills to create a popular restaurant in Salem.

By Gene Marrano

When executive chef/owner Scott Switzer talks about planning for Salem's Blue Apron Restaurant & Red Rooster Bar (blueapronredrooster.com), which opened nearly two years ago, he sounds like a quarterback. Scott envisioned how the wait staff would operate, how often the tables turned over, how many drinks he might serve.

In fact the Salem native was a quarterback at Salem High School in the early 1990s, and a middle linebacker as well, two thinking-man's positions that require visualization and leadership.

"It's [also] a ton of work," chuckles Scott, who had to call some audibles at the line of scrimmage when initial plans met the usual minor bumps in the road. Scott (39) and his wife Ashley (she's an architect who did the interior redesign on a building they purchased) met those challenges head on until they could "flip the tables," and return to a planning-ahead mode.

"It was really an ugly little building—completely different," notes Scott of the old plywood floors, carpeting and drop ceilings. It took about four months to overhaul the space.

"You can't define what the demand is," says Scott, an 18-year veteran of the restaurant business who spent six years at Metro! in downtown Roanoke. He began as a line cook before venturing out on his own, and says, "It defines it for you." Competition from other restaurants "makes you better and puts you in a survival mode. [It helps] keep the edge sharp. I want the service to stand out."

Scott calls Blue Apron "authentically modern cocktails and cuisine;" American

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all photos: Gene Marrano

fare with French roots. It allows for what Scott says Blue Apron does best: “creativity and spontaneity—creating flavor that doesn’t have tremendous limits on it.”

The menu changes every few months. Try dishes with names like Pan Roasted Domestic Lamb, Warm Orecchiette Pasta and Magret Duck Breast. Recent weekly specials featured Ahi Tuna and Provencal Bouillabaisse. Desserts included Lemon Tart and Chocolate Soufflé Cake. Lunch entrees on a mid-September menu were typically pricey for the Roanoke Valley, in the teens; dinners were in the mid to high \$20 range. Locally sourced products are used when possible and Scott shops at farmer’s markets.

Blue Apron Restaurant—and the intimate, adjacent Red Rooster Bar on the other side of the wall—also prides itself on signature drinks that include champagne cocktails, “classic” martinis and something called the Hemmingway.

The restaurant has drawn clientele from as far away as Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Lexington and Washington D.C., all without

much marketing. “When you have goodwill and word of mouth, it doesn’t fail you,” says Scott

That means that the Blue Apron staff has one chance to execute the moment a diner walks through the door. Slip up—poor service, uninspired food—and they may never return. Scott treats that challenge like a two-minute drill he might have run at Salem High while playing for the legendary Spartans head coach, Willis White.

That time-honored approach to attracting and retaining loyal customers means more to Scott than “Likes” on Facebook or e-mail blasts. “We have to earn them and continue [to do so].” It’s a message he imparts to his staff, some of that “old school mentality.”

Believe in yourself, Scott advises; stick to the business plan if its good. Food has to be great, the service fast and excellent. “Everything has to be done to a certain level of expectations and conciseness,” notes Scott. “If we know that [and] are committed ... that’s the best we can do. That approach rarely fails.” 



Exterior of the popular Blue Apron Restaurant & Red Rooster Bar

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Charles Grissom

The Kitchen House author Kathy Grissom of Lynchburg

Building a book from the grassroots >

Executive Summary:

*Lynchburg author Kathy Grissom wasn't satisfied that her book, *The Kitchen House*, was selling all it could, so she took control. Half a million sales later ...*

By Leah Weiss

While the traditional world of publishing has split like the atom into jagged pieces of its former self, Lynchburg author Kathleen Grissom has been forging her dazzling destiny.

Her first book, *The Kitchen House*, has been so radically successful that top publishing

companies are taking notice and asking, "how?" How does a novel that debuted in 2010 grow from an initial printing of 11,500 copies to a half-million circulation worldwide? How does an unknown author reach New York Times Best Seller status with little promotional help from agency professionals? More succinctly, how does a "slow simmer" book move to "full boil"—as described in an August Wall Street Journal article about Kathy Grissom's accomplishment? Her bankability grows richer by the minute, and though it is confounding publishing heavyweights, her success isn't an accident.

First, her idea.

The premise for her novel was spawned from a string of events that positioned Kathy, who is 65, in the right place at the right time. A move from Manhattan, where

she had been an ad executive. To New Jersey, where she and her second husband raised Cashmere goats. To rural Virginia and an 1830s farmhouse. To a discovery on an old map.

"I was captured by the notation, 'Negro Hill' written on the drawing," she says. "That poignant entry pulled me by a force I still can't explain. I set aside everything and sought the facts that ended up becoming *The Kitchen House*."

Kathy believes she was destined to tell the tale that lay behind that innocuous entry. Her tireless research eventually tied her to 18th Century characters who became family. She became their voice.

"My deep connection to people, whose names I found on slave lists, had them fall on paper fully developed," she says. "I believe they drove the storyline. They determined the dialogue. I think they trusted me to tell their side of the story. My job was to listen."

So the book was written (after five drafts), an agent was hired (Kathy stopped counting after 30 rejections), a publishing date was set and books were sold. A lot of books. But that doesn't tell us how.

Now, her plan.

"Despite herculean efforts to get my small book published, I knew it was relatively unimportant in the publishing arena," Kathy admits. "I knew its promotion would be my responsibility. So I studied the business and

realized book bloggers could connect me to readers. I contacted them and asked—again and again—for blog reviews. I met with dozens of book clubs. I still spend substantial time answering every e-mail with careful consideration. These steady steps opened the door into the vast network of book clubs.

"Then book clubs began to seek me out. I was honored by their interest and overjoyed with their positive response to my characters' story. In the end, I hope I served those old souls well," Kathy says. "That was my objective all along."

Kathy's goal was momentum. Her plan simple: earn a coveted spot on book club reading lists. She has moved beyond that target. A screenplay has been written and a movie is being considered. Her second novel is in the works, and her fan-base is solid. The appeal of her writing talent, her acute business sense and affable personality, has the wheels of success rolling on their own, and show no sign of slowing.

In this age of digital touchpoints, trends and taglines, Kathy Grissom's grassroots method has catapulted *The Kitchen House* into the record books and made Madison Avenue take notice. And she's learned that fulfilling her dazzling destiny is something akin to splitting the atom. Only more fun. 

(Kathy Grissom will be the keynote speaker at the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference Jan. 25-26 at Hollins University. She will teach a class on marketing your book. For information, call FRONT Editor and conference director Dan Smith at 540-556-8510.)



Rendering courtesy of 1717 Design Group.

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Randolph Walker

The tools of the trade.

Vocational avocation at the Rescue Mission >

Executive Summary:

Homeless men and women learn the discipline of craftmaking at the Rescue Mission.

By Randolph Walker

Graduates of Nancy Weekly's jewelry-making class at the Rescue Mission of Roanoke probably won't get a job making jewelry. But they learn skills and attitudes that will help make them more employable.

"It's teaching motor skills, it's teaching concentration, it's teaching patience, it's teaching stick-to-it-tive-ness," says Nancy, an accomplished jewelry artist who volunteers her time to the Rescue Mission (www.rescuemission.net) in Roanoke.

Nancy teaches about 11 months a year at the Rescue Mission on Fourth Street Southeast.

Some graduates of the arts program "went on from here to make it part of their profession, but that's not our goal," says Sylvester-Johnson, who heads the Rescue Mission. "Our goal is to involve people in

the process, seeing something at first you don't see and bringing it to the forefront, sticking with something until you get to the finish point, turning it into something beautiful and useful. All these things translate into how we approach life."

"The class is called Wire and Metal Arts because so many men take it, but really it's a jewelry making class," Nancy says. Men don't seem to mind. "Many of the gentlemen like working with the wires and hammers and cutting metal."

Wire and Metal Arts is a class in the Rescue Mission's addiction recovery program, says Joy Sylvester-Johnson.

"Once they choose wire and metal arts as an elective," says Nancy, "they must complete six weeks with me. However, I have had some folks who have been with me the entire duration of the program which is 18 months."

Nancy teaches three classes every Tuesday morning, with each class lasting about 75 minutes and up to six men and women in each class.

Nancy had to adjust her teaching methods to the homeless population. "A standard woman's bracelet is seven and quarter inches from clasp to clasp. Many of them can't measure. I started with written instructions

but I had to learn not everyone can read appropriately.” Nancy helps them learn basic skills such as following directions and measuring.

“Everyone does a non-solder bracelet as a first project. They get familiar with how wire works. The second project is a bracelet with a smaller bead and a different clasp, so they’ve learned how to make a clasp. And then the third project is wire sculpting or wire wrapping. Wire wrapping is a method of encasing an object without glue.”

Nancy donates brass, copper and nickel wire. The wire might be wrapped around a stone taken from broken jewelry donated to the mission.

“My students can choose any item they want to wire sculpt. Generally it’s a pendant.”

Students also choose what they want to do with the finished item. “They make them for themselves personally, they make them for family gifts. It’s one thing they can do for a family member. I had a gentleman make a bracelet with a Byzantine chain and it had an ID portion that we stamped with the letters ‘diabetic’. He wanted to do something for his diabetic brother. That made it all worthwhile for me.”

In addition to teaching, Nancy, 70, creates wearable art from natural stone, gold, copper, silver and brass at her home studio in Southwest Roanoke. She retired from health care sales and marketing seven



Randolph Walker

Artist Nancy Weekly proudly shows off one of her students’ designs.

years ago to devote herself to jewelry, doing business as UniquelyYours. Her work is displayed and sold at 2nd Helpings, the Rescue Mission’s gallery, cafe and upscale-resale shop on Williamson Road (www.2ndhelpings.org), which helps fund the Rescue Mission’s shelter, dining room and clinic.

One of her former students was hired to work in the cafe at 2nd Helpings. “It’s always good to see them doing well,” she says. 

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Christine Manhart with one of her equine clients.

A woman for all seasons >

Executive Summary:

Christine Manhart of Blacksburg is involved in a range of vocational and avocational activities that is impressive. None more so than equine massage therapy.

By Rachael Garrity

The physician must be experienced in many things, but most assuredly in rubbing.

—Hippocrates, The "Father of Modern Medicine"

In today's culture, the word "massage" brings to mind New Age music, exotic oils, thumb-thick terry cloth towels, and surroundings that are designed to appeal to the senses enough to convince the client that yes, this hour is worth the money, because everything about it

suggests high-end living.

Add the word therapeutic, and if the practitioner lives up to the billing, the experience morphs into much less a luxury (albeit no less pleasant) and more a necessity for maintaining a state of optimal health. Christine Manhart is just such a practitioner.

Trained as a geologist, Christine moved with her family to Blacksburg to assume a position with a consulting firm. Not long after that, she left the firm to continue her work as a consulting geologist on an independent basis, but decided to investigate the possibility of adding therapeutic massage as well. Formal training at the Blue Ridge School of Massage and Yoga is the basis for her work, but she is indefatigable in her search to provide for her clients not only hands-on—in every sense of the term—help, but also suggestions for at-home ways of addressing discomfort. Quick to insist that she is not a physician, she is nonetheless a trove of information regarding proven therapeutic techniques.

That skill, however, does not work for all of her clients. There are some who just can't put a healing herbal bag in the microwave. Fact is, they can't put anything in the microwave or anywhere else in a home—they're stable dwellers.

"Working with horses is a very different experience," Christine says, a grin playing around the corners of her mouth. "Naturally, there's some risk involved, but the return is amazing. When I really am successful and the endorphins get going, the horse's eyes are literally transformed and all of these little bubbles begin to gather on their lips. Talk about fun!"

Let's see: consulting geologist, massage therapist for people, equine massage therapist, mother of two teenage girls, wife who enjoys hiking with her husband

when they get the chance. Enough? Not in this case.

Christine is a meticulous and yet creative weaver and an active member of the guild; she's such an enthusiastic baker that she considered starting her own cupcake company; and she's putting the finishing touch on a Microsoft Excel-based system whereby her peers in the massage business can manage billing, referrals and business costs with efficiency and simplicity. Whew!

With all that on her plate, it would be easy to expect a bit of tension, perhaps effectively contained, but nonetheless there. Not so. She welcomes clients at her office at the Center for Creative Change in Blacksburg with a relaxed smile, and a cheery greeting.

it's here

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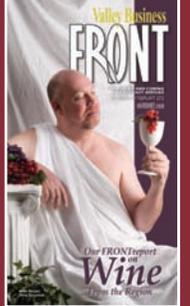
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Coming Up..



December 2012

Best Sales People

In December we bring you the region's top sales performers, in our various FRONTS. But we don't just list them—we ask them to share the secrets to their successes. This economy requires the most tenacious pros more than ever. And you can meet the ones on the FRONTlines here.



January 2013

Airports and Flight

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



FRONTguide

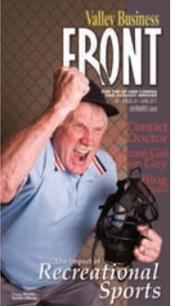
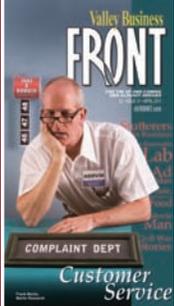
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There's no incense, the substance she uses for her massage is about the consistency of vegetable shortening and has no scent (making it far more healthy, according to the experts), the room itself is simple and inviting, the music comes from a well-chosen Pandora feed on her iPod. Nobody

could get by with calling this a spa.

Like the practitioner, the environment is about health, good health. It's as if Christine Manhart and her colleagues are intent on proving for their clients what the Chinese proverb suggests: "Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are." 



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Vacation? What vacation? >

My View

By **Dan Smith**
Editor

BLOG: [fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Excutive Summary: *The question arises, how much work is too much and when is time off a good thing?*

This magazine was founded in October of 2008 and work on it actually began about two months prior to that. In all that time—until August 17 of this year—I did not take a vacation. I rarely even took a full day off, one where I did nothing toward producing the magazine.

I have never minded. In fact, I've enjoyed it. FRONT is part of my personal identity and my involvement is more than a job. The magazine is half mine and working on it is a great pleasure. I could not work that way for someone else, though, and I suspect most of us can't ... or won't. My recent "vacation" was forced by knee surgery and is actually still going on, to a degree, while rehab is ongoing. I'm working for FRONT, but for some time at a much reduced rate and it's driving me nuts.

We are told that Americans take little vacation time, compared to what other cultures enjoy—or even require. On average, we leave about three vacation days a year on the table, according to one study. Nearly half of us don't take all the vacation time we are allotted.

There are consequences to that oversight, for both the worker and the employer. According to Key Organization Systems, the lack of quality time off results in increased levels of stress (which accounts for a large percentage of illnesses), less productivity, companies held captive because so few people know how to do key tasks and mismanagement. Those are most often bottom-line issues, for which we set ourselves up. KOS says there are easy to identifiable causes: a fast lifestyle, money problems (if you don't use your vacation, you usually get paid for it), multitasking addictions (I plead guilty here), the belief that nobody else can do our jobs, the fear of being replaced, and a corporate culture that fosters overwork.

The fact is that an awful lot of us simply can't or won't disconnect from work except to sleep. We are tethered to our computers and cell phones, carrying our offices with us wherever we go, completing tasks while eating. We ignore our guests, take business calls during dinner dates and generally act like addicted, consumed work-a-holics, even when we deny to ourselves that this is what we're doing.

The family suffers. We suffer because we don't take time to get perspective, and that's not good for those projects we hold so dear. I'm not certain what the answer is because going back—in the midst of all this enabling technology—is probably not a choice unless we simply resign from what we're doing and go into hand-crafted woodwork, eschewing power tools along the way.

Hmmmmm. Hold that thought. 



Manage like mom >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap from the Pub

Why in the world would the death of my sister-in-law have anything to do with my little column in a business magazine?

How in the world could it not?

The announcement that Beth Hennebery had passed on in mid-October just as we were finishing up this November edition hit me like a shot to the gut.

But the news also presented me with one of my most easiest decisions to make: pull my column and replace it with something that really matters. A life that inspired is far more valuable than self-imposed opinion. We are all shaped and nudged and coaxed or prodded in our little journeys by the lives that pass before us. We head off in our little directions, on tiny brush covered paths or big fat wide paved boulevards, all because fragments of the souls around us stick into us, often in near invisible and way down deep ways, forming us into who we are and where we go.

So be it if this is a business magazine. Beth's life even matters here. Frankly, it counts more than the greatest of books and training and conferences and professional influences I ever experienced.

For one thing, Beth had the professional designation that tops the list: mom.

Beth is the mother of five. All girls. And her love of that position was so obvious, she was larger than life in the role. She was so good at it, it was as if you felt drawn to go to her with any question, because she surely had the answer. *My kid has an earache after getting out of the pool; what can I do? We've got this little problem with the flux capacitor; should we reroute the circuitry or change the output on the modulator switch?*

So, if you need a metaphor for business that's as valuable as any other you're likely to ever shove in your briefcase, consider Beth's contribution. Call it the mother of all business advice.

Protect

Beth protected her children. (Her husband, too.) Most mothers are generally good at that; but let's not take it for granted. There seems to be more warnings out there about being an over-protective parent or helicopter mom than the flip side. Psychological experts and therapists are eager to show us all the examples of "damaged goods" (a.k.a. messed up people) from our misdirected parents, while the neglected kids are merely byproducts of unfortunate victims. But I'd rather see an over-protective parent any day over a neglectful one. As a business executive or manager, do you really protect your employees? Do you actually define your job in a calling that high, where you truly feel an

continued on Page 52



Field / On Tap

from Page 51

obligation to watch out for the people who work with you? I've seen companies put that protective shell around their people at least to some degree. It's quite amazing to see, and your level of respect soars when it happens. Of course, we've all worked in environments where such protection never exists. That really fosters loyalty, doesn't it?

Nurture

Beth nurtured her children. Nurturing exceeds even that basic necessity to protect. A really good mother doesn't just see to the physical needs of her children, but she is always nurturing the whole individual. You see, Beth didn't grab her daughter's hand to direct every movement; but she certainly grabbed it when that hand was about to touch a hot stove. Thank God for the mothers who scoff at the current trend to "let children discover everything for themselves." Although it sounds noble to hold yourself back, so you're not an overbearing parent, in order to not impose your beliefs on your young impressionable offspring... that's a futile and ridiculous notion. There's no need for the "parent" designation if you don't... parent. It's your job to impose. The irony is, the very kids who grow up to become the most productive members of society are the ones who completely embraced or rejected their parents' impositions. Without involvement (sometimes intensive) you get adults who wander aimlessly or are only able to complete the task of opening up the child-safety cap on the Prozac. As a business executive or manager, are you

compelled to nurture the people in your company? Do you really want them to grow or improve in their vocational development or increase their skills? Not just elevate your performance, but theirs? A nurturing environment is pretty easy to spot; and if you can't distinguish it at your business, you might want to think like mom.

Love

Beth loved her children. Okay, I know it's a stretch to apply the most intense human capacity to a business lesson. There is no justification to even hint at such a comparison. So I won't.

But for crying out loud, there are some companies out there that obviously couldn't care less about their employees. That's as bad as outright hate. At the least, let's respect and appreciate one another. Do the employees at your company know they are appreciated? That's a start. You can hug and kiss 'em if you want to take it that far (until the regulators find out).

Beth Hennebery was a magnet. Even as they became young adults, Beth's girls gathering around their mom was a common sight. The scene would have made a beautiful Norman Rockwell painting. People gathered around this amazing soul, and no one was a stranger.

The protective, nurturing, and loving mist lingered on the souls near her for 59 years. A span far too short, like a morning and an evening, really. But the mist will continue to spread over the meadow. Over the brush covered path or big fat wide paved boulevard. It will sustain us, and we will flourish. 



Parents need to take back the reigns and refuse to accept rude behavior from their children — Page 20

Letters

Cool business people

Thank you for your comprehensive coverage of the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute in the October, 2012 issue of Valley Business FRONT. It is difficult to communicate the size and scope of this initiative in a typical “news story,” and your willingness to devote 12 pages of the magazine to the story is remarkable!

This initiative to add to meaningful translational research, improve our lives, our health and our economy is a game

changer, and we are excited about its potential. In addition to being well-written, I appreciated the way the article effectively showcased the promise and excitement of VTCRI through the words and faces of its researchers, leaders and supporters.

Stay tuned, there is much more to come.

Nancy Howell Agee
Carilion Clinic President and CEO

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

“”
Entrepreneurship and romance
are terrible roommates — Page 22

“”
Average earnings also is
determined by where the men
and women live — Page 59

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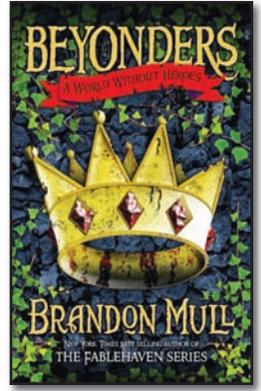
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



Beyond Harry Potter

Move over Hogwarts, take note J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter is so last year. There's a new kid in town. Brandon Mull's epic Young Adult fantasy series *Beyonders* (Aladin, \$19.99) is a knockout. "By reading these words, you have volunteered yourself to recover the Key Word. Move swiftly. The knowledge you now possess marks you for prompt execution. The first syllable is A."

Jason is just an average kid living an ordinary life until he falls into a Hippo tank and is transported into an alternative world. His curiosity leads him to become an accidental hero. To find his way back home he must first seek the Key Word that will overcome the dark emperor whose evil magic is destroying the realm. In his journey he stumbles into another "Beyonder," Rachele. Can he keep them both safe as they fight to get home, or will Rachele be the one to save him?

—Melanie Huber

A rare, superb read

Every now and again—all too infrequently—a book comes along that has the can't-put-it-down quality of a good mystery, the learning quotient of historical fiction, and the dramatic tension available only when characters are fully formed and dialogue rings with a near-perfect pitch. Lynchburg author Kathleen Grissom's *The Kitchen House* (Touchstone \$16, Kindle \$12.99) is just such a book. Read it on a Kindle, and you're likely to forget to check your progress on the page-percentage indicator, and be left breathless when you reach the

final paragraph. A full-blown example of what happens when an author is as much storyteller as wordsmith, this book virtually throbs with reality, alternately visceral and poignant, and sometimes painful.

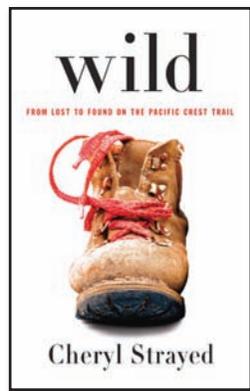
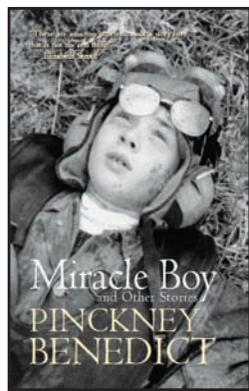
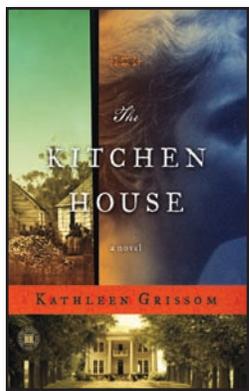
The story opens in the late 18th Century, when a young Irish orphan named Lavinia finds herself unable to remember her past and living among the slaves on a Virginia plantation. The kindness and warmth her adoptive family offers her and their raw strength and indomitable spirit in the face of a life many would find intolerable defines the first portion of the book. As the story evolves, and Lavinia becomes a part of the family of the plantation owner, the author adroitly changes the focus without losing the pace, in part because she uses multiple characters' points of view throughout.

To write more might risk ruining the story, and that would be a tragedy indeed. Read it. When you close the book, you can't help but hope that the part of the plot that remains unresolved signals the possibility that there might be a sequel.

—Rachael Garrity

'A chain of images'

This collection of short stories, *Miracle Boy and Other Stories* (Press 53, \$19.95), holds nothing but the written word sacred. Pinckney Benedict draws on his Appalachian roots for his muscular stories. From the title story about a boy who is bullied following a tractor accident, to "Bridge of Sighs" where an epidemic causes authorities to destroy farm animals to prevent its spread, to "The Beginnings



of Sorrow” with a dog who acts human, to “Zog-19: A Scientific Romance” where an alien filled with sentient gas seeks a new home from his dying planet, Benedict’s language is strong yet wonderfully poetic.

He peers through his magnifying glass at humanity and the hardscrabble lives of his characters, laying bare preconceived ideas of what is right and wrong. His best stories are those when Pinckney is being Pinckney, unrestrained, without bowing to conventions. Fourteen stories, each a gem, present a chain of images unexpected and exciting.

—Betsy Ashton

‘Ride in a gypsy cab’

Ferrum author Charles Shea LeMone’s *The Spring of Unexpected Consequences* (Warwick House, \$12.95), dazzles with tension, texture, and harmony in Harlem in 1957. Nate Holt, former police detective who tends bar with grace and grit, writes a music column, and boxes to relax, draws the reader into a culture beginning to change as drug lords infiltrate Harlem.

With the “casual dexterity and tonal clarity” of the jazz world and the dangers and thrills of boxing, LeMone hits us with uppercuts, combination crosses, and backpeddling as his characters seek out the evil of a new underworld. Like his earlier novel, *Corner Pride*, a coming-of-age story set in the ganglands of North Philly, this novel shines with memorable characters whose integrity gleams through the murk of change. “Although the calendar said it was spring, the night air held onto winter’s coattails.” Prepare for a ride in

gypsy cabs into a spring in flux.

—Ibby Greer

Break out the boots

Imagine your life reduced to what you can fit in one backpack. What will you leave behind? What will you carry? For Cheryl Strayed, author of the memoir *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* (Knopf, \$25.90), living out of a backpack became her way of life. Strayed takes you with her, step by step, through a heart-pounding adventure across 1,100 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail.

Having never hiked before, Strayed leaves an obliterated life behind and learns to endure at the most elemental level. On the trail she confronts constant thirst, rattlesnakes, punishing weather, extreme terrains and overwhelming solitude. As she does, she comes to the realization that the world she has been trying to escape is the very same world in which she can and will learn to survive. *Wild* is fierce, sexy, smart and ultimately motivational. You’ll want a pair of hiking boots after reading this one.

—Melanie Huber

(The reviewers: Melanie Moro-Huber lives in Vinton and is the book review editor for NYQ and the layout and design manager at Connotation Press. Rachael Garrity is a Blacksburg-based freelance writer and regular contributor to FRONT. Betsy Ashton is a Smith Mountain Lake-based writer. Ibby Greer is a Rocky Mount-based writer.)



Roanoke Civic Center courts media >

Robyn Schon, general manager of the Roanoke Civic Center and Global Spectrum management group addresses members of the media at the annual Media Day on Oct. 11. In addition to a recap of the year's 263 events, facility upgrades and improvements, Schon reported on the upcoming schedule and the civic center's social media impact: over 15,000 "likes" on Facebook; over 2,000 followers on Twitter; 39,000 Cyber Club members; "Venues Today" Social Media Power 100 Chart.



Tom Field



on Virginia students by 2025.
• Emphasizes high-demand disciplines, technology, engineering, mathematics and healthcare.



Dan Smith

Education review >

Tom McKeon, executive director of the Roanoke Higher Education Center, told a good-sized group at the Claude Moore Center that a new study by the center has discovered that adults seeking higher education want healthcare or education almost overwhelmingly. In addition, the report found, 59 percent of workers in a group of 337 companies surveyed are pursuing some kind of education.

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



Tom Field

FireFli alights in Grandin >

Firefli Media, a digital ad agency, held an open house and grand opening Oct. 11 at its new studio in a renovated building in Roanoke's historic Grandin Village. Pictured above are **Greg Brock**, **John Cornthwait** and **Matthew Sams**.



Dan Smith

Women's Conference >

The Virginia Women's Conference at the Hotel Roanoke Oct. 13 drew a full house of more than 750 people to hear speakers and sit in on classes of intense interest to women. Speaker (and co-sponsor) **Mark Warner** posed for a photo. A young armless woman used her feet to take a photo of Warner speaking. FRONT was one of the sponsors for the conference, which drew more than 750 people.



Dan Smith

Chervan salutes manufacturing >

Frank Chervan Inc / Kellex in Roanoke celebrated National Manufacturing Day on Oct. 5. President **Greg Terrill** praised the 165 workers, the 500 to 1,000 chairs they produce daily, and predicted a comeback for U.S. manufacturing in the coming years.

CONTRIBUTORS

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is the founder of business news site Handshake 2.0 (handshake20.com) and President and CEO of Handshake Media, Incorporated, makers of Handshake mobile applications. She is co-founder of She Chooses.com (shechooses.com), the social network for women.
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Gene Marrano, a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, is one of the most prolific journalists in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Roanoke This Week with Gene Marrano" on Fox Radio 910).
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Michael Miller is senior licensing manager for Virginia Tech Intellectual Properties in Blacksburg. His consulting company is Kire Technology. With more than 25 years as an inventor and technology consultant, working with Fortune 500 companies and startups, he screens businesses for the World's Best Technology Showcase and mentors tech startups through Development Capital Networks and the National Science Foundation.
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Anne Piedmont is the president of Piedmont Research Associates, a marketing communications firm she has started after working for the Roanoke Regional Partnership as director of research for more than 18 years. She's also worked in public relations and journalism. She loves numbers and wants them to make sense for you.
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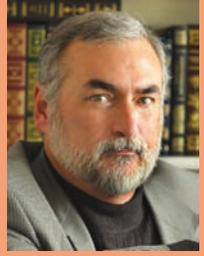
Dan Smith is editor and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT. A native of Asheville, N.C., he has been a journalist for more than four decades and has won many journalism awards (writing, photography and design). He is a member of the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame and was a 2009 recipient of the Perry F. Kendig Literary Award. He was Virginia's Business Journalist of the year in 2005. He is the founder of the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference.
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Randolph Walker graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a journalism degree in 1983. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in Roanoke and an advertising copywriter for the Edmonds Packett Group. He is now a freelance writer as well as a performing musician and guitar teacher.
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Leah Weiss works at Virginia Episcopal School in Lynchburg as assistant to the headmaster. Her short stories have appeared in half dozen literary magazines and two have won national honors. She has completed a novel and is working on a book of short stories. She is an artist and a musician, as well.
[leahstories@live.com]



Michael Miller

October 2012 > Contributor of the Month

Michael Miller has been a columnist (Technology) and feature writer for Valley Business FRONT almost from the beginning, but the October cover story on the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute and its overall impact and expectation is his first cover. The work he did on the story has made him the October Contributor of the Month. Like everything else Michael does, it was impressive on several levels. His research, his interviews, his understanding of the concepts and the facts and his crisp writing style made this one of the best stories of the year in FRONT. Michael has been our contributor of the month in the past, but this one's special because it's his first cover. We are lucky to have a man of Michael's talent (he's a splendid photographer, as well as an outstanding writer) working with us and the beneficiary is our readers. You can read Michael's current and back issue articles at vbFRONT.com

“”

Buying fast
fashion is like eating fast food

— Page 21

“”

keep the edge sharp

— Page 38

What we make >

You've heard it discussed recently in debates and political ads and even around the dinner table: the difference between what men and women earn. It is an unfortunate fact of life that professions and types of jobs dominated by women—education, retail, healthcare—pay lower than those filled by men.

And while male and female colleagues in the office should be paid the same amount for the same job at the same experience, the size of the gender difference in average earnings also is determined by where the men and women live—which certainly is the case in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. In communities where, according to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, a higher percentage works in manufacturing, the disparity tends to be higher. That's the case in Pulaski County, where 23.0 percent of those over 16 years old work in manufacturing.

Radford has the lowest percentage difference between male and female earners, as a high

portion of them (32.0 percent) work in the same sector: education/healthcare/social services. Additionally, 44.8 percent reported working in management/business/science/arts jobs within the education sector.

Radford also has the lowest median earnings for all earners, reflecting the very high student population and large number of part-time or low-wage jobs they would hold. Montgomery County, home to Virginia Tech, also has low median earnings. The highest median earnings are found in the suburban counties of Botetourt and Roanoke, and, in fact, both are above the state average. Roanoke County is the only area community with a median family income above Virginia's; with Botetourt very close to it.

In Roanoke City, both the region's urban core and healthcare hub, 24.2 percent work in healthcare and education, and 29.0 percent report that their jobs are in management/business/science/arts. Within the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area, Roanoke City has the lowest gender disparity in earnings.

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

Difference in Earnings Between Men and Women

	Median Earnings, Year-Round, Full-Time			All Earners	Family
	Male	Female	% Difference	Median	Med. Income
Botetourt Co.	\$49,265	\$36,368	-26.2%	\$33,656	\$73,032
Craig Co.	\$40,286	\$28,021	-30.4%	\$27,882	\$63,134
Franklin Co.	\$36,198	\$31,430	-13.2%	\$26,702	\$53,066
Roanoke Co.	\$50,634	\$36,865	-27.2%	\$34,325	\$74,660
Roanoke	\$35,084	\$31,131	-11.3%	\$25,148	\$46,322
Salem	\$43,922	\$34,091	-22.4%	\$26,771	\$64,254
Roanoke MSA	\$41,681	\$33,377	-19.9%	\$28,832	\$60,547
Giles Co.	\$39,945	\$35,585	-10.9%	\$28,042	\$48,966
Montgomery Co.	\$43,194	\$32,601	-24.5%	\$15,528	\$65,654
Pulaski Co.	\$40,410	\$29,688	-26.5%	\$25,747	\$48,884
Radford	\$35,962	\$33,211	-7.6%	\$7,271	\$58,258
Blacksburg MSA	\$41,364	\$32,195	-22.2%	\$17,885	\$57,442
Virginia	\$51,245	\$39,598	-22.7%	\$33,027	\$73,514



Dan Smith

Samantha Steidle in the lobby of the new iteration of the Business Lounge: “Entrepreneurism has become a legitimate career path.”

Business Lounge moves into high gear >

Executive Summary:

Up until now, the Business Lounge in downtown Roanoke has been in what Samantha Steidle calls its Beta Phase. It's at full-throttle Alpha now.

By Dan Smith

Samantha Steidle was taken aback by the attention at the time. This was June and the Business Lounge had just opened a block from Roanoke's daily newspaper. An enterprising reporter had found the concept interesting, did a story and opened the media floodgates. Before Sam was ready for them to be opened.

She didn't have the heart to tell the fawning reporters that this was pretty much a trial run and that the real deal wouldn't be starting until about September or so. So, she went along. This is a former advertising professional and she knows the value of publicity—whenever it comes and however it reads.

Still, only part of the story was being told

because only part of the story was set up and running: a co-working environment in what had been—and remained, in part—a photographer's (Dan McDilda) studio. It had limitations, but it also had clients, so there were visuals. Now, it has everything it needs and Sam is looking at expending toward Salem, Lynchburg and Bedford in the near future, but let's not get ahead of the story.

The facility on Campbell Avenue was immediately successful, drawing 40 paying clients (at \$100 a month per) who used the spare offices in the Business Lounge, most often for meetings and as a base camp. These are people who are not office-bound because of the nature of their jobs—often sales. But there were other needs and Sam listened. “We want closed conference spaces” is what she heard frequently.

The new facility on Kirk came available and Sam mustered her resources, furnished the space with conference tables, a workroom that looks like a press room at a governmental facility, and a big lounge. Already, in her early days at the spot, she has more than 20 clients (at \$200 a month) and is growing as word gets out. This space is different, a bit more elaborate, but less individual.

The need is being filled. “I cannot stand not filling a need when I see one,” says Sam. The initial space, she insists, was “the beta test.”

It has become a studio space since the move, returning to its photo roots. The space can be rented, as needed, on that basis. It does not have full-time clients and nobody's there all the time.

That's pretty much the opposite of the new BL, which is open all the time and is meant to accommodate clients who are starting a business, often while working a fulltime job, or working a second job—that means at night, very often. Sam thought this one out. "I teach at Virginia Western [Community College]," she says, "and I asked one of my classes how many of them wanted their own business. About 75 percent of them raised their hands. Entrepreneurism has become a legitimate career path."

She recently started playing in another ballpark, as well, that of the venture capitalist. "I've been trying to compile a list of resources for our clients," she says, and the idea of venture capital came up, so she pursued it. She got positive response. "I have a team of five to seven business people looking to invest," she says. These are not techno-geeks, but people looking for solid business plans. "I won't just kick anybody to them," says Sam.

Co-working spaces are starting to gain footing in communities, hence Sam's interest in expanding, but she's not so much worried about competition. "The difference is that I work 10 times as hard as anybody else," she says, an implied wink. That means that at the Kirk facility, she poured the concrete floors and painted the walls before moving in.

In Brief

Name: Samantha Steidle
Age: 32
Business: Business Lounge
Location: Roanoke (2 locations)
Type of business: Co-working/shared office space
Background: Native of Baton Rouge, La. MBA from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (2009) and bachelors degree in accounting from Radford University (2004). Worked at American Red Cross (marketing blood drives), Yellow Book (advertising), Fox 21/27 (TV advertising), Virtual Marketing & Virginia Western Community College (taught marketing and entrepreneurship). Married to David Steidle of the Steidle Law Firm, with two-year-old daughter Olivia.

Getting bigger, she insists, is not the model. Growing slowly and with intelligence is.

And she's constantly looking for resources. Her husband, David, has offered clients free advice as an attorney and Samantha says her marketing experience is always there for the clients. It's that and the small things—like pushing in chairs and cleaning smudges off tables—that visitors notice. She won't let those pass. 



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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Bongard

Brian T. Bongard has joined the Ameriprise Platinum Financial Services practice of Richard L. LaRose in Roanoke as a financial advisor.



Ratcliffe

Serena G. Ratcliffe has joined Cole & Associates CPAs, LLC as an accountant.

Curt Clements has been appointed as a group benefits consultant at Scott Insurance,



Clements



Showalter

Roanoke office.

Milton Showalter of NewRiver Bank has graduated from VBA School of Bank Management.

Mark Woolwine, CPA, and **Scott Clarke**, CPA/CCIFP have been admitted as partners at Brown, Edwards & Company.

David "Tommy" Semler has been named chief credit officer of Bank of Floyd.

LEGAL FRONT



Lugar



Thomas

Justin M. Lugar and **John Reed Thomas, Jr.** have joined Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore as attorneys.



Blake

Julianee M. Blake has joined Anderson,

Desimone & Green, PC as an associate attorney.



Chinn-Gilstrap

Sandra Chinn-Gilstrap has joined Woods Rogers as Of Counsel.

WELLNESS FRONT



Tims

Stuart Tims, MD and **Amber Hurley, OD** have joined Vistar Eye Center in Roanoke.

Sidney Mallenbaum, MD, has been elected co-chair of the Virginia

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Hurley



Mallenbaum

Stroke Systems Task Force.



Winfield

Gary L. Winfield, M.D., has joined LewisGale Regional Health System as Chief Medical Officer.

TECH / INDUSTRY FRONT

Donald B. Baker, Ross C. Jenkins, Ron D. McCall and Joe Gary Street have been appointed to the board of Coalfield Economic Development Authority.

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute has named **Rachel Cogburn** as executive

director, I-81 Corridor Coalition; and **Roderick A. Hall** as senior associate director for operations and finance.



Civility is a power tool

— Page 20

Seydric Williams



- Executive Director of K-5 Instruction for Roanoke City Schools
- Graduate of UNC Charlotte & NC State
- Married with Children
- Vibe Radio Listener

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Career FRONT

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Thomas

Richard Thomas, AIA, has joined Spectrum Design as an architect.

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

Kevin Dempsey has been appointed vice president of global and merchandising division of Advance Auto Parts.

Jerry McLawhorn, president of Superior Exterminating Co. has been awarded the Virginia Pest Management Industry Stewardship Award.

SENIOR FRONT

Susan O'Malley, RN, of Friendship

Assisted Living was named 2012 Assisted Living Administrator of the Year by Virginia Center for Assisted Living at the Virginia Health Care Association.

EDUCATION FRONT



Duncan

Michael J. Duncan has joined the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville as deputy director.

Forest Jones has been elected as 2012-13 chair of the Virginia Western Community College Local Advisory Board.

Dr. **Nancy Dye** has been appointed to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors by Gov. Bob

McDonnell.

Victor E. Giovanetti has been named to the Roanoke Higher Education Authority Board of Trustees.

Kenneth Nicely has been named director of secondary instruction / technology for Roanoke County Public Schools.

CULTURE FRONTS

Margo Crutchfield has been named curator at large for the Center of the Arts at Virginia Tech, scheduled to open in 2013.

OTHER FRONTS

Advertising / Marketing

Beth Kolnok has joined B2C Enterprises as director of client services.

Mary Hastings of Hastings Design Corp. was selected as a finalist in Neenah



Kolnok



Hastings

Paper's competition for her Halifax Regional Hospital package entry.

Organizations / Associations

YMCA of Roanoke Valley announced its new and returning officers and board of directors: **John Carlin; Dale Lee; Lee Wilhelm; William Sparrow; Rob Cassell; Dan Joiner; Adam Boitnott; Tom Robertson; Skip Zubrod.**

“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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Sheetz



Gilbert

Gilbert; Susan Woody-Williams.



Zanella

Nina M. Zanella has joined Roanoke Valley SPCA as director of development.

Downtown Roanoke Inc has announced the following board of directors members: Glenn Hager; Anna

Karbassiyoon; Jill Lovejoy; Bill Poe; Leesa Wilcher; and executive committee: Curtis Mills, Jr.; Barry Henderson; Joyce Waugh; Melissa Palmer; Mike Sutton; Robert Eaton.



Anderson



Woodie-Williams

board members: Amy Sheetz; Beth Anderson; Kim

Greater Blue Ridge Chapter of JDRC announced its new

“ ”

I am not going to give up my fries

— Page 33

So much more.

vbFRONT.com

- > Surprising Findings in Higher Education Center Survey
- > 200 Manufacturing Jobs for Franklin County from Ply Gem
- > Taubman Changes Model: Free Admission; Mickenburg Out as Executive Director
- > A Celebration of Manufacturing at Frank Chervan Inc.
- > Large Group from Region Finalists in Gap 50

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.

- > Atomic Axis Brings 30 New Jobs to Blacksburg
- > Roanoke Co-op Wants To Farm Again; Submits Proposal
- > SoftSolutions, Cenveo Reach Supply Agreement
- > Fralin, Smoot in Hall of Fame
- > Novelist Mary Johnston's Majestic Manor to Sell at Auction
- > State Contracts Often Exclude Local Contractors
- > ND&P Acquires tba To Form Big Agency

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



St Francis service dog.

Saint Francis re-accredited

Roanoke-based **Saint Francis Service Dogs** has been re-accredited by Assistance Dogs International, which designates international standards for raising, training and placement of service dogs for people with disabilities.

City Market Building renovation

The Market Building Foundation, Inc. and Hall Associates, Inc. announced **Lionberger Construction** has been awarded the bid for the renovations to the first floor of the City Market Building.

Audiotronics in Blacksburg

Roanoke-based **Audiotronics**, a home theater and electronics company has acquired Scotty's Radio & TV on Main Street in Blacksburg.

Bedford ranks well

Bedford ranked number 6 as a "Top 10 Small Town, 2012" by Livability.com, citing the town's scenery, outdoor recreation, low crime rate and low median home price.

HUD grants state \$1.7 Million

The U.S. Department of **Housing and Urban Development** (HUD) awarded Virginia \$1,759,658 in grants to public and assisted housing residents for employment and education services.

VWCC gets \$5 Million

Virginia Western Community College has announced that the **Horace G. Fralin Charitable Trust** has made a commitment of \$5 million over five years to create an endowment for scholarships at the College. At least 75 percent of the funding will be used for scholarships

in the areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and healthcare.

Carrier Enterprise expands

Branch Management Corp has broken ground on a 10,000 square foot expansion for a facility at Aerial Way Drive in Roanoke for Carrier Enterprise, an HVAC distributor.

VDH opens at Valley View

Virginia Department of Health has opened a pilot site at Valley View Mall in Roanoke for a **community wellness center** that includes a nursing room for breast-feeding mothers, vaccinations, and nutrition education.

Peaks of Otter lodge seeks operator

The National Park Service did not receive proposals by its deadline for concessionaires to

operate **Peaks of Otter** lodge and restaurant, signaling the potential of not reopening in spring 2013. A deadline has been extended, but an NPS official cites restricted bank lending as the primary obstacle.

Roanoke County named Tech Leader

The e.Republic's Center for Digital Government has ranked **Roanoke County** as number three in its national Annual Digital Counties Survey for 2012.

Gander Mountain expands

Gander Mountain, an outdoor recreation retailer in Roanoke County, has expanded its staff and product offering.

VT's ARC and CGIT join USGIF

Virginia Tech Applied Research Corporation and Center for Geospatial Information Technology have joined the United States Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF).

Botetourt Softball award

The **Botetourt Sports Complex** has been selected as the 2012 Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America Complex of the Year.

ITT Exelis reduced workforce

ITT Exelis in Roanoke County has laid off more

than 200 workers because of "anticipated U.S. defense government procurement reductions," according to a company spokesman.

Finley and Debbie Meade.

PlyGem adds jobs

PlyGem, a manufacturer of windows and doors, announced the plan to add 200 jobs by the end of 2014 to its Rocky Mount operations in Franklin County.

Atomic Axis in Blacksburg

Atomic Axis, a mobile solutions company based in Austin, TX., is opening an office at the TechPad in Blacksburg, with the anticipation of 30 new jobs in Montgomery County over the next three years.

Taubman

The **Taubman Museum of Art** in Roanoke announced it will no longer charge admission (depending instead on contributions), and has appointed a new board of directors, including Nick and Jenny Taubman, Heywood Fralin, David Wine, William Lemon, Bittle Porterfield, Garnett Smith, Kent Greenwalt, Leon Harris, Nancy Agee, Stan Lanford, Tammy

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.

New direction for RAAP expansion

The **Radford Army Ammunition Plant** in Dublin plans to construct one of the biggest industrial facilities in the region, spending \$240 million, according to published reports. BAE Systems, which took over the plant three months ago from

Alliant Techsystems, will build the facility to produce nitrocellulose, an ammunition ingredient for the U.S. military.

Arts Council dumps staff

The 36-year-old **Arts Council of the Blue Ridge** has terminated its professional staff and

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FRONT Notes



National College award.

become an all-volunteer organization. Vern Danielson has become the interim director.

National College & president honored

President **Frank Longaker** of **National College** in Salem, received the Imagine America Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award, honoring his 40 years of service to the career college sector and its tens of thousands of students and graduates, at the annual conference of the Association of Private Sector Colleges & Universities. The College received the TOPS Award, recognizing its grassroots advocacy efforts on behalf of the students.

VWCC wins marketing awards

Virginia Western Community College

received the most awards out of 17 schools and agencies at the 2012 Virginia Community College Association (VCCA) Excellence in Communications Competition. The College received 10 awards in seven categories at the VCCA convention in Oct., including annual/presidents

reports; billboards; broadcast and print promotions.

Micah's Soup for Seniors launched

Warm Heath Village and St. Michael's Lutheran Church recently partnered to launch Micah's Soup for Seniors,

a service to provide basic food staples for needy seniors in several HUD housing units.

Co-op wants farm

Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op has submitted a proposal to Roanoke City Council to purchase 17.5 acres of land on Blue Hills



Virginia Western marketing at VCCA.

Drive off 460 in Northeast Roanoke, from the City of Roanoke to serve as the site for its urban farm.

NS to cut 200 jobs

Norfolk Southern Corporation plans to lay off 200 workers in this region and portions of West Virginia, citing a decline in coal traffic.

Jarrett property bought

347 West has purchased

the 9,600 square foot industrial property at 2002 Centre Ave. in Roanoke from Jarrett Electric Co. for \$219,000. The property will be used for 347 West's office furniture business.

Library restaurant closes

The venerable **Library** restaurant joined two other landmark Roanoke eateries as victims of the economy in September. The upscale restaurant blamed the lifeless

economy for closing after 33 years at Picadilly Square on Franklin Road. The other closed restaurants are Tudor's Biscuit World (28 years) and the Little Chef (50 years).

Radford University MBA recognized

Radford University College of Business & Economics was listed in The Princeton Review's "Best Business Schools: 2013 Edition."

SiteVision contract

SiteVision of Roanoke, an Internet application development company, has won a hosting services contract from the Virginia Information Technologies Agency. SiteVision will furnish hosting service, software and GIS and Internet map services.

Compiled by Tom Field

Additional FRONT Notes posted 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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It's not like it is on TV at all

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Thank You! **Valley Business FRONT** recognizes:

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- **Woods Rogers PLC**

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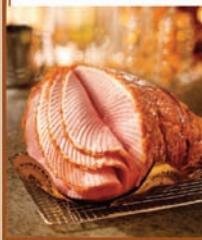
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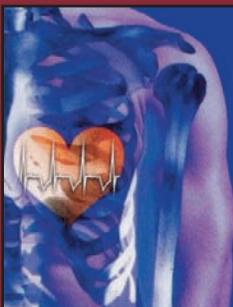
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