

Valley Business

# FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING  
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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A Special  
Report:

VTC Research  
Institute

## Roanoke's Future?

Emma Duncan,  
Age 4, Roanoke



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*Que sera, sera. Whatever will be, will be.*

In the Hitchcock classic “The Man Who Knew Too Much,” Doris Day sings the French lyric, answering a young child’s question on what he will grow up to become. Apparently, Doris is not concerned; which is understandable, since she’s delighted at this point to have a child who is alive, instead of missing, abducted, or dead. Waylon Jennings, however, shares a different perspective.

*Mommas, don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys.*

And so we come to Roanoke, Virginia, and the greater Roanoke region, New River Valley, and southwestern Virginia. Roanoke was a railroad town. So much so, that it wasn’t until the early 1980s that even the most diehard railroaders could finally admit the designation no longer applied. Ever since then, people have wanted to claim another leading industry to characterize the Star City. Fiber optics? (Thanks to a slew of spinoffs from ITT.) Distribution and mail order? (Home Shopping Network, Orvis, etc.) Financial services? (No way to catch up there.) R&D? Hmmm... (Maybe on the medical front.)

Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute shows promise. For one thing, it’s bigger than just Roanoke proper, with its direct tie-in to Blacksburg and Virginia Tech. But there are other projections and forecasts at play, including economic viability and sustainable employment. We talked to the architects and torchbearers.

Now all we need is a song with some catchy lyrics.

**Tom Field**

**Dan Smith**

“”

## Brimmed hats are back

— Page 22

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*Spine Surgeon*

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# Roanoke's Future

In Medical Research

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Art direction and cover photography  
of Emma Duncan by Tom Field.

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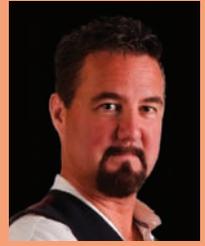
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# OCTOBER



Anne Giles Clelland



Tom Field



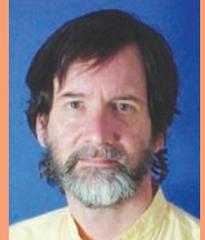
Rebekah Manley



Elizabeth Markham



Nicholas Vaassen



Randolph Walker

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

## Editorial Advisory Board

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

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

# CONTRIBUTORS



Kathleen Harshberger



Mary Hill



Rachael Keshishian



Pete Krull



Michael Miller



Anne Piedmont



Dan Smith



Kathy Surace



It's the advertising plus the better products at the lowest price that is causing the business to grow

— Page 39

## 2012 Members

**Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)  
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**Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)  
**Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)  
**Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)  
**John Williamson** RGC (Tech/Industry)



Anyone can be a champion

— Page 31

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

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# Roanoke's Future?

## A Special Report: VTC Research Institute



**Emma Duncan** our 4 year old FRONTcover model from Roanoke County, may or may not grow up to become a doctor or medical researcher, but many forward-thinkers are banking on that industry.

### VTCRI finally flexing economic muscles >

**Executive Summary:**  
*There has been promise from Day 1 that the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute would be a job-generator for the region on a significant scale. We're starting to see some of that promise reach fruition with exciting work.*

By Michael Miller

For the sixth time, the National Civic League has named Roanoke an All-American City. Roanoke joined only 13 other localities, including Baltimore, San Francisco, Seattle, and San Antonio, to claim the 2012 award. The primary judging criterion in 2012 was a candidate locality's ambitious plans to guarantee more students are proficient readers by the third grade.

Among the primary reasons for Roanoke's selection is the involvement of a pair of newcomers to the community: Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey of the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute.

The Rameys were founders of the Georgetown University Center on Health and Education, but left there to join Dr. Michael Friedlander, director of the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, as Distinguished Research Scholars focusing on the role of nutrition, education, and social interactions in the development of cognition in children.

In other words, Roanoke brought in some ringers.

Ringers, indeed. Warner Dalhouse, a founding board member of the Virginia Tech Carilion Medical School and one of Roanoke's most significant community leaders, is a man not given to excessive verbal flourish. So, when he says, "I believe the creation of the VTC Medical School and the VTC Research Institute is the most significant event in the history of Roanoke since the railroad came to town in 1882," you have to take a second look at what's going on here.

While Roanoke's award is nice feather in its cap, it represents only a small fraction of the economic potential that is developing due to a vision shared by the leaders—past and present—of the City of Roanoke, Carilion and



Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute.

Virginia Tech to drive the economy from an 19th Century railroad base to a 21st Century medical technology powerhouse.

The economic history of Roanoke is based on transportation and technology. By the mid-1700s, Scots-Irish, English and German immigrants working their way down the Indian trails through the Great Valley from Pennsylvania towards the Carolinas and Tennessee, began to farm in the Roanoke region. A succession of towns was established: Antwerp, Gainsboro and Old Lick eventually became the town of Big Lick in 1874.

## Some history

Roanoke was chartered in 1882, the same year the Shenandoah Valley Railroad completed its junction to the Norfolk & Western Railway. The rail junction created rapid growth in the region, and just two years later, in 1884, Roanoke became a city. In fact, Roanoke became a railroad city, which defined its character for more than a century.

City leaders knew the "railroad town" designation would eventually change because of the nature of business and with it different needs for the community. Improvements planned for the Roanoke air facilities were temporarily put on hold in the mid-1970s when serious consideration was being given to establishing a regional airport facility to the east, near Bedford. Such an airport could have spurred growth throughout the Roanoke-Lynchburg-



I believe the creation of the VTC Medical School and the VTC Research Institute is the most significant event in the history of Roanoke since the railroad came to town in 1882

— Warner Dalhouse,  
founding board  
member VTC



**Charles Steger: Wanted Tech to be among the elite.**

Southside region, but the service eventually migrated south to Charlotte, leaving Roanoke devoid of a potential economic driver.

Roanoke's importance to the N&W system was unquestioned, but the merger with the Southern Railway system in 1982, resulted in the headquarters of the enlarged rail system being moved to Norfolk. For a time, fears of de-emphasis of the rails in the Roanoke region created significant hand wringing among planners, and though the Norfolk-Southern presence remains strong in the area, the writing was on the wall: the future of Roanoke would not be built on steel rails. The question became, on what would that future rest?

Meanwhile, 30 miles west, a model of the new economy was emerging, as Virginia Tech sought new avenues for growth. T. Marshall Hahn, Jr., Tech's president from 1962 to 1974, had set the university on a course to evolve from a smallish, cadet-dominated southern school to a modern, major research university. By 1985 the student population had grown to more than 20,000. More important, the university took a major step into the future by establishing the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center on farmland adjacent to U.S. 460 and the Tech airport, within sight of Lane Stadium. Although the first building was not completed until 1988, growth in the park was eye-popping, and it would eventually become the major driver for high tech industries in the entire region.

This example was not lost on the urban planners in Roanoke. Clearly, association with a research university



We were at a special point in the history of medical education. By collaborating, Virginia Tech and Carilion could create a new generation of physicians with high competence in medicine and research.

— Charles Steger,  
Virginia Tech president

would be an impetus for future economic growth in the technology markets of the future. At the time, the only need for a link between Roanoke and Blacksburg was the airport, and that link was tenuous at best. In order for Roanoke to benefit from the developing Virginia Tech technology base, the distance between the two regions had to be reduced.

Simultaneously, Virginia Tech planners were beginning to realize that their growth would be hampered by the limited road structure in the Blacksburg area. A direct connector road between Blacksburg and Roanoke was proposed, but a succession of impediments combined with road improvements around the Christiansburg and Blacksburg bypasses eventually prevented construction of such a connector. In nascent form, the connector route survives as the so-called "Smart Road."

Although the connector road was not constructed, other events were conspiring to set the stage for a regional partnership.

## New president

In Blacksburg, Charles Steger took the helm as president of the university and set the goal for his administration to boost Virginia Tech into the top 30 "elite" research universities in the country. Increasing competition for research funding forced the university to develop an institute model where more collaborative resources and synergies could be brought to bear in a proposal effort. Several of these institutes have become household words in the NRV: the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute (VBI), The Fralin Life Sciences Institute, the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science (ICTAS), and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI), which manages research projects on the Smart Road. Together, these institutes represent more than 600 employees and about one-third of the total research funding for the university.

Meanwhile, the Carilion System under CEO Ed Murphy was also evolving. From its humble beginnings in the old Roanoke Memorial Hospital, the non-profit Carilion system had grown to eight hospitals in the region, including the acquisition of Roanoke's Community Hospital. Cost pressures in medical care and a realization that the various elements of the Carilion system were not providing coordinated service created an impetus to change the healthcare delivery model. After visiting the Mayo and Cleveland Clinics, Murphy spearheaded the conversion of the Carilion system to the clinic model. The key to success would be in using medical education and research combined with state-of-the-art facilities



Dan Smith

**Ed Murphy: Had a vision.**



Of all the things I have done, the medical school and research institute project is the one I am most proud of. ... This project would be the envy of anywhere and probably not achievable in most cities the size of Roanoke.

— Ed Murphy,  
former Carilion CEO





**Roanoke Economic Development Director Rob Ledger (from left), Assistant City Manager Brian Townsend and City Manager Chris Morrill look over the development of the Riverside Medical Complex.**

to provide the best possible medical care and outcomes for regional patients.

Roanoke city planners were eager to assist in the creation of the expanded medical technology enterprise. Working with Carilion, they could see the development of specialized facilities stretching from the old Community Hospital and Jefferson College of Health Sciences on one end to Roanoke Memorial Hospital on the other. The city invested more than \$20 million to acquire and redevelop property in the region to be used for the creation of the Riverside Medical Complex, as well as dining and other supporting mixed-use infrastructure. The entire area, once fully developed, will be an integrated, medical-technology focused park unique to cities the size of Roanoke.

## Setting the stage

So, by 2005 the stage was set for the next act in the economic development of the region. Transportation issues between Blacksburg and Roanoke, though not eliminated, were substantially reduced by the VDOT improvement projects around the Christiansburg I-81

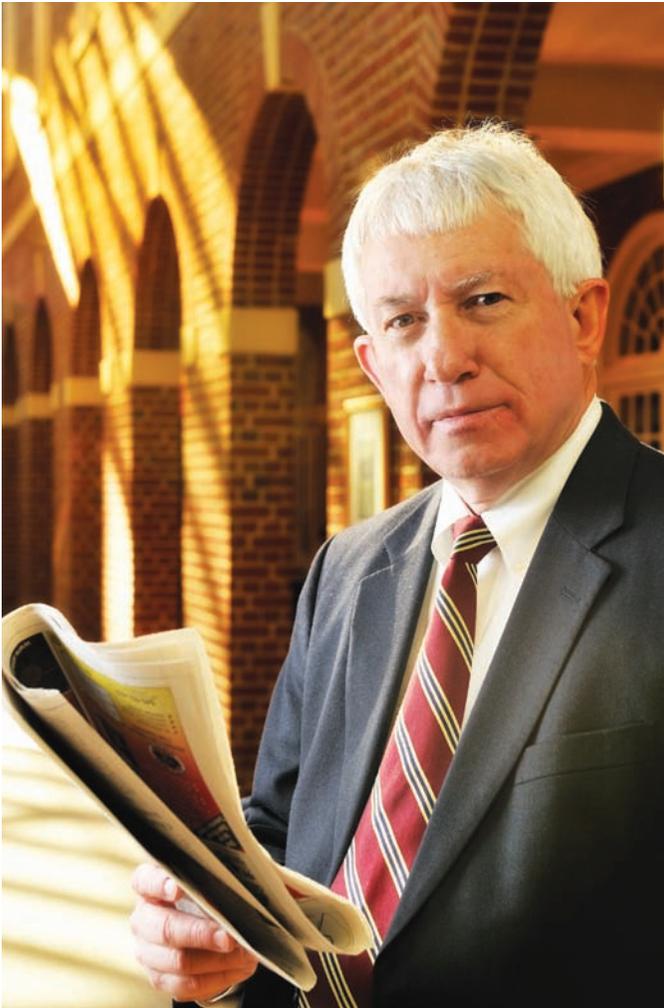
# COVER STORY

interchange and the bypass-to-bypass shortcut. Carilion needed a medical education and research facility to continue the path toward a true clinic model. Virginia Tech needed a medical education and research facility to continue its path to the top 30. Roanoke City made adequate property available in the right place through major investment. All that was lacking was the catalyst.

Murphy recounts that “Charles Steger and I had been discussing how in the long run, Carilion and the university had to work together to bring our resources to bear to help the economy grow, develop and evolve.”

Murphy surmised at the time, “This project would be the envy of anywhere and probably not achievable in most cities the size of Roanoke.”

Steger says, “Ed and I agreed that as the largest employers in the region we were well-positioned to be a major economic force for the good of the whole region.” Steger describes the unique opportunity



Ray Smoot



The city made an investment to the tune of about \$25 million, but that was really an investment to create an opportunity for the next two or three generations of residents. That was the big picture action the council took in 2001, making that long term investment, knowing that it wasn't to reap benefits in the first 5 or 10 years, that the real benefit was going to come much further along.

— Chris Morrill,  
Roanoke City Manager



Roanoke has, for a city its size, an exceptional civic capacity ... continuously focused on building a better community.

— Ray Smoot, Virginia Tech  
Foundation CEO



Nancy Agee



Less than five medical schools are associated with universities having both a school of veterinary medicine and a top flight college of agriculture and life sciences. The potential for discoveries which can have a real and measurable impact on patients' lives is exhilarating.

— Nancy Agee, Carilion CEO

available through the Carilion collaboration, noting that while Carilion was already involved in medical education, "Virginia Tech could bring additional advantages in the form of our excellent engineering, computational and bioinformatics and programs. We could build on the strengths we already had."

"It was clear," says Steger, "that if we could tie all these things together with Carilion we could do amazing things to help advance society."

Steger adds: "We were at a special point in the history of medical education and research. By collaborating, Virginia Tech and Carilion could create a new generation of physicians with high competence in medicine and research."

But as in any endeavor of consequence, another roadblock loomed. At that time the accrediting bodies had set up rules that made it essentially impossible to start a new medical school. "But once they realized the magnitude of the coming shortage of physicians," says Murphy, "they changed the rules to allow new schools to open. I called Charles as soon as I found out and told him, 'This is it!'"

## Cooperation personified

The next three years were a whirlwind of regional cooperation that involved Carilion's Board of Directors, Virginia Tech's Board of Visitors, then-Governor Tim Kaine, Delegate Lacey Putney, and many others. Funding for the facility had to be secured from the General Assembly as well as Virginia Tech and Carilion, construction plans had to be approved, and staff had to be hired. It was a major miracle made possible only by the shared vision of the key players.

"You don't do a project of that size and complexity as successfully as we did it without a lot of people pulling in the same direction," says Murphy. "To get a list of all the people who made it possible, you'd need pages and pages."

With the facility issues in hand, the next important step was to acquire the right leadership. "I think the hiring of Dr. Cynda Johnson was a seminal moment in the establishment of VTC," says Nancy Agee, now the CEO of Carilion Clinic, since Murphy's resignation to take a position in Boston. "By hiring someone with her credentials and experience, we were making a clear and unequivocal statement about our intentions to build a first class medical school."

Agee puts that in perspective: "Less than five medical



schools are associated with universities having both a school of veterinary medicine and a top flight college of agriculture and life sciences. The potential for discoveries which can have a real and measurable impact on patients' lives is exhilarating."

The educational model is also unusual for a medical school. Incoming classes are limited to 42 students who are divided into six sections of seven students each. They spend their first two years learning by use of actual case studies, akin to the method dramatized in the television series "House." The goal is to create physicians with a special emphasis on medical research.

While the medical school is an important ingredient, the major economic impact in the region is likely to come from the research institute. Success in research means obtaining research funding and then spinning out local technology based businesses that will create employment beyond the confines of the academic enterprise. In that regard, the Research Institute scored a major coup in attracting it's first director, Michael Friedlander.

## World class

Dalhouse, a says of the director, "Friedlander, himself a world class researcher, has successfully recruited a sizable group of research scientists who are doing world class



[Former Carilion CEO Ed] Murphy and [Tech President Charles] Steger could both be described as visionaries for their respective organizations. They were both excited about this idea from the start because it was such a big deal for both. They quickly hammered out a memorandum of understanding which later became a true partnership agreement.

— Warner Dalhouse,  
founding board  
member VTC



Dan Smith

**Warner Dalhouse: Huge impact.**



The keys to our rapid success in setting up the collaboration were an embracing political leadership, a well-established healthcare system and a university with established excellence in areas outside of the traditional health field.

— Michael Friedlander,  
director of VTC-RI

research right here. Many of these are renowned in their fields and could be doing their work anywhere in the world. Friedlander has attracted them to Roanoke because of Virginia Tech and the environment he has created for their work.”

Friedlander is no stranger to public-private collaborations with medical research facilities. He directed a similar research facility in Birmingham, Ala., and saw it bloom into a major economic driver.

“There are many parallels between Birmingham and Roanoke,” says Friedlander. “Birmingham was built on the crossing of two railroads. In the 1950s there was talk of a Delta Airlines hub, which eventually was cited in Atlanta. Birmingham was sinking into oblivion.”

The city was economically saved by the hospital and growth of a regional medical technology economy, which now accounts for more than \$3 billion in economic impact. And while Roanoke is not in the dire straits of Birmingham, Friedlander would like to see a similar outcome.

Says Friedlander, “The keys to our rapid success in setting up the collaboration were an embracing political



Michael Friedlander: World class research.



**Debbie Kelly: Class filled quickly.**

leadership, a well established healthcare system and a university with established excellence in areas outside of the traditional health field.”

While the doors only opened in 2009, early success in the research institute is evident. VTCRI at 23 months:

- 20 faculty research team leaders,
- 150 total employees with annual payroll of \$9 million,
- 35 spouses/partners relocated to Roanoke,
- 39 active and 38 pending research grants totaling \$27 million.



The institute has already accounted for significant research funding and local employment, and it has barely started. One of the researchers relocated his tech startup company to Roanoke, and there are three more startups in the works. The Riverside Medical Center could one day resemble the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center.

## Full classes

One indirect measure of success is that a VT-CRI researcher has already held a workshop for other researchers who came to Roanoke to learn about her work. Debbie Kelly arrived in Roanoke from Harvard Medical School, and her



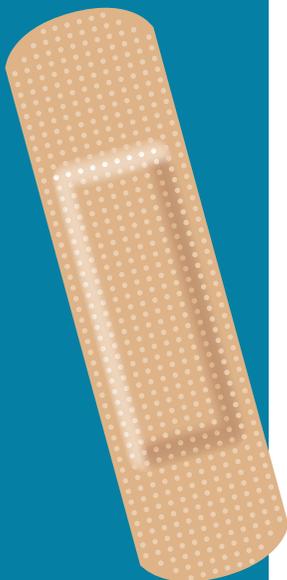
**Sharon and Craig Ramey.**

specialty is sorting out pieces of cells to isolate features of, for example, cancer cells so that more effective treatments might be developed. Kelly held a workshop to demonstrate to other researchers how to use the special grid structures to sort the macromolecules and cells. "The registration for the workshop filled up so quickly that I had to cut it off and put some people on a waiting list," says Kelly.

The long term research areas for VTCRI include brain, heart, cancer and infection research, but the initial team is focused mainly on the brain. Millions of dollars of specialized medical equipment is being used to study recovery from brain damage caused by impact, disease or genetics.

The Rameys, who contributed to the selection of Roanoke as an All-American City, study, among other things, sociological factors that contribute to cognitive abilities in children. Warren Bickel studies the relationship between brain structure and addictive behaviors with a goal of helping to develop more effective treatments.

The number and variety of research programs already underway is breathtaking. VTCRI faculty universally cite one major factor in their situation that is uniquely creative: There is, as yet, no duplication of skill and experience. Researchers are encouraged to overlap with each other and benefit from a different viewpoint on their research problems. This fosters a scientific community environment where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.





Warren Bickel: Unique research.

## Solid evidence

The successful launch of the Tech-Carilion collaboration is, in Murphy's words, "evidence of what the region has going for it." Certainly there remain some limitations. Adequate air service is lacking, and the need for increased broadband service has been exacerbated by the demands of the new technology center with its data-laden brain imaging facilities.

The road between Blacksburg and Roanoke is still 45 miles long, although as Steger says, "It's no longer the impediment it once was. I make that trip so often now that I don't even notice. I get in my car and I think it automatically drives me to Roanoke." Certainly the researchers at the Transportation Institute would like to make that happen.

While the ink is not yet dry on the introductory pages of this unique collaboration between a university, a hospital system and a smallish southern city, we can be certain of a couple of things: Regional leaders have clearly demonstrated that by working together, big things are possible.

And, with a little luck and a lot of effort from dedicated doctors and researchers, this region will continue to be a Star City of the new technology south. 





## Cell Phone and Texting Manners >

In January of this year at the Lincoln Center, during a performance of Mahler's Ninth Symphony a cell phone rang for nearly five minutes. Conductor, Alan Gilbert, finally put down his baton and stopped the performance. The sophisticated (sic) audience hurled abuse at the culprit (not good form either, wouldn't you agree?) and a national debate ensued on cell phones in performances.

We've all seen it—the child texting during dinner; the young business person talking on the cell phone during meetings, and yes, even us baby boomers sliding into senior citizen status sometimes do it. It seems that each generation has its own reasons for violating the rules for cell phoning and texting. It's almost a "You shouldn't do it, but I can—just this once" scenario. Let's face it. It's not the device that's the problem. It's how we use it.

Cell phones and texting are wonderful tools. I love my mobile device, which gives me freedom to work anywhere in the world I happen to be. I actually wrote and sent my first column for FRONT on my mobile device while I was on a cruise.

When a child or adult texts or phones in the company of others, they are not giving attention to the people they are with. It's up to the parents to teach good mobile device manners. That said, it means we have to model that behavior to the children, and follow our own rules.

Cell phone and texting tips:

- **Be present.** Whether it's a conversation, a meeting, a dinner or a performance, put your phone on silent, and live in the moment.
- **Be private.** Don't tell the world about your private life. People don't really care, and it's rude to interrupt and intrude on others with loud talk.
- **Be cool.** Angry outbursts in public reflect poorly on us, and embarrass others.
- **Be quiet.** Please don't "cell yell." Let's modulate our voices.
- **Be polite.** Stay at least 10 feet away from another person when talking.
- **Be aware of latency.** This electronic delay between when you speak and when the other person hears you is becoming more problematic as cell phone use increases. It can lead to one person repeatedly interrupting another. Apologize if you detect latency. That tells your caller that you don't mean to interrupt, and you are not being rude.
- **Be focused.** (Do I need to mention this?) Please don't text and drive. 🚫

## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

### Executive Summary:

*"Let's face it. It's not the device that's the problem. It's how we use it."*

## The great employee who won't show up >

***Dear Anne:** Part of what we do at the company where I'm a manager is develop custom software. Programmers are hard to find and keep at a salary we can afford. We have an excellent programmer—except once or twice a month he just doesn't show up for work. Doesn't call, doesn't email, doesn't text, just doesn't show. I talk with him, he apologizes, says he forgot, sits down, puts on headphones, and starts writing lines of outstanding code. Other employees complain and I would fire him in a heartbeat for this absolutely unacceptable behavior if he had any other job in my department—except replacing him would be almost impossible. What do I do about having to keep someone who breaks rules but has a privileged position because of what he can do?*

**Dear No-Show:** People who can write code, whether for custom software or for the next mobile game phenomenon, have tremendous power. Excellent programmers have knowledge, skill, practice and experience that are hard-won and highly valued in our increasingly technology-driven economy. And the proliferation of software start-ups creates an incredible competition among companies who want to hire programmers, especially for complex, long-term projects. Why work for a salary at an established company when a developer might make millions at a start-up?

We're told that no one's indispensable, that each of us can be replaced. When it comes to software developers, their shortage makes this adage pretty much untrue.

What's to be done about the reality of a company's dependence on programmers? The major problem when people don't show up for work is the interdependence of tasks, i.e. the whole production system breaks down if one person isn't present to do his job.

The only way to handle predictable absence is to plan for it. Have two production systems in place—one for when your programmer is there and one when he's not. When an employee complains, "Why is he allowed to break the rules and I'm not? Is he more special than I am?" instead of answering "Yep," offer tuition reimbursement for employees who are willing to take programming courses in their off-hours. And immediately post a job opening for your programmer's position. Someone is probably whispering "Join my start-up" in his ear as you're reading this. 

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



## Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

**Executive Summary:**  
*No matter how good, or how valuable this gold brick is, you're going to have to deal with his negligence sooner or later. Better make it sooner.*



## Oh, man, hats are back! >

If you're a man feeling the urge to don a brimmed hat of late, you are not alone. The Wall Street Journal reports that more and more men in New York City and cities across the country are sporting hats for the first time in 40 years.

Brimmed hats were prevalent in the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. Functionally, they keep a man warm and dry—or cool. They once signaled success and professionalism. The 1960s and '70s brought big changes in men's hats. President Kennedy, with his robust head of hair, eschewed hats. Culturally, men began favoring longer hair and casual clothing, such as jeans. The baseball cap became the hat of choice but, with all due respect, ball caps are a different subject.

Classic hat styles lost favor and men's headwear began a long decline. However, in recent years, men began wearing their hair shorter and adopting headwear to distinguish themselves from others. Men of all ages are embracing hats in the form of fedoras, Panamas, and trilby hats. They collect hats, seek them on vacations as souvenirs and view them as great gifts.

The intervening years, in which few people wore hats, has led to a hat etiquette debate. At one time, everyone knew that hats were to be removed indoors. Now, young men often see their hats as part of their ensemble and decline to remove them. Also, they dislike "hat hair" and prefer to keep it under cover.

Not to mention the lack of safe places to leave a hat so that it can be stored safely and reclaimed in good condition. In the 1950s when a gentleman removed his hat, he could check it and trust that it would be returned in good shape, but coat-check rooms are scarce lately. Men are forced to hold their hat or place it on a table or chair, not a great solution.

With the resurgence of brimmed hats we must fine-tune the hat etiquette of yesteryear. Hats can help a man communicate his style, his personality, and the level of respect he holds for other people and institutions. Removing one's hat indoors and when greeting others is seen as respectful. A little courtesy goes a long way.

Just like the business suit, hats enhance a man's appearance, creating a great silhouette and an air of mystery. Brimmed hats are back – and they've never looked better. 

## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

### Executive Summary:

*We're not talking baseball caps here, but real hats like they wore in the 1930s, '40s and '50s.*

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# Financial Matters

## Aligning mission with investments >

### Executive Summary:

*It can be a fine line that non-profits walk when investing in their endowments.*

### By Peter Krull

Non-profits are mission driven. Their mission may be community, social or environmental in nature, and the operations of the organization are dedicated and focused on achieving specific community, social or environmental goals.

Many non-profits derive some operational funding from their endowments. An endowment is typically a sum of money established for the long-term operation of the organization. At times it may contribute 4-6 percent of its value to the operational budget. During times of reduced giving, such as a recession, endowments can be life-savers for many non-profits.

This begs an important question: should the investments of a non-profit's endowment

be aligned with its mission? Is it ok for an environmental organization to have investments in ExxonMobil? Or for a local community group to own WalMart shares?

All endowments should be guided by what is called an investment policy statement (IPS.) An IPS creates guidelines for the endowment, such as the purpose of the endowment, portfolio construction, risk management, distribution policy and selection of investment managers. It also helps to reinforce the fiduciary responsibility that board members have.

Many non-profit investment policy statements include language that specifically mandates a socially and environmentally responsible investment strategy. They may require avoidance of particular sectors such as tobacco, big oil or even gambling, whichever sector(s) are in opposition to the organization's mission.

In addition, the IPS may also direct the investment manager to vote the stock proxies in a manner that aligns with the non-profit. In recent years, there have been numerous votes on issues such as climate change, executive compensation, lobbying and political contribution transparency and women's equality.

Finally, there may also be mandates that a portion of the investments be placed in community investments, sometimes local if possible.



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So why is this important? Because by moving a non-profit's endowment portfolio into alignment with its mission, it expands its opportunities for greater impact. Not only does the organization fulfill its mission through operations, but through the prudent use of its investment resources as well.

In addition, there is also the opportunity for increased contributions once donors understand that their dollars are not only going towards "on the ground" operations. In effect, their contributions are multiplied, both sustaining the non-profit and acting as a change agent. What more could you ask for?

How about returns? The board does have a fiduciary responsibility to invest the assets as prudently as possible, balancing risk versus return to maximize performance. Studies continue to show that there is not a tradeoff between investing with

your values and performance.

In fact, a February 2012 study by Japanese researchers concludes that "the hypothesis that pursuing social benefit comes at the expense of economic performance is rejected in all regions." So, both domestically and internationally, there is no penalty for using a socially and environmentally responsible investing strategy.

If you are a non-profit board member or make charitable contributions, you should be questioning the allocation of the organization's endowment. Is there an investment policy statement and what does it say? Are the investments aligned with the organization's mission or do they run counter to it? With a few questions and a little work, you may be able to increase the organization's impact and make the world a better place. 

## Damon Williams



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- *Va Military Institute graduate*
- *Serves on Roanoke City Economic Development Authority*
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Randolph Walker

**Rusty Schundler: "I think crowdfunding is not going to be the tool of choice for raising funds for small businesses."**

## Crowdfunding's promising, but is it legal? >

### Executive Summary:

*Will the JOBS Act let you submit your start-up idea to an online "crowd" of potential investors? It's not clear yet whether "crowdfunding" will work in practice.*

By Randolph Walker

Maybe you've heard about bands that raise money for albums by soliciting donations on a website. Some contributions come from fans who know the band personally, others from strangers. That's an example of crowdfunding.

Could an entrepreneur use the same approach to fund a start-up?

While some artists have been successful in using websites like Kickstarter.com, the role of crowdfunding in business has been "insignificant to date," says Rusty Schundler, an attorney with the Charlottesville office of Woods Rogers PLC, a Roanoke-based law firm. "People were effectively making donations, not investments. You could not do this where it was structured as an investment from the public at large."

That might change as a consequence of the JOBS (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) Act which President Obama signed in April. The full possibilities won't be known until the Securities and Exchange Commission issues its final regulations in 2013.

Companies generally can't publicly offer securities to a large number of investors (especially to "unaccredited" investors who don't meet income or net worth criteria) unless the company first files a registration statement with the SEC.

An initial public offering typically costs hundreds of thousands of dollars, says

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Schundler. "There's a lot of time spent trying to get disclosures set up correctly to protect yourself from liability. For small early stage companies, it's just not a viable path."

Start-ups often use exemptions, such as Rule 506, to bypass some of the restrictions in federal securities law. The JOBS act created additional options. Under JOBS, domestic, non-public companies can raise up to \$1,000,000 in any 12-month period by receiving small investments from a large pool of investors.

A company may now raise funds publicly by selling its securities to anyone, regardless of whether they're accredited or had a pre-existing relationship with the company.

"As long as you comply with the procedures in the crowdfunding exemption, you can essentially go out to the public through an

intermediary and solicit investments," says Michael Hertz, who, like Schundler, works with small businesses and start-ups at Woods Rogers ([www.woodsrogers.com](http://www.woodsrogers.com)).

The new exemption comes with some limitations. The amount the company can receive from each investor is limited, as is the total amount raised. Solicitations must be conducted through an SEC-registered intermediary. Certain information must be filed with the SEC, which is likely to be costly.

That's the letter of the law, but whether crowdfunding turns into a practical tool is still unknown.

"There are two possible ways this is going to play out," says Schundler. "One is that the SEC regulations and some market solutions will develop that will make

## Dr. Guy Sims



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- *Graduate of Lincoln University*
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Randy Walker

**Michael Hertz: "... You can essentially go out to the public through an intermediary and solicit investments."**

crowdfunding a great tool for small businesses.

"Or, alternatively, if solutions can't be found for three fundamental issues, crowdfunding could be permitted in concept but unused in practice.

"The three issues are: First, there will need to be some due diligence to vet companies to protect against fraud and to give investors confidence in investments. Second, there needs to develop some monitoring function to look out for the best interest of the small investors.

And third, there needs to be mechanisms

developed to allow small companies to manage having potentially hundreds of investors.

"And until the SEC regulations come out, it won't be clear which of these may be addressed by regulations, or which may need structures or ideas to arise in the marketplace. But unless all three are addressed, I think crowdfunding is not going to be the tool of choice for raising funds for small businesses."

Says Hertz: "In theory, it's a really great idea, but the unknown is whether the burdens of compliance will make it unusable in practice." 

“ ”

In theory, it's a really great idea, but the unknown is whether the burdens of compliance will make it unusable in practice.

—Michael Hertz,  
Woods Rogers

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Rachael Keshishian

Joseph Catlett with his class.

## Making women formidable >

### Executive Summary:

*At Carilion Clinic, Joseph Catlett has taken on the task of helping these female healers become masters of self defense. Just in case.*

### By Rachael Keshishian

You might think of Joseph Catlett when you hear names like Bruce Lee, Mohammed Ali, and the Karate Kid. Joseph Catlett is a highly decorated Master Instructor of Karate and Self-Defense at Carilion Clinic whose job is empowering female employees there to be strong, confident and know how to defend themselves in any situation.

The women in Catlett's Carilion class call themselves the "Lady Wildcats" and, after sitting in on one of his classes, it is obvious why. The class is extremely tough. The mental toughness is equally important to the sharp physical moves and techniques.

## In Brief

- Name:** Joseph Catlett
- Employer:** Carilion Clinic
- Location:** Roanoke
- Type of job:** Master of Self Defense and Karate Instructor
- Background:** Philadelphia native; high school track and field star, kick boxer, US Army/ Vietnam Veteran, self defense and karate master. Oldest of nine children and he has six children. Master Instructor of Karate/Self Defense; two-time Army Hand-to-Hand Combat/Pugil Stick fighting Champion (1972-73); former Pennsylvania Kickboxing Champion (1979); Virginia State Certified Private Security Officer/Alarm Respondent; 2003 World Martial Arts Hall of Fame Inductee. Affiliated with American College of Medicine, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, American Legion



Rachael Keshishian

**Catlett teaches some moves: “No! What was that?”**

“The lower body and legs are the foundation for everything I teach,” says Catlett. “If you have a strong base you can protect yourself. The women work on posture, stances, mobility and coordination. There are so many components to their fitness,” he says.

The class is completely silent except for the heavy breathing of the students and the sound of their calculated punches connecting with the leather glove on Catlett’s hand. Just then one student makes an error and Catlett’s voice halts all activity. “No! What was that?” Students seem to hold their breath in suspense, not knowing what will come next, but there is a collective sigh of relief when their strict instructor breaks down laughing. Catlett makes a quick joke and they return to practicing kicks, punches and other series of defensive and strength moves.

Catlett, a Virginia Certified Private Security Officer, is a Vietnam War Veteran and a two-time U.S. Army Hand-to-Hand combat champion. He is a pugil stick-fighting champion and former Pennsylvania Kickboxing Champion, training in his hometown of Philadelphia.

Track and field was Catlett’s first love and his interest in self-defense came from trying to avoid gang violence in the streets of Philadelphia.

“As a kid I had to walk seven blocks to school every day and passed through gang territory. After seeing many of my friends seriously injured and killed by gangs I knew I had to learn to defend myself,” says Catlett.

After training with his father, Joseph joined former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Frazier’s gym at the age of 16. “I wanted to learn to defend myself while living in an environment of violence. It was for self-preservation. I wanted to protect myself and my family,” he says.

In 1972 Catlett enlisted in the Army and began his basic training in Fort Dix, N.J. His physical and mental strength helped him go far. During his three years in the army he graduated from Platoon Leadership School and served as Army Tactical Microwave and Radar specialist in the Vietnam War. He was Soldier of the Month in the Schofield Barracks in Hawaii near Pearl Harbor and served as a Chaparral Missiles Analyst. He later served as part of military intelligence in Korea. He retired from the Army in 1974 and returned to the United States to teach karate and self-defense.

Catlett teaches the “Katsu Ryu” karate system, a system he named himself after the Japanese meaning behind word. “Katsu is Japanese is the word for dominance. “Syu”



Rachael Keshishian

is the word for school," he explains. "Katsu Ryu is my school of victory and dominance."

His specialty and passion has always been training female athletes and he has even trained his own daughters Syreeta and Shatia Catlett, now 27 and 20 years old. Both were named Female Athlete of the Year for their Karate performances at the Virginia Commonwealth Games, Syreeta in 2003 and Shatia in 2006.

In May of 2012, Catlett was hired as the official self-defense instructor at Carilion

Clinic in downtown Roanoke. He says he believes that all women should learn to defend themselves and there are an exceptional number of female doctors and nurses on staff at Carilion.

"I want all of the doctors and nurses here to become a team, able to perform and protect themselves," says Joseph. "All women have the ability to be involved in this program regardless of body shape or size. If you can stand, walk and breathe deeply you can be trained. Anyone can be a champion." 



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## Tech Scoop

# What if somebody is always watching? >

### Executive Summary:

*A study that goes a little bit farther.*

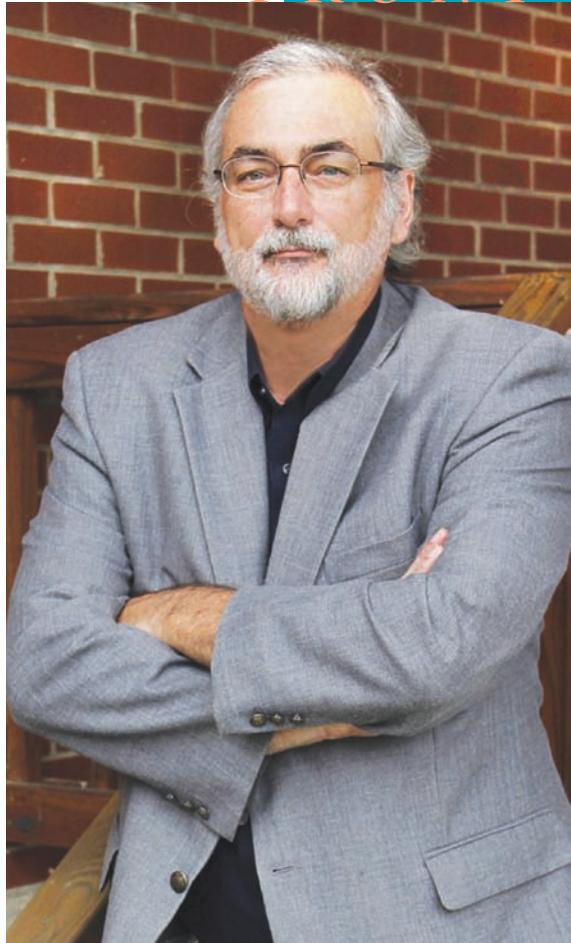
### By Michael Miller

During one of my geeky conversations with a researcher friend, I was introduced to a seriously scary new concept: the Human Sentinel.

Actually, you probably already know this concept. In the old days, coal miners sometimes took canaries into the mines with them. The canaries, being much more sensitive than the miners, became sick quickly if exposed to poisonous gases, allowing the miners to (possibly) escape. The birds functioned as “sentinels” for the miners. Today we would call them sensors, but of a living variety.

My geeky friend is a microbiologist, and he told me that sometimes humans were also used that way. If you plan to send a work party into the jungle to build a new canal, it's a good idea to understand what biological threats are present so that your workers can be properly inoculated. One really good way to find out is to take a blood sample from a person who already lives there. Presumably, this person has been exposed to all the pathogens and has developed immunity, which shows up as antibodies in their blood. So in effect the humans are the sentinels.

Now, that doesn't sound so scary, but here's a new twist. Dr. Reed Montague, a researcher at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute in Roanoke, has a big, expensive MRI machine that monitors brain activity. Montague's team uses the machine to study how various physiological factors affect decision making.



Michael Miller

The cool part is that he has it connected to four other similar machines around the world, so he can study how individuals react to each other or to external stimuli. For example, he has the subjects play a simple digital game together and monitors their brain activity. It turns out that a healthy subject's responses can be used to identify brain abnormalities in the opponent. So, in effect, the healthy brain is used as a sensor, or sentinel, to diagnose the brain issues of the opponent.

This all sounds breathtakingly cool, but here is the scary part. If you pay very close attention, the sentinel can actually identify the language spoken by the opponent if it is different than the local subject.

“So what?” you may ask. Well, the digital game they use doesn't have any words.

I expect to see this fully developed into a JJ Abrams movie very soon. 



Mark and Deb Burke, proprietors.



Mark's fertility lab; full of DNA.

## Work Spaces

### Stalls over Cubicles >

#### Executive Summary:

*It's Amethyst Acres, not Green Acres. But the storyline is similar.*

#### By Tom Field

Our workspace for this month features Our workspace for this month features Amethyst Acres in Botetourt County. Maybe it feels like you work in a barn sometimes—but this is the real deal. And if anyone should know about that, it's Deb Burke. She left a 20-year "office job" in publishing and advertising to join her husband Mark in their full service equine reproduction, boarding and training business. But before you hand in your city desk job resignation to step out into the great outdoors, this life is not all pretty pastures and kissing cute ponies on the nose. Deb and Mark aren't just married to each other—they're married to the business.

"It's the Green Acres story in real life," says Deb, referring to the classic television sitcom. "It's just the two of us, except for

one part timer. This is a 24/7 lifestyle."

But it's easy to forget the hard work part when you see the couple's eyes light up as they describe what clearly is their completely encompassing passion. Their smiles never end as they troop from one postcard scene to another on their picturesque Virginia- calendar farm, bordering the James River and with panoramic views of the Blue Ridge Parkway. Their home is also located on the property, which is perched up on a high knoll.

"You couldn't get me back [in an office]," Deb says.

Amethyst Acres serves all breeds of horses, though Egyptian Arabian is a personal favorite of the Burkes. They maintain as many as 45 horses in the breeding season, and their clients hail from the U.S. and Canada. Services include stallion management, foaling and mare management, semen collection, freezing and storage, artificial insemination, sales, marketing and training.

Mark received his training from Texas A&M, and the couple set up the business in Buchanan 12 years ago. The horses here are as lively, bright-eyed and responsive as the two people caring for them. There might only be one other example where the expression matches that level of satisfaction: the faces of the family who dropped by to pick up their new 2-year old.

All in a day's work. 

# DEVELOPMENT FRONT



all photos: Tom Field

The heart of Amethyst Acres is its 172 feet long by 36 feet wide modern stable with 12 stalls, offices, breeding & foaling equipment.



Deb's office in the stable with memorabilia on the walls.



This 2-year-old beauty is being adopted by her new owners today.



October 2011



November 2011



December 2011



January 2012



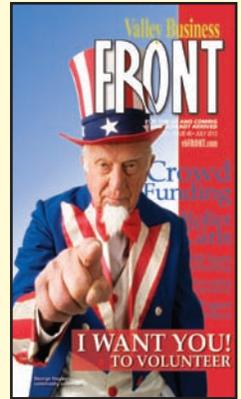
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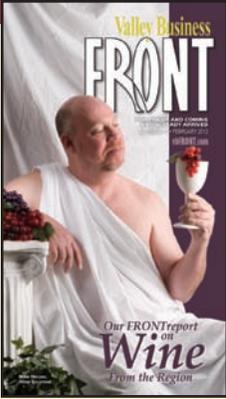


July 2012

# FRONT favorites

**Volume IV is complete (October 2011-September 2012)**

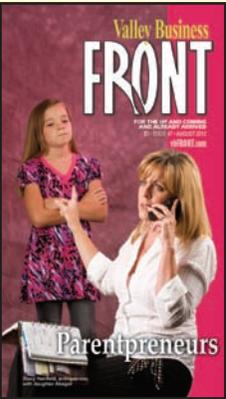
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Randolph Walker

**Joel and Clayton Spencer in their showroom in Salem.**

## Overhead down; sales up >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Here's the story of a father-son team that undercuts competitors in mid- to high-end furniture by doing almost everything themselves.*

### **By Randolph Walker**

A customer comes up to Joel Spencer with a question about a chest and a dresser. "When is it going on sale?"

"We don't run sales," says Spencer. "We beat everybody's prices every day of the week."

Looking around The Rug Mattress & Furniture Store in Salem, it's hard to argue with him. Spencer sells a dining room table with two

leaves for \$795; a dresser for \$695; a queen size bed for \$695—all solid cherry Amish, hand-made.

How is Spencer able to sell middle- to high-end American pieces for hundreds of dollars less than his competitors? The answer is as straightforward as the name of his store.

"There's three things in business," says the veteran of 40-plus years in retail furniture. "There's volume, or gross sales; there's markup; and there's overhead. Our overhead is so small, it's incredible."

Spencer and his son Clayton run the store at 40 W. Calhoun St. with just three part-time employees—two for deliveries and one for sales. "Between Clayton and me, we haul the furniture ourselves, we sometimes help on deliveries, we both will do the job of five employees. We work very

hard for a small margin of profit. The furniture business is traditionally 100 percent markup and we work on less than half of that."

His small Amish suppliers are actually competitive with imports, he says.

"Almost all of our suppliers of bedroom and dining room furniture and occasional tables are Amish from Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania. The Amish are basically doing the same thing I do. They have no overhead. That's how we beat everybody's price. We're not selling off-brand goods either."

In addition to the solid wood Amish, he sells Sherrill sofas and chairs, made in Hickory, N.C.; Englander mattresses, and Karastan rugs, among other mid- to upper-tier brands.

Rowe sofas, made in the U.S., are priced as low as \$595. A Rowe full size sleeper runs \$695.

Furniture and mattresses account for 70

# RETAIL / SERVICE FRONT

percent of his business, rugs 30 percent. Spencer also offers area rug cleaning, repairing and refringing, and will pick up and deliver.

In a rambling building adjoining the main showroom—parts of it date to the 1800s—he sells antiques and collectibles on two floors, mostly on consignment. A third floor has more Amish furniture.

Joel Spencer, 59, grew up in Roanoke and Salem. He started working in retail furniture at age 18. Clayton Spencer started even younger, hanging rugs at age 5. "He's the only 28-year-old you'll find with 23 years' experience," Joel says.

Spencer previously owned Olde Salem Furnishings in the same location. He closed the business, intending to sell or lease the building. However, the downturn changed his plans. "Due to economic times there was

nobody leasing and nobody buying," he says.

Clayton, meanwhile, tried several careers before deciding to return to furniture. Together, they opened The Rug Mattress & Furniture Store ([www.therugmattressandfurniturestore.com](http://www.therugmattressandfurniturestore.com)) in 2010. "I couldn't have done it by myself," Joel says.

Either of them can do most of the work at the store, although Clayton usually handles computer tasks, such as generating price tags, while Joel writes the ad copy. "You have to advertise if you're going to stay in business, period," says Spencer. "We were forced to advertise. It's the advertising plus the better products at the lowest price" that is causing the business to grow.

Keeping the overhead low is the key, says Spencer. "Our payment for everything is less than most stores have for rent payment, but it's taken 30 years to get it this way." 

*"Thanks so much to PNS for all that they do. It is nice to know we are in good hands and there is someone else out there in the business world that operates their business the way we do. Their customer service and support is top shelf. I cannot say enough kind words to express my appreciation. "*

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Mary Hill

**Bootie Chewing at the Vinton War Memorial.**

## Shaking Bootie a way of life >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Bootie Chewing has crammed so much into her life, it's hard to figure how any more would fit.*

### **By Mary Hill**

What does a 76 year old woman do after raising a family, running several beloved local businesses, leading dozens of community organizations, jaunting off to Hollywood to make her mark in movies, acting as a hostess and a judge for local television shows, producing the Miss Virginia Pageant, writing a regular column for a hometown newspaper, spearheading an effort to erect a six-columned monument to veterans of World War II, co-founding a community theater group, helping coordinate a regional film festival, and serving on the

county school board for a dozen years?

If you ask Bootie Chewing, the answer may surprise you.

"Now I'm ready for a real job!" she says, enthusiasm bubbling over the side—as it always seems to do.

The former cheerleader-homecoming-queen-cum-civic-dynamo was born with the name Barbara Lee Bell, but was soon after dubbed "Bootie" by her father. (Recall that at this point in most American households, "shaking your bootie" meant you were either jingling a bag of coins or wiggling sock-clad feet.)

"I loved the story of Puss in Boots," she says, "so to my father, I was Bootie Bell." It is perhaps telling of Bootie's personality, however, that what ultimately makes the fortune of her favorite storybook hero is a mixture of pluck, charm and creative PR. It's clear that Bootie Chewing has a generous dose of all three.

The name—which stuck, despite her school

principal's admonition that no adult should be called "Bootie"—went on to grace her store, Bootie's Hallmark & Gifts. With her husband Bob Chewning, Bootie also co-owned the furniture stores Chewning Interiors in Vinton and Chewning Contemporary Living in Salem, as well as the restaurant Chewning's Loft.

After Bob's death in 1986, Bootie continued to run the Vinton furniture store, reconfiguring the space to include her Hallmark business under the same roof. After a few difficult years, she retired. "I saw the handwriting on the wall that mom-and-pop operations couldn't survive," she says. "The big operations have so much more buying power."

It was then that Bootie's life took an unexpected turn. Jeff Howell, who had worked in her Hallmark store as a young man, contacted her from Hollywood where he was working in a talent agency. "After Bob died, he called me and said, 'Bootie, you want to be in movies?' and I said 'Yeah.'"

And that, apparently, was that. She headed west, and for several weeks she worked as an extra in Los Angeles, appearing as an angry neighbor in the television show "Cagney and Lacey" and a diner patron in the made-for-TV movie "Baja, Oklahoma" (which also included Julia Roberts at the start of her career).

In between her times on set, Bootie met up with her old friend, Roanoke real estate

## In Brief

**Name:** Bootie Chewning

**Ages:** 76

**Family:** Widow of Bob Chewning; mother of Greg Chewning (who works for US Foods) and Angie Chewning-Lewis (who directs the Vinton Chamber of Commerce); grandmother of Drake and Abbie Lewis; Step-grandmother to Kalee, Jerry, and Ian Thompson.

**Background:** Bootie's resume of life experiences includes being one of the first women cheerleaders at Virginia Tech (then VPI); appearing in small, often uncredited roles in a string of movies made in the region, including "Evan Almighty and Lake Effects;" founding the Blue Ridge Vision Film Festival; helping organize the first Festival in the Park; and working with the women's club to organize Youth Haven home for wayward boys—among many, many, many other activities.

developer Richard Hamlett, who was then married to famed actress Debbie Reynolds. The meeting with Reynolds resulted in a lifelong friendship for Chewning. "Debbie and I just clicked," says Bootie. "I loved

## "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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## Bootie in her own words... >

**On being honored with the award for "Mother of the Year" for community affairs:**

*"If you're going to have an affair, might as well have it with the whole community. That way everyone already knows about it."*

**On why she hasn't remarried after the death of her beloved husband:**

*"If anybody wants someone my age, they either want a purse or a nurse, and I'm not either."*

**On her expansive volunteerism:**

*"Do I look stupid all across my face, because anything they want done, they say, 'Bootie, can you do it?'"*

[her] movies. She was my idol. ... Ironically I found out that she had wanted to be a gym teacher [which Bootie had been for several years before opening her Hallmark store], while I always wanted to be an actress... . She calls me her sister ... and I'm glad to call her my friend."

The contacts Bootie made in Hollywood have been helpful in her work as the Southwest Virginia liason for the Virginia Film Office—as have the many people she's met in her theater work and as executive producer and public relations chairwoman

for the Miss Virginia Pageant. "I've had such great experiences getting to know people that it's made my life a blessing," she says.

Although she keeps busy with her many volunteer positions, she is not kidding about the job. "I'd like to have a PR job," she says. "I promote. It's what I do all the time."

While says that she's been blessed with good health and has no intention of slowing down, she makes a slight concession to her advancing age: "Something part time would be good." 

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Randolph Walker

Director Jeanne Larsen teaches a class at Hollins.

## Feng shui at Hollins >

### Executive Summary:

*Hollins' MFA writing program continues to set a national pace that laps other programs.*

### By Randolph Walker

Hollins University features one of the country's most successful creative writing programs. With the June appointment of Hollins University graduate and Pulitzer Prize winner Natasha Trethewey as the U.S. Poet Laureate, you could say the university's writing program is proving its reputation.

But there's no need to put words in the mouth of Jeanne Larsen, who is quite capable of forming them herself. "We're rockin'," says Jeanne, who has taken over

directorship of the two-year Master of Fine Arts program, as well as the Jackson Center for Creative Writing ([www.hollins.edu](http://www.hollins.edu)). "Things are going well."

The Hollins creative writing program, which admits 12 graduate students a year, is among the country's most prestigious. It has produced, in addition to Trethewey, two other Pulitzer winners in Annie Dillard and Henry Taylor, as well as many other acclaimed poets, essayists and novelists, including Madison Smartt Bell and Jill McCorkle. Hollins has been called Pulitzer U.

Jeanne takes the reins—or retakes them, since the directorship has rotated—at a time when Hollins is still feeling the boost not only from Trethewey's 2012-2013 appointment, but from the establishment of the Jackson Center for Creative Writing. Hollins alumna Susan Jackson, herself a writer, and her husband donated \$5 million in 2008.

Jeanne describes the Jackson Center as an "organizational platform" rather than a physical location. It serves both grads and undergrads. Most of the faculty offices are in the poetically named Swannanoa Hall.

"I don't want to get gushy, but the Jackson Center has made a tremendous difference in funding to support students," says Jeanne. "It funds a rotating chair that gives writing faculty a little bit of a breather to continue teaching, but devote some more time to writing. It's given us more money to bring in writers to do readings on campus. We're able to include some more high-profile writers."

The faculty is high-profile in the literary world. Jeanne has published fiction, poetry, criticism and translation. She's "just about done" with a historical novel, "The Caravan Master," which should appeal to readers of her "Silk Road" trilogy. "It's along the trade routes. The subtitle is 'A Novel of the Kushan Empire.'"

Her predecessor, Cathryn Hankla, directed the program during the Jackson Center transition. Cathy's collection of short fiction, "Fortune Teller Miracle Fish," was published in 2011 by Michigan State University Press. Her list of publications—including the novel *Blue Moon in Poorwater*—is extensive. She describes her next project as "a book of essays woven around the theme of constructing home and place."

After the departure of founder Louis Rubin, Richard Dillard "really fostered [the program] and kept it alive," says Cathy, who was once married to Dillard (as was Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Dillard). He has had "an enormous amount of influence on generations of writers."

Although Dillard has stepped back from administrative work, he "is still teaching, students still love him," Jeanne says.

Other faculty include Carrie Brown, distinguished visiting professor of creative writing; Eric Trethewey, Natasha's father; T.J. Anderson, Thorpe Moeckel, Karen Osborn, and Elizabeth Poliner.

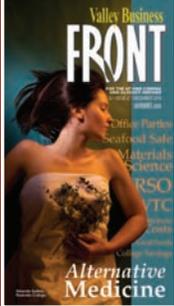


**Cathy Hankla: Writing and teaching.**

They hold desirable jobs in the creative writing world, and prospective students are warned that landing a position here or elsewhere is a long shot. Cathy says students need an M.F.A. plus published work to have a chance.

Even though many grads end up working in related fields rather than writing full time, the program counts many big successes.

Jeanne, who is immersed in Chinese literature, half-humorously attributes it to the campus's "feng shui," the Chinese concept of a beneficial location. Aside from that, she mentions the sense of community among the aspiring writers. "The students tend to enjoy each other and that means they stimulate each other. It's not a place for backstabbing." 



# Coming Up..

**November 2012**

## The FRONT List

Yes, it's our annual best of business edition featuring the FRONTleaders in our region, in general and in specific industries. Get the FRONT List 2012 and read all about it.

**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.

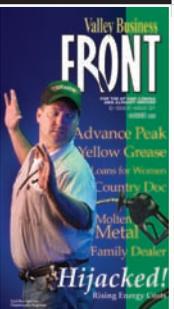
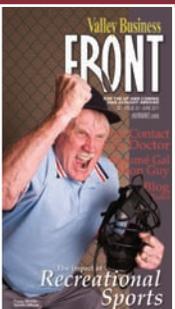
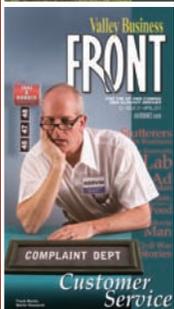
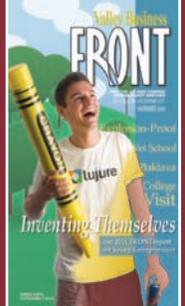
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## A new designation for Williamson Road? >

### Executive Summary:

*Under a plan being discussed, it would become Roanoke's International Corridor, celebrating the wide diversity it encompasses.*

### By Rebekah Manley

Efforts are in the works to unveil Williamson Road as Roanoke's International Corridor. Think Disney's "It's a Small World" but substitute mind-numbing music with amazing food with cultural flare.

With food and flare in mind, Roanokers rally to Williamson for September's Greek Festival. However, the rest of the year, most residents remain unaware of the road's global goodies. This is where the International Corridor coining comes in. City Manager, Chris Morrill, explains, "Ultimately, it is about creating an awareness of the culture that already exists. We have this collection of International restaurants and businesses on Williamson Corridor. Organically these businesses have popped up there. Organically, it's happening...So let's help promote it and make people aware of it and let's grow the corridor even more."

The idea for the corridor initially came in one of FRONT editor Dan Smith's blog posts, where he was celebrating the wide variety of food choices at Happy's Flea Market and all along Williamson Road. Roanoker Christina Koomen suggested "Roanoke's International Corridor" and Smith presented the idea to Morrill for consideration.

Tom Field, FRONT's publisher has offered up two flag designs for the corridor's international businesses to fly. He explains the design, "Rather than replicate the exact colors and markings of several nations, even the most prominent ones represented in this area, we are presenting the diversity by incorporating



Rebekah Manley

### Wendy Jones: Progressive international dinner.

our own selection of colors, shapes, and motif."

Out-of-town guests may recognize Roanoke as a community that already embraces different cultures. Morrill sees this as a differentiator, "We are a community that celebrates our diversity. We even have a festival—Pearl Fu's Local Colors, which separates us from the stereotype people have of Southern small cities."

The curious about the corridor's collective culture can start by visiting the Williamson Road Area Business Association website ([www.wraba.org](http://www.wraba.org)) or talk to Executive Director Wendy Jones. "Start at Orange Avenue and work your way up," she says. "You are going to find Cuban, Mexican, American, Chinese, Korean, Greek, Mediterranean. There is just a plethora and I am not hitting all of them. We are a melting pot of Big Boxes and Moms and Pops—which is really a lot of fun because with the Moms and Pops you are getting the more authentic stuff."

A strong valley voice for authenticity and



Flag designs, logos, branding (by FRONT publisher Tom Field) are being reviewed.

culture is Pearl Fu, the executive director of Local Colors. Pearl is always watching Williamson Road for a new restaurant to open. She celebrated her last birthday at Cuban Island and says, "There are many Latino people there so you know it's authentic. I love their mango drink;

done, take the kids to the park and go out to dinner. It's a good and safe and family place to be," says Jones.

Jones is developing two ideas for May 10-11 that will draw residents into the destination of Williamson and feed into Local Colors. The

it's only a dollar."

Before you get the wrong idea, know variety doesn't stop at the corridor's restaurants. A full day of errands can be accomplished. Jones says, "This is the only place in the valley were in five to seven mile stretch you can get your clothes cleaned, go to the library, get your hair

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first one is a progressive dinner up Williamson Road involving the Star City Trolley. Each participating restaurant will offer a sampling of its cuisine. In the middle of this dinner the "palette cleanser" includes a library stop. There in people can learn about the different countries featuring the night's food.

On Saturday May 11, Happy's Flea Market will host an International Festival. Businesses can sport food, music and more. Fu says, "Happy's has asked Local Colors to help with the entertainment so it will be almost like Local Colors but at Happy's. This is just concept that is in the embryonic stage by the time May rolls about it will be a full adult."

As plans for the corridor progress, some might wonder about the non-international businesses. "I think it will add more business to them," says Fu. "People might head there

to find a something from Haiti and discover the hardware store or another treasure they didn't know was there."

Like Pearl Fu's life and the hundred plus minorities in Roanoke, this project it is about celebrating, supporting and growing what is already in place. "Williamson Road is not Little Italy or Chinatown," says Tom Field. "It is not a big pocketbook of resettled immigrants from one place; it's more like a bunch of little pockets, with colorful peoples from lands all over. There's always something interesting within reach; and there's always a story."

Pearl envisions this corridor growing greater than just Roanoke awareness, "Once you start understanding each other and communicating with each other it's like one great family. By having this we are reaching out to the greater world and maybe even drawing people in." 

## thinking survival? right now?



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# Medical leave >

## My View

By **Dan Smith**  
Editor

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

**Excutive Summary:** *Surgery called, and my name was attached. It is not pretty.*

My guess is that it takes immersion into the health care system to get a feel for the frustrations of everybody involved. I'm in the middle of one of those immersions right now—knee surgery—and I'm finding a lot to like and a lot to point out as needing improvement.

My orthopedic docs—the construction workers of medicine—took on a knee that has been injured and abused repeatedly for 50 years and, in essence, gave me a new one. Everything was smooth up front and through the hospital stay of 2 ½ days. I was a pretty happy boy when I left the hospital on a Sunday afternoon, hugging nurses, thanking everybody, smiling broadly and looking toward a new mobility.

Reality set in when I got home and realized this would be neither quick nor easy. The powerful medicines used to ward off pain and infection are often in conflict and getting in touch with my inner bowel was an immediate necessity. I don't recall being almost painfully constipated for so long, nor did I remember that these knee surgeries (I had one when I was 16) hurt. Like hell, they hurt.

I have said for years that you can tell a person's age by how often his bowels come up in conversation. During the past six weeks, people have been guessing me to be 143 years old. I discuss it in mixed company with a straight face, as if we were talking about the election.

So, back to the medical care. Like so many people, I went into this major work eyes wide closed. The surgeons, nurses and other health care people tried everything to open them and I do vaguely remember hearing, in a required class, "Your bowels could be more of a problem than your knee if you don't take care of them." I heard a lot of stuff like that and all I could think was, "You're going to be climbing McAfee's Knob at the end of October." Fat chance.

It all takes time. Lots of time. Agonizing amounts of time. Progress is glacial and the steps forward are barely steps at all, more short shuffles. I'm constantly being told, "You're doing really well," which only makes me wonder, "What's doing 'badly'?"

Answers are hard to get. It was hammered (orthopedic types love hard tools) home to me over and over in our class that "if you have a problem call your doctor's nurse." I wasn't told that the nurse was the fourth person in a phone tree, that she was generally busy, that I would have to repeat my information several times and that she wouldn't necessarily put me at the top of her response chart when she did start returning calls. Talking

continued on Page 52



## Terrible twos >

By Tom Field  
Publisher

## On Tap from the Pub

Two is my least favorite number. There is nothing good about it.

In literature, philosophy, the arts... two represents the great conflict. Good versus evil. Love and hate. Dualism makes great poetry only because there is battle, strife and struggle. Two sides equate war.

Even in marriage two is bad. A good marriage is when two become one. That doesn't mean two individuals no longer exist, each surrendering his or her very identity or complete character. But when a partner totally pursues his or her own interest without regard to the other, the marriage fails.

*Aside: Polygamists aren't exempt, either. Their marriages last when their higher numbers are reduced to one or expanded to three or more—never two. Once it goes to two it all falls apart and someone begins writing books and making movies about it for the Lifetime network.*

And so it is with next month in America.

November 2012. Our great obsession with the number two. Our festering disease eating us from the inside called the two party system.

As a passive Facebook user (reading and stalking versus posting), I am fascinated by the political postings from my "friends" who seem to be more dogmatically partisan than ever. My one master post on the subject (if I ever do it) is simply an observation. It's based on the fact that I have somehow managed to "befriend" just about as pure a 50/50 split as possible, between Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals, left and right. Here it is for your viewing pleasure:

*Isn't it interesting that the people who point out the faults, weaknesses, errors, misinformation and outright lies of their opposing party make the most valid points?*

AND YET

*Isn't it interesting that the people who point out the merits, strengths, truths, facts and proven accomplishments of their party somehow always fall short, or ring hollow, or seem delusional?*

The arguments *against* a candidate are strong; the arguments *for* a candidate are weak.

Logic (and yes, I took a class in college) necessarily dictates that neither party is particularly good when this happens. That's why so many people vote for the lesser of two evils. There is not enough good

continued on Page 52



## Smith / My View

from Page 50

to the doctor didn't seem to be even a possibility.

Home health care nurses, who come by to monitor my blood thinner drug use have very, very little information, though most are veterans with long careers in medicine. I don't know if they don't have the information or won't share it. I stopped asking.

Slogging through and trying to become patient seem to be the only options. I miss work and mingling with you guys and I am enormously grateful to have a partner like Tom Field who can do his job and mine without missing a beat—and do them both with style, creativity and thoroughness. I'll be back soon, knowing less about the medical field than before I left for my immersion into it. 

## Field / On Tap

from Page 51

when the choice is two. With three or more choices, at the very least you spread the evil around so there's less of it in one realm. And you might actually produce more chance for good.

Polarity is strongest when there are two poles. The two cannot meet to form a common goal.

In the last two administrations each party has done a terrible job. Even the most loyal party advocates cannot say their party has done a great job.

Someone, some day, should be able to say: great job.

As long as we're dealing with the terrible twos, we're in for a long, sleepless night with never-ending headaches all the next day. 

““”

Music and accounting require discipline

— Page 60

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## Letters

### Cool business people

I just finished reading the September issue yesterday (I like to wait until I really have time to pay attention) and was really struck again by how many cool business people I learn about and how many really innovative businesses are in SWVA. It's unlike any other business publication I've read and in the best possible ways!

S.J. from Facebook

### Don't miss with subscription

I'm no longer taking my chances by picking up a copy of your magazine at racks. They empty out too fast; and it's worth the \$20 to get it mailed to my house. That way, I get every issue, and I don't have to remind myself to run out hunting for the new one each month.

W.M. from Facebook

*Publisher's Note: Every issue of the FRONT is also available in full, online at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com).*

### Optimists and pessimists

Was your construction story ["The Battle for Construction" FRONTcover story, Sept. 2012] positive or negative? Based on the people you interviewed, I guess it all depends on who you ask.

J.E. from Facebook

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

“ ”

## Roanoke brought in some ringers

— Page 8

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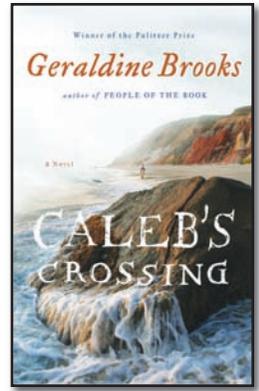
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## Books @ the FRONT >

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



### 'Erudite yet accessible'

Pulitzer winner Geraldine Brooks' penchant for historical detail gives the reader a truly American novel in this early settlement tale, *Caleb's Crossing* (Viking Adult, \$26.95). Bethia Mayfield lives at Martha's Vineyard in the 1660s with her minister father. He is trying to convert the natives. When she is 12, Bethia meets the son of one of the chieftains. She calls him Caleb. He abandons his native ways and joins Bethia's family so that her father can teach him.

Caleb becomes the first Native American to graduate from Harvard. This is the truth of the story, the facts around which Brooks has created her novel. Bethia is fictional, but Caleb's historic rise as a scholar is not. Brooks' work is erudite yet accessible. This story left me thinking about how society has changed regarding its treatment of one another and made me realize how lucky I am to live in this century. A book that makes me think is the best kind of story.

—Anita Firebaugh

### *The Days of Our Lives*

Julian Barnes' *The Sense of an Ending* (Vintage, \$14.95) is a master read. The narrator has me transfixed. I was on the verge of reporting that the only disconcerting element of the story is... the ending. I'm convinced many readers will agree with that assessment. Barnes has us moving along just fine, he kicks us in the stomach when we discover our life has little meaning or worth after age 20, but that—we can take, actually. He twists it all up at the very end, and that's the part some will find unnecessary, even as we figure out the mystery and why such a thing must

happen. But the ending is as it must be. Our narrator distinguishes "real life" from "literature" and Barnes takes us below the surface to make the point. *The Catcher in the Rye* meets *Dead Poets Society*, only you can't stay an adolescent male forever.

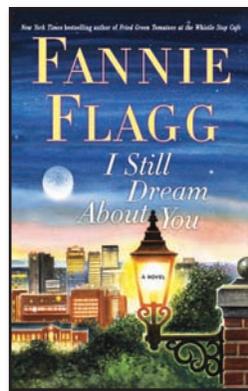
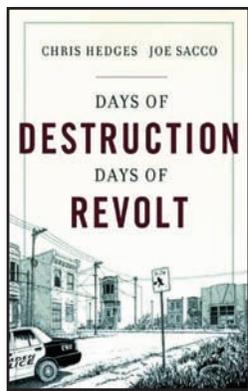
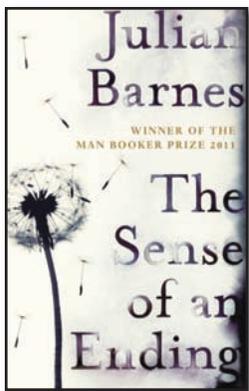
The book is about the great literary equivalences of Eros and Thanatos (sex and death) but primarily how our two great themes in life are translated through memory. His diatribes about how history is recorded (personal and otherwise) is not just fascinating, but it has us second guessing whether anything ever happened the way we think it did. The greatness of *Ending* is the brilliant writing. Heady, but not the least bit arduous. When you're reading a sentence, only to be smacked upside the head when the previous sentence just hits you—you know the writer has trumped you. That really doesn't happen often to consummate readers—and it makes this novel a top pick.

—Tom Field

### *The Big Lie*

"The American dream, we now know, is a lie. We will all be sacrificed." It's a vexing claim, but former foreign correspondent and current social critic Chris Hedges, teaming with cartoonist Joe Sacco, make the point difficult to deny in *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (Nation Books, \$28.00).

This is a compilation of sketches from what Hedges describes as National Sacrifice Zones, including Pine Ridge, South Dakota, Camden, New Jersey, Immokalee, Florida, and of most interest around here, Welch, West Virginia, in vivid descriptions of the decay and decrepitude



that results from unbridled corporatism.

These epicenters of destruction result from unregulated capitalism and the vicissitudes of the marketplace. Surrounding Welch are formerly rich Appalachian Mountains left in hellscape and fractured lives of people who live in some of the America's poorest and unhealthiest communities. Without revolution, Hedges opines, these downtrodden outliers portend the death spiral of the American dream for all of us.

—Michael Abraham

## ISO Urbanchick

Oh, what a girl has to do to survive in the big city. Mark Wisniewski's *Show Up, Look Good* (Gival Press; \$20) gives us Michelle, who has us convinced that of all the qualities a 30-something single woman really needs to survive—money, a job, a place to live—a sense of humor might be the one that matters most. Even in Manhattan, NYC (or any of the boroughs). A very unforgiving environment, even when you want to make it there... to show everyone that you can, including yourself.

Our "girlfriend" is "Seinfeld" meets "Sex in the City" meets *The Out of Towners*, as we laugh and root for her mission; but this is no bell-shaped climax and plotline. The short novel is completely linear all up to chapter 21 of 23, when the sitcom formula comes abruptly to an end. I have a rule not to read reviews before reading the work itself; so I will be curious to see if there is a difference between the male and female perspective here. There was an undercurrent in voice that made me question whether the narrative accurately matched the gender, but if there is a mismatch, it doesn't really matter. The

super quick read, with witty and just plain fun dialogue, along with the surprising twist in tone right at the end, make *Show Up* a colorful read. There's a confirmation here that says you have to show up and look good just to get by. Whether you make it or not is a whole other story.

—Tom Field

## Dead dreams

In her latest book, *I Still Dream About You* (Random House, \$26), Fannie Flagg takes on dreaming and death as she delves into her delicious southern characters. Maggie Fortenberry, an aging former Ms. Alabama and a successful real estate agent, has decided to die. She's planned out her death in detail. But every time she sets out to kill herself, she is interrupted.

While the premise itself is not funny, Flagg pulls it off. Maggie wants to die not because she is depressed, but because she has stopped dreaming. Fortunately, the author offers other characters to take us away from her heavy topic. Babs the evil real estate agent, Hazel, the midget with the business acumen of Warren Buffet, and Brenda, the African American who would be mayor of Birmingham, were enough to keep me engaged. While this work may not stand up to *Fried Green Tomatoes*, this is not a bad read if you're up to it.

—Anita Firebaugh

(The reviewers: Anita Firebaugh is a Botetourt County writer. Tom Field is Publisher of FRONT. Michael Abraham is a Blacksburg writer whose new book is *Providence VA*.)



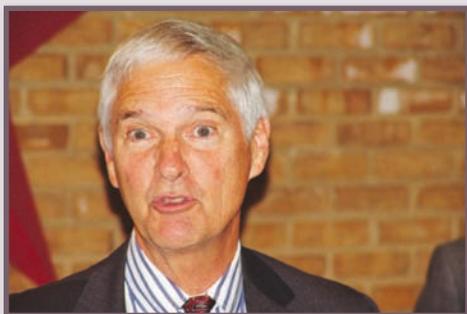
## Remember this >

**Joshua Foer**, author of the current top selling *Moonwalking with Einstein*, spoke at **Roanoke Regional Forum** on Sept. 10. Foer, a journalist who won the U.S. National Memory Championship, described "Memory Palace" and "the major system" techniques used to increase memory to become a mental athlete and how that equips people to be the best in their professions.



## Muddy matters >

The 17th annual **Marine 5k Mud Run** was held Sept. 15 at Green Hill Park in Roanoke County. Above: One of the first teams into the mud pit at the end of the race, out of the pit, and into the showers.



## LP VP quick stop >

Judge **Jim Gray**, the Libertarian Party's candidate for U.S. Vice President (on the Gary Johnson ticket), stopped by Mill Mountain Coffee in Salem, Sept. 17 on his way to an engagement at Virginia Tech. Gray articulated his position on the major issue planks to a gathering of 23, while asking for a viral rally to include the LP party on the presidential debates.

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



Tom Field



## A taste of Botetourt >

The **Botetourt Wine Trail** concluded its 2012 summer concert series with a fall wine tasting festival at Daleville Town Center on Sept. 15, featuring wine from Botetourt County's three vineyards, Blue Ridge Vineyards, Fincastle Vineyard & Winery, and Virginia Mountain Vineyards.



TomField

## Getting Greeked out >

The annual **Roanoke Greek Festival** was held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Roanoke on Sept. 14 - 16. Music and art were plentiful (face painting included), but by far the most popular draw was the traditional Greek-prepared cuisine.

# CONTRIBUTORS

## **Anne Giles Clelland**

is the founder of business news site Handshake 2.0 ([handshake20.com](http://handshake20.com)) and President and CEO of Handshake Media, Incorporated, makers of Handshake mobile applications. She is co-founder of She Chooses ([shechooses.com](http://shechooses.com)), the social network for women. [[anne@handshake2.0.com](mailto:anne@handshake2.0.com)]

## **Tom Field**

is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT magazine. He has written and produced programs and materials for local and international organizations for more than 30 years. [[tfield@berryfield.com](mailto:tfield@berryfield.com)]

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## **Mary Crockett Hill**

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

## **Rachael Keshishian**

is a recent graduate of Bridgewater College where she studied public relations and served as President of the Public Relations Organization. She was a Field Hockey player. She was recently with the Business Lounge in downtown Roanoke and is now social media coordinator and account associate at Rubin Communications in Virginia Beach. [[rachaelkeshishian@gmail.com](mailto:rachaelkeshishian@gmail.com)]

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is a FRONT financial columnist, and president of Krull & Company, a financial services firm with many clients in the Roanoke Valley. He is a registered principal with and securities are offered through LPL Financial, Member FINRA/SIPC. He was on a national championship volleyball team in college. [[pkruell@krullandcompany.com](mailto:pkruell@krullandcompany.com)]

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## **Elizabeth Markham**

is a 2012 graduate of Hollins University with a degree in English. She is a homemaker as well as an aspiring writer. [[emarkham@hollins.edu](mailto:emarkham@hollins.edu)]

## **Michael Miller**

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

## **Anne Piedmont**

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

## **Dan Smith**

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

## **Kathy Surace**

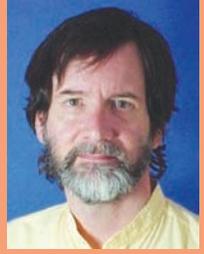
is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years. [[kssurace@aol.com](mailto:kssurace@aol.com)]

## **Nicholas Vaassen**

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

## **Randolph Walker**

graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a journalism degree in 1983. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in Roanoke and an advertising copywriter for the Edmonds Packett Group. He is now a freelance writer as well as a performing musician and guitar teacher. [[rwalker25@cox.net](mailto:rwalker25@cox.net)]



**Randolph Walker**

**September 2012 >  
Contributor of the Month**

**Randolph Walker**, who has been a steady hand for FRONT for some months now, turned out two excellent pieces for the September issue and has been named our Contributor of the Month for his efforts. His stories were on a construction company owner who also raises bees and a man who teaches executives how to kayak. Randy is a veteran journalist who has been working in the Roanoke Valley for decades and his work is always readable. We congratulate him for his September performance. You can read Randy's current and back issue articles at [vbFRONT.com](http://vbFRONT.com)

“Don't tell the world about your private life”

— Page 20

# ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Month-to-month economic comparisons often shows small ups and downs, but a longer view of the Roanoke and New River Valley economies show improvement over this time last year. Regionally, unemployment stayed steady from June to July, but dropped from July 2011. Home prices also are showing growth.

**Initial unemployment claims** for the region fell 7.3 percent during Week 32 (August 3-9) from the same week last year. While the regional drop was slower than the state's (17.6 percent), within the region, the Roanoke MSA matched it, while the Blacksburg MSA saw a rise of 18.8 percent.

## Unemployment/Employment

**Unemployment rates** in the combined Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas in July remained steady from June at 6.6 percent, but fell from 6.9 percent a year ago. Virginia unemployment rates also stayed the same (6.0 percent) over the month and fell from 6.4 percent from July 2011. Within the region, the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area saw a monthly drop of one percentage point, while the Blacksburg MSA saw a rise by the same amount.

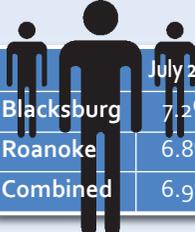
### INITIAL UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Week 32 2011	Week 32 2012
356	330

*Source: Virginia Employment Commission*

## Real Estate

**Home prices** in the region fell slightly from June to July, with June showing the highest average price since December 2010. Over the year, the region's average home price has risen at a faster rate (10.1 percent) than the national average price (7.1 percent). The number of homes sold in July was down from both a year ago and in June, but well up from the 208 homes sold in January.



	July 2011	June 2012	July 2012
Blacksburg	7.2%	7.0%	7.1%
Roanoke	6.8%	6.5%	6.4%
Combined	6.9%	6.6%	6.6%

Another sign of an improving economy is the number of people **employed** in the region. In the two valleys, more people were working in July than in June. Employment has improved by 2.4 percent from a year ago.

	July 2011	June 2012	July 2012
EMPLOYED	226,340	230,319	231,650



July 2011	June 2012	July 2012
\$176,289	\$204,357	\$194,068

### HOME PRICES

July 2011	June 2012	July 2012
342	371	303

### HOMES SOLD

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

—By Anne Piedmont,  
Piedmont Research Associates

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Elizabeth Markham

**Sam Phillips: JMU over Juilliard.**

## Numbers and notes >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Sam Phillips has discovered a way to incorporate his two loves into his life with equal vigor.*

### **By Elizabeth Markham**

Sam Phillips often begins his mornings before sunrise with his viola at the music stand he keeps in his office. He has been playing under contract with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra for the past eight years. By early summer, the stand was

covered with music for RSO's fall performances.

Most contract members of the RSO have fulltime music careers. Some teach in local colleges, give private lessons, or play with other professional orchestras. Sam's day job as a principal member of Walker-Phillips Healthcare Consulting for the past 20 years, is a rare exception.

Enamored of the viola from elementary school, he chose to attend the University of Hartford's Hartt School of Music because of its excellent music program. While studying at Hartford he discovered that he was as passionate about business and accounting as he was about music. He decided to pursue an MBA at James Madison in lieu of accepting a spot at Juilliard and began to consciously create

a life which has not only allowed him to develop a successful accounting career but also allowed him to continue to pursue his music on a professional level.

He believes that the discipline, intense focus, and long-term commitment required to master the viola have translated into success in the business world as well.

David Stewart Wiley, music director and conductor of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, summed up the underlying similarities between Sam's approach to and success in both music and business: "Music and accounting require discipline and attention to detail and also the ability to look beyond the notes and the numbers

to the greater picture.” He notes that Sam arrives at rehearsals “super prepared” and “has a great attention to detail,” but is always “looking for the larger picture just beyond the notes.”

Sam’s first job out of college was with the healthcare system that oversaw the same nursing homes he had visited as a kid. The experience provided him with solid practical experience in the long-term healthcare industry. Not only was it a good foundation for his current work as a consultant but it also introduced him to Glenn Walker, the initial principal of Walker-Phillips Healthcare Consulting. Sam says of Walker, “I feel fortunate to have mentored under him and to have met him. He’s definitely one of the most important influences in my life.”

Sam has been with Walker-Phillips Healthcare Consulting for more than a decade describes it as “a boutique business.” Walker-Phillips focuses solely on providing financial services to the long-term healthcare industry such as independent living facilities and nursing homes. It is the largest provider of long-term care reimbursement services in Virginia.

Although a large part of the business is focused on reimbursement services, Sam notes that the firm handles “pretty much anything financial whether it’s financing or the building of a new facility.” While much of their work consists of routine filings and applications, Sam

## In Brief

**Name:** Sam Phillips  
**Ages:** 44  
**Business:** Walker-Phillips Healthcare Consulting; Roanoke Symphony Orchestra  
**Location:** Roanoke  
**Background:** Grew up in Manassas and graduated University of Hartford in accounting with emphases in business and music; MBA from James Madison University. Member of the Virginia Healthcare Association and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Has lived in Roanoke for the past 11 years with his wife Ellen and their two children.

emphasizes that “every day is unique.”

As with his music, Sam looks beyond the details of accounting toward the bigger meaning they have in people’s lives. He explains the origins of his career this way: “When I was in middle school and high school I would volunteer in a nursing home and I’ve always loved that industry,” Sam says. “With the elderly I just feel a real connection.” He has a passion not just for numbers but for the people those numbers represent and impact.”

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# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT

### Banks

**Ron Durbin** has joined Valley Tree Mortgage as a licensed mortgage loan originator in the Salem office.

**Lana Seale** has joined Corridor Mortgage Group in Roanoke as a senior mortgage loan originator.



**Waters**

**Angie Waters** has joined the brokerage division of First Bank & Trust Company in Blacksburg.

The Vinton Kroger location of SunTrust Bank has named **Tiphonie Witt** branch manager.

**Patrick Lamm** has been promoted to



**Lamm**

senior vice president of credit administration at National Bankshares in Blacksburg.

**C.J. Carter** has been appointed as trust investment analyst and **Angie Waters** has joined as financial specialist at First Bank & Trust Company.



**Robinson**

### CPAs

**Billy Robinson, James Fries, Laura Sprouse, Robert Guilliams, Tony Harris, Jr. and Elizabeth Hammond**



**Fries**

have been promoted to firm directors at Brown, Edwards & Company.

### Insurance

**Bill Meador** has joined Erie Insurance as an independent agent in Roanoke.



**Guilliams**

North Carolina headquartered SIA Group has named **Wallace ("Wally") J. Nelson Jr.** to head its new office in Blacksburg.

### Investing

The Invest in Others Charitable Foundation and InvestmentNews have selected **James Pearman Jr.** as one of three Volunteer of the Year Award finalists for its Community Leadership Awards.



**Harris**



**Hammond**



**Angle**

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## Have a career announcement?

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



Harvey

the financial advisor designation at Merrill Lynch.



Spruill

Lisa Angle, Kendra Harvey and Micah Spruill have earned

## LEGAL FRONT

### Law Firms

**John Byrum** has been promoted to principal partner at Woods Rogers PLC in Roanoke.

## WELLNESS FRONT

### Free Clinic

The Free Clinic of the New River Valley has announced board officers: **Patricia Hyer, Amy Westmoreland, Michael Herndon**; new board members: **James Bohland, Tracy Cohn, Kristi Eaton, Keith Finch**; existing board members: **Joan**



Hyer

**Hirt, Cathy McDowell, Molly Prater, Anthony Ramsey, Charlotte Ramsey, Karen Eley Sanders, Margot Thompson** and



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# Career FRONT

**Daniel Kelly.**

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

### Construction

**Bill Hamlin**, a vice president with Boxley, has been elected president of the Virginia Transportation Construction Alliance for 2012-13.



**Berg**

### Architects/Engineers

**John Berg** has joined Obenchain, Linkous, Daniels & Sowick Inc. in Roanoke as a mechanical engineer.

**Dan Capor** has joined Aeroprobe Corp. as IT manager, hardware and network systems.

**Kumar Kandasamy** has joined the firm as a principal investigator and lead engineer with the additive friction team. **Ken Helton** has joined Aeroprobe as sales team account manager.



**Bousch**

### Real Estate

**Randy Boush** has

joined Waldvogel Commercial Properties in Roanoke as property manager.

**Olivia Scott** has been promoted to sales and marketing assistant at Hall Associates Inc. in Roanoke.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

Advance Auto Parts has named **Joe Gonzalez** as area senior vice president and **Kurt Schumacher** as senior vice president, national field operations.



**Torrance**

**Jason Torrance** has been appointed general manager for Ovations Food Services at the Roanoke Civic Center.

## EDUCATION FRONT

### Colleges/Universities

**Rachel Cogburn** has joined the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute as executive director of its I-81 Corridor Coalition.

**Josh Nease** is the new head of Virginia Tech's Catawba Sustainability Center.

**William "Jamie" Tyler**, an assistant professor with Virginia Tech

Carilion Research Institute, has received a 2012 McKnight Technological Innovation in Neuroscience Award.



**Velasquez**

**Caroline Brady Velasquez**, Virginia Tech human resources representative, has received a service individual award from the university.

**Chris Willis** has been named assistant vice president and chief facilities officer at Radford University.

**Noah Dellinger** has been hired as an admissions representative at National College.

## CULTURE FRONTS

### Theater

Mill Mountain Theatre in Roanoke has named **Paul M. Mylott**, a 24-year veteran of fund raising, director of development.

## OTHER FRONTS

### Advertising/PR

**Linda Staley** has been inducted to the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)



**Staley**

College of Fellows.

### Media

**Amber Hazelwood, Chad Parries** and **Eric Testa** have joined WDBJ 7 television in Roanoke in sales.

### Consulting

**Elizabeth Stuart** has been named assistant vice president of D'Ardenne Associates, a management consulting firm in Roanoke.



**Lohmann**

### Organizations & Non-Profits

**Stephanie Lohmann** has been named the new program manager for Blue Ridge Literacy.

**Randy Grumbine** with Clayton Homes of Roanoke has been elected to the board of directors of the Virginia Manufactured and Modular Housing Association. The organization has also announced that **Bill Moody** of Covington has been inducted



Dunford



Rorrer



Collins

Cyndy Graham, Marie Rorrer, Juliann Poff, Christine Smith, Lauren Collins and Sharon Chinault.

“ ”  
I love  
their  
mango  
drink



Graham



Smith

into the VAMMHA Hall of Fame.

The New River Valley Express Chapter of the American Business Women's Association has named its 2012-2013 executive board:  
**Melinda Dunford,**

— Page 48

## So much more.

**vbFRONT.com**

- > Novelist Mary Johnston's Majestic Manor to Sell at Auction
- > State Contracts Often Exclude Local Contractors
- > ND&P Acquires tba to Form Big Agency
- > Foot Levelers New Marathon Sponsor
- > New Partnership for Save-a-Ton
- > The Roanoke Regional Chamber Responds
- > MB Contractors Leadership Transition Complete
- > Huge Roanoke Contract Goes to Another Outside Firm

## morefront.blogspot.com

So many FRONT readers 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.

- > New Regional Investment Firm Announced
- > Roanoke All-American City for 6th Time
- > Virginia Tech Names First 6 to Entrepreneur Hall of Fame
- > Ferrum College Impact Set at \$93 Million
- > Roanoke Native Fights To Preserve Civil War Battlefields
- > New Rural Outreach for Carilion Clinic
- > Carilion Receives A Grade in Report
- > TowneBank Moves into Roanoke Market
- > Tech's New Budget a Third Less Than a Decade Ago

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



**Plow Hearth ribbon cutting.**

*Decor/Accessories shop opens*

**Plow & Hearth**, a home, entertaining, decor and accessories retailer opened a store at Valley View Mall in Roanoke at the end of June. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Aug. 30. Pictured left to right: Louise Dudley of Valley View; Anita White and John Haydock of Plow & Hearth; and Chris Morrill, Roanoke City Manager.

*Roanoke College recognized*

**Roanoke College** has been listed in The Princeton Review's "Best 377 Colleges" guide book, the Sierra Club's "Cool School's" list, and named an "Up and Coming" liberal arts college by U.S. World News & World Report's "Best Colleges 2013" ranking.

Roanoke College has also established The Center for Teaching the Rule of Law, a forum for discussion involving

national and international rule of law advocates, scholarly research and collaborative initiatives.

*CreateAthon deliverables*

The **AAF Roanoke** club (American Advertising Federation) conducted its annual public service campaign entitled CreateAthon on Sept. 8-9. The 24-hour production session held at Virginia Western Community College used the talents of 30+ professionals to create advertising and marketing material for 15 non-profits that were selected by application review.

*Rescue Mission goes to Market*

A new program, "**Market to Mission**" began at the end of August, where Roanoke Farmer's Market vendors donate end-of-week produce on Friday afternoons. Participating vendors stock a food donation truck that takes the goods back to the

Rescue Mission to be served to people in need.

*Free Clinic recognized*

The **Free Clinic of the New River Valley** received a certificate in recognition of \$4,315,000 in free prescription medication received for its low-income, uninsured patients.

*Carilion's mobile app*

**Carilion Clinic** has launched a MyChart app for iPhones, iPads, and Android phones and tablets. The app is an online healthcare management tool with 24/7 access to medical records, test results, doctor's office communications, appointments, medication, allergy and immunization listings.

*Global Metal Finishing gets ISO*

**Global Metal Finishing**, an aluminum anodizing provider and manufacturer

in Roanoke, has achieved ISO 9001:2008 certification.

*VUPS gets ISO*

**Virginia Utility Protection Service** in Roanoke (also known by its "Miss Utility" brand), a non-profit statewide one-call center that protects Virginia's underground utilities and provides safety to residents, has achieved ISO 9001:2008 certification.

*MemberOne blog*

**MemberOne Federal Credit Union** has launched a blog (memberoneblog.com) featuring financial education, security and fraud alerts, community involvement and information.

*CEED gets LEED*

The **Center for Energy Efficient Design**, a primary public school building in Rocky Mount, has earned platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design) certification. The center uses Passivhaus technology and was designed and built by Structures Design Build in Roanoke.

*Unsettling news hits Roanoke Airport*

**Roanoke Regional Airport** officials dispute U.S. Rep. Robert Scott's (Newport News) report of potential closing of Newport News and Roanoke airports due to budget cuts for air

traffic controllers by the FAA.

Regional Elite, an airline subsidiary providing service to Delta and United, will close Roanoke operations the end of October, according to reports filed.

**of Supervisors** voted unanimously to increase the transient occupancy tax (also known as the hotel tax) from 5% to 7% to provide additional revenue to the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau for tourism marketing.

*Pollina ranks Virginia #2*

**Virginia** placed second (behind Utah) in the Pollina Corporate Top 10 Pro-Business States for 2012.

*RVCVB gets 2% tax*

**Roanoke County Board**

*Ground floor/ rooftop hotel*

**Roanoke City Council** granted approval for negotiations to begin with Windsor/Aughtry Co./South Commonwealth Partners on the potential \$800,000 development of a 123-room Hampton Inn to be located on the ground floor and the top

of Roanoke's downtown Market Garage.

*Sunken City brewing opens*

**Sunken City Brewing Company**, a microbrewery, broke ground on a \$2.3 million, 8,800-square foot facility at the end

of August at Route 122 Westlake Towne Center near Smith Mountain Lake in Franklin County.

*16 West Marketplace TEDTalks*

**16 West Marketplace** in downtown Roanoke will host weekly Wednesday

*Have an announcement about your business?*

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



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*cordially invites you to save the date*

## 2012 Virginia Women's Conference

**Virginia Women's Conference**  
**Saturday, October 13th, 2012, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**  
**The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center**  
**Roanoke, Virginia**

Hosted by Senator Mark R. Warner, Virginia Tech Roanoke Center, Hollins University, the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the City of Roanoke

**Featuring Senator Mark R. Warner and the following special guests:**

**Marie Wilson**, founder and president of The White House Project  
**Toni Blackman**, an American rapper, actress, writer and State Department Musical Ambassador

*Advice from experts on health, wellness, leadership, development, business and finance.  
Free to participants (registration required). Includes a box lunch and refreshments throughout the day.*

**Sign up here to get the registration link as soon as it goes live!**  
**[www.warner.senate.gov/womensconference](http://www.warner.senate.gov/womensconference)**



## Sunken City

noon TEDTalks, a non-profit community forum on lifestyle vision from the disciplines of technology, entertainment and design.

---

*Blacksburg named top college town*

**Livability.com** has named Blacksburg a Top 10 College Town for 2012.

---

*Aeroprobe expands*

**Aeroprobe Corp.**, a Blacksburg engineering instrumentation company, announced plans to hire 40 additional people and build a new, \$2.2 million facility in the Falling Branch Corporate Park in Christiansburg.

---

*Tourism increases 8.2%*

The **Roanoke Valley**

**Convention & Visitors Bureau** released year 2011 figures for the cities of Roanoke and Salem and the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt and Franklin, indicating \$703,610,000 in tourism revenue, an 8.2% increase over 2010, based on computation schedules from the Virginia Tourism Corporation / U.S. Travel Assoc.

---

*RSO debt free*

The **Roanoke Symphony Orchestra** reported it ended its fiscal year free from debt and with a renewed four-year contract of musical director, David Stewart Wiley.

---

*Hall to manage Turner Street*

**Hall Associates**, a Roanoke based regional

commercial real estate firm, was awarded Blacksburg's Turner Street Project management contract by the Virginia Tech Foundation.

---

*Mountain View Humane hits milestone*

**Mountain View Humane**, a low cost spay and neuter clinic and subsidiary of the Roanoke Valley SPCA, with locations in Christiansburg and Roanoke, performed its 10,000th procedure in September to prevent overpopulation of unwanted pets.

---

*VT growth*

The **Virginia Tech Board of Visitors** approved a resolution to begin development of a projected \$3.5 million, 8,100-square-foot

propulsion laboratory in Phase 2 of the Corporate Research Center.

Virginia Tech opened the Genomics Research Laboratory at the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute.

---

*Jacks Men's Fine Grooming opens*

Jacks Men's Fine Grooming & Valet Services opened in the Davidsons Clothing for Men shop in downtown Roanoke.

---

*Heyo expands*

**Heyo** (formerly Lujure Media), a Facebook peripheral software interface company in Blacksburg, announced a \$100,000 investment and expansion that is expected to create 50 new jobs in two years.

*DRI president leaving*

**Sean Luther**, president of Downtown Roanoke Inc for the past three years, announced his resignation, effective mid-October, as he accepted a job in Pittsburgh, his hometown.

*Montgomery Chamber gets Foundation*

The **Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce** announced the formation of the Montgomery

County Chamber of Commerce Foundation to serve the community in charitable, educational, scientific and literary objectives.

*Brownfield loan extended*

The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** extended the City of Roanoke's Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund grant to September 2013. RLF funds are used for environmental cleanup of properties, including lead

and asbestos abatement; and are administered and coordinated by the City.

*Buchanan partners with Feeding America*

**Feeding America Southwest Virginia and Buchanan County Board of Supervisors** announced a collaborative partnership to serve underfed people using a \$48,000 investment with Mobile Food Pantry monthly distributions.

*New FedEx facility*

**Roanoke's Centre for Industry and Technology** off U.S. 460 will be the new home for FedEx Ground in early fall of 2013. The new facility will be 103,000 square feet and is being developed by SunCap Property Group at a cost of \$5.1 million. FedEx will lease the property. The FedEx facility in Salem has 70 employees.

*Compiled by Tom Field*

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

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In theory, it's a really great idea, but the unknown is whether the burdens of compliance will make it unusable in practice.

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