

Valley Business FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 63 • DECEMBER 2013

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In-Home Sales

Direct Sales Gets Serious

Jeanie Patterson,
Nerium International

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Are you with Valley yet?

WELCOME to the FRONT

Door-to-door sales are a thing of the past. Well, almost. We have had the occasional “act now” meat-on-a-truck and “desperate” college student book/magazine salesperson or two stop by our home—even out on our somewhat rural route. But finding legitimacy from a “business” represented by a real live person approaching the door of your home is improbable and highly suspect. Unless it's a kid we know hocking products for the high school team, I turn the porch peddlers away. The quicker the better.

But isn't it amazing how many successful (older) entrepreneurs today started out in direct sales. Some, like our own Cabell Brand [FRONT magazine inaugural cover model], from door-to-door shoe sales of all things!

Fortunately, that talent of direct face-to-face encounters is not completely lost. We haven't yet totally shut our houses off from the outside world (although there are some very interesting social studies indicating an alarming rise in the isolation of our private lives, despite more opportunities to connect than ever before via technology). Today's method has a new name: the home party. It's “by invitation.” It's safer. It's probably more productive. Particularly if you get two friends...and they get two friends...and they get two friends...

Don't lock your doors forevermore; or you might as well live in a compound. Product or no—have yourself a party...or two...or three...



Tom Field





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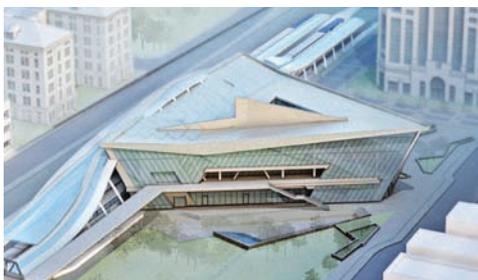
Restless in Roanoke

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MOOOVE OVER

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Toot! Yeah, that would work!

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Art direction and cover photography
of Jeanie Patterson by Tom Field.

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FRONT

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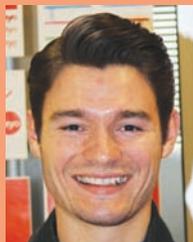
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Cathy Cooper



Tom Field



Nathan Latka



Michael Miller



Nicholas Vaassen



Randolph Walker

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 68.

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



Wayne Firebaugh



Rachael Garrity



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Kathleen Harshberger



Anne Piedmont



Jim Shell



Samantha Steidle



Kathy Surace



Alison Weaver

“

It appears that, in some instances, the contractor is expected to guarantee a building forever.

— Page 38

2013 Members

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

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

“

And I thought, and I’m going to bring my shoes...

— Page 36

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Direct Selling: Peddling, Party Plans and Practitioners >

Executive Summary:
*Independent direct sales
agents channel high energy
and intensity into substantial
vocational enterprises—at
least the successful ones.*

By Rachael Garrity

Ding

Jeanie Patterson
plays our multi-
multi-level marketing
door-to-door super
sales pro, able to
leap small porches
and neighborhood
sidewalks with
every product
featured in our
FRONTcover story.



all photos: Tom Field

Dong...

Home Party Sales and More!

Economist Paul Zane Pilzer, former NPR and CNN commentator, and author of numerous books, including the much-acclaimed *Other People's Money* and *The Next Millionaires* is widely quoted as calling multilevel marketing (a.k.a. network marketing or direct sales) the most important of all the entrepreneurial opportunities available.

The actual scope of the multilevel marketing segment of the economy can be a bit difficult to pin down, The Direct Selling Association estimates 15.6 million people are involved in direct selling in the U. S. and more than 92 million worldwide, with sales in the US topping \$30 billion in 2011 and \$154 billion

worldwide. But the group also defines multilevel marketing as one segment of direct selling, rather than using the terms interchangeably, because the multilevel marketing model includes compensation not only from one's own sales, but also from the sales of one's "downline" – people you recruited to go into the business.

There is also general confusion about the difference between multilevel marketing and "pyramid schemes," the latter a pejorative term. Multilevel marketers are quick to point out that their businesses are legal, because they rely on product sales not on participation fees charged to new recruits.

In pyramid schemes, which are not legal, distributors pay to participate and receive their revenue

from recruiting others to do the same.

Indeed, in the business community there are acolytes for the success of such models, and critics who vehemently insist they are flawed. What the numbers do seem to support, though, is that the median annual income for a consultant/brand manager/sales associate in 2011 was just under \$2,500. But those who succeed, really SUCCEED.

The individuals interviewed for this story share certain characteristics that clearly underpin that kind of productivity:

- Clearly defined goals based on realistic expectations
- Hard work
- A strong belief in the products they sell and the company they represent
- Mutual support and networking not only among colleagues in their own companies but with other multilevel marketers, through business networks, chambers of commerce, etc.
- A dollop – or maybe even a deluge – of creative thinking

Early this fall, Terri Welch of Wine Shop at Home and Mariekan Strachan of Thirty One devised a party that is a pretty good example of how it all works. They "paired" Terri's wines with Mariekan's purses, adding a level of fun to the whole enterprise. And successfully selling both product lines to one participant who had never before bought from – or for that matter attended – a multilevel home party.

In the words of Henry Ford: "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

RIUM



With Skin in the Game

Although there are no statistics to support the claim, it's probably fair to say that the typical individual who goes into multilevel marketing has not previously owned a small business. Jeanie Patterson is the exception to that rule.

During the four years Jeanie owned the Daily Grind coffee shop in Roanoke's West Village, she searched for ways to build her business, and one she identified was a multilevel firm (that she asked us not to name). She signed on and did well splitting her time between the two businesses, so when she sold her coffee shop last year, she knew a little about the multilevel marketing part of the economy. Then, a friend invited her to a luncheon planned to introduce a new skin care product, touted as a scientific breakthrough. Trained as a registered nurse, Jeanie was intrigued, and she invited her daughter – home from college and very reluctant to get involved – to join her. What they learned intrigued them both.

The name of the product – and at that time there was just one, a night cream – is NeriumAD. Research on a plant named Nerium oleander revealed some unexpected and pretty dramatic results. When used to treat aging skin, it had a tightening and smoothing effect visible in a matter of weeks. Creativity and entrepreneurship have done the rest.

Currently operating in the US only, the company has expansion plans in the

Jeanie Patterson

Nerium



Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in Dallas in 2011 by Jeff Olson, CEO; Dennis Windsor, President; Renee Olson, Corporate Liaison; and Amber Olson, Director of Marketing and Culture, after an accidental discovery in the labs of Nerium Biotechnology Inc., which owns 30 percent of Nerium International.

What: Age-defying skincare products.

How much: Ranked number 86 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News (DSN) Global 100* with \$100 million in sales. Currently operating only in the United States and its territories, but plans near-term expansion into other countries.

works. Last September, it introduced a day cream, and a full product line is on the drawing board. To say that Jeanie is effusive about the experience so far is like saying that temperatures in Death Valley are warm. What she says about. . .

The product: "It's anti-oxidant and botanical. While the marketing is all about looking better, the focus is not just on the baby boomer generation. I have a lot of young people on my team, including my daughter, Kara. It's an easy product to use: once a day, right at bedtime, with no hassle. Men love using it, too.

The work: "NeriumAD pretty much sells itself. Some munchies, a friendly host or hostess, and a small group of people – then you show the video. We let you experience the product for five nights to see if you like it. Your before and after photos pictures don't lie. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words."

The financial commitment: "After your initial investment to get started, all you have to do to get paid is purchase your own night cream. With this company, unlike many others, you don't have to buy any inventory. It can be sent to you at no cost."

The results: "It's a dream come true to be part of a company that has allowed us to experience life to the fullest, create a sustainable business, build lasting relationships, and travel the world with friends. Since Kara and I decided to become part of Nerium International in 2012, she and I both have earned an iPad, a Lexus, and currently I am enjoying a six-figure income."

Cookin' it Up

Just over 15 years ago, Jennifer Eubanks made a decision that gives new definition to the phrase "career change." Trained as a geological field technician, she was collecting contaminated soil and water samples as part of her work in international environmental consulting. Then she went to a party her mother was hosting. She remembers: "I thought, what's the big deal?"

The deal, as it turned out, was one she found more than a little appealing. Elegant stoneware, a way to "mist" olive (or any other) oil, instead of smear it, and no matter what you bought, a one-year warranty. Some products with a lifetime warranty.

Then two months later, her aunt had a party, and Jennifer told her mom she simply couldn't go, because she had no more money to spend. "Just go," said her mother. "There's free food."



Jennifer Eubanks

Pampered Chef



Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in Chicago in 1980 by Doris Christopher, and educator and home economist. Bought by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway in 2002 and headquartered in Addison, IL and led by Marla Gottschalk, CEO. This month marks her 10th year with The Pampered Chef.

What: Kitchenware, stoneware, cutlery and other home products.

How much: Ranked number 28 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News (DSN) Global 100* with \$500 million in sales. More than 60,000 independent consultants in 2012.

At that point, Pampered Chef had been in business 18 years, founded by a woman in Chicago who developed the now familiar "cooking show." Jennifer was sold.

"What's not to like?" she asks. "The work is fun, I get to choose the people I work with, and I am the boss of me. And, yes, sometimes I need to shake my finger at myself."

Apparently, not too often though. In addition to 20 to 25 percent commission on sales, she's earned lots of bonuses, including trip points, seasonal gifts, etc. And, as is true with most multilevel enterprises, she earns from the sales of people she recruits, and as of this year there are 300 of them. (This includes her direct recruits as well as the people they, in turn, recruit, levels that Pampered Chef refers to as "generations.")

"The average sales for a cooking show is \$500," she explains, "which means roughly \$100 for the person who does the show. For me, it's comforting to know that I can ratchet up my activity and make more."

Jennifer and her colleagues are currently being trained to market to the "millennials," a task that she suggests is made a lot easier by the fact that Pampered Chef is "on trend with everything," changing the design and selection of products to match the preferences of their most likely customers.

Jennifer grins: "If Warren Buffet thinks it's a good thing, it's a good thing – right?"

Sip, Swirl, Sell

Multilevel marketing is by no means a new skill for Terri Welch. She's worked for some of the best-known companies, such as Tupperware and Mary Kay. When one of her colleagues at Carillion Clinic invited her to a wine party, she went not only because she's what she calls "passionate about wine," but to see what it was all about. For the next two weeks, she researched WineShop at Home, finding out about the commission structure, the support, the training, and the advancement opportunities.

"This looked like just the right thing for me," she explains. "I enjoy sales. (I spent 15 years in cemetery sales.) I love wine, and I needed more time at home, because my grandchildren had just come to live with us. It was important, though, that I could advance quickly if I put in the time and effort."

When she began with the company in August 2012, Terri was still working full time. That is now in the past, and she is quick to say she's eager to go anywhere she can to build her business. Her team has grown to 14 people. In addition to those nearby, there is one in Virginia Beach, and one in Waynesboro. One week in October, she had a party in Wytheville on Friday night, one in Lexington on Saturday, and one in Bristol on Sunday.

Terri Welch



WineShop At Home

Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in the mid-1990s originally as an online wine distributor; a bonded winery headquartered in Napa Valley and the only direct seller to offer its own exclusive brands. Chairman of the Board Stan Frederick II has spent more than three decades in the direct selling business and Jane Edwards Creed, president and CEO, spent nine years as senior vice president at Pampered Chef. Director of Winemaking Alexandre Reble, a native of Bordeaux, France, has more than 18 years of experience, first in his native country and since 1997 in Napa.

What: Eighteen exclusive labels, both red and white wine bottled for custom labeling, plus decanters and stemware, gifts, and accessories.

How much: No published sales statistics found.

Sources in this Story

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People familiar with the wine business, be they growers, vintners, distributors or retailers, have stories to tell about the limitations in selling and distribution because of Virginia state regulations. Does that constrain Terri and her team?

“Well, some multilevel marketers hand-deliver their products,” Terri says, “and we can’t do that. But because WineShop At Home is licensed to distribute in 35 states, we have the benefit of a volume discount on shipping. And I’m pretty careful to always follow up after the delivery to make sure everything is meeting my customers’ expectations.”

According to an April 2013 post in the Huffington Post blog, one of the great appeals about the parties that Terri and her colleagues hold is: “No one is judging your knowledge about wine or what you’re tasting in the glass. It’s all about being in a relaxed atmosphere that encourages enjoying wine rather than analyzing it.”

Terri pays particularly close attention to making sure that no party attendee feels shy about being uninformed or liking a wine most people reject. “Different tastes are different, and the training our company provides helps me know how to assure everyone that they don’t have to pretend to like, and certainly don’t have to buy every wine.”

And, if they’re Terri’s customer, they may even receive a handwritten thank you note to boot!

The Right Chemistry

After a quarter of a century working at Virginia Tech, Carol Eggleston was ready to find work to do only part time, but at the same time draw on her experience and interest in science.

“It was 2009,” she remembers. “For a host of reasons, Shaklee appealed to me. Like most people, I was quite familiar with its emphasis on being green and following strict scientific protocols. My husband had died because of health issues caused by asbestos. My daughter is interested in human nutrition, and wanted to help. I’ve also been conscientious about my own health – into exercise, but problems with my joints. I’m sensitive to scents, so some of the other products sold this way were not ones I could work with.”

What she was not prepared for, she admits, was how different her tasks would be from what she had been accustomed to. “Make phone calls? I’d rather do the research.”

Carol Eggleston

Shaklee

Noting that prior to the rise of the Internet, and the marketing opportunities it affords, Shaklee was effectively sold word-of-mouth, Carol points out that there are other elements of the business plan that make it more appealing to her than many of the other multilevel marketing companies. "I don't have to carry any inventory, I get help with the marketing, and I even get leads from corporate," she elaborates. "And I'm greatly impressed by all the peer-reviewed study results available about the products."

She is particularly enthusiastic about Vivix, the liquid dietary supplement that combines resveratrol with other phytonutrients in a proprietary blend that the company says has been shown to be 10 times more helpful than resveratrol alone.

In addition to being tagged on the corporate website, Carol has her own Facebook website, and this spring she used Twitter to talk about her experience with the company's new weight loss plan. In January 2012 she wrote an online post headlined "Proud to be part of this company and its values" with a link to a Forbes interview with Shaklee CEO on the company's efforts to eradicate child malnutrition, become carbon neutral and focus on prevention in health care.

While making phone calls may not be her typical approach, Carol has found a way to promote and provide – promote a business and provide a path toward the kind of world she'd like to see.



Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in San Francisco in 1956 by Dr. Forrest Shaklee, Sr., and operated with his two sons. Today headquartered in Pleasanton, CA, and led by Roger Barnett, chairman and CEO, with operations in seven countries.

What: Nutritional, household and personal care products, which the company bills as "always safe, always work, always green."

How much: Ranked number 19 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News Global 100* with \$650 million in net sales. Operates in seven countries.

Money in the Bag

When Mariekan Strachan's marriage dissolved in 2008, she knew exactly how much money she needed to add to her income as a schoolteacher to be able to cover her expenses. At the same time, it was important that she limit her time outside her home, since she had a young son.

Mariekan Strachan

Thirty-One Gifts



She'd had some experience with multilevel marketing, so when she was invited to a Thirty-One party, she calculated what it would take. "Commission from an average party is \$125," she points out. "I figured I should have at least six a month, and better yet eight."

Quickly, she began to see that success was about more than making ends meet. "If I recruited four people, I received a \$1,000 bonus. Since usually about half the recruits end up dropping out, I decided my business would take off if I kept up with my eight parties a month, and recruited at least two people a month. That way, at the end of the year, I'd have 12."

As one of the first Thirty-One consultants in this geographic area, Mariekan literally hit the road to meet her goals, driving as far away as Northern Virginia. Today, she has 43 people on her personal team, and 1,200 in what Thirty-One refers to as her "lineage" – her recruits, their recruits and on down the line. Since that means she's achieved the executive director level, her commission structure is set at 7 percent for the first line, 3 percent for the second line, and 2 percent for the third line.

Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in Columbus, OH, by Cindy Monroe, who still serves as CEO. In April of this year, she and her sister founded Jewell, to be operated on a similar business model and with trendy fashion products available only in exclusive boutiques.

What: Handbags, backpacks, and other related products that can be personalized.

How much: Ranked number 18 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News (DSN) Global 100* with \$718 million in sales. In 2012, 139,272 consultants received a check from Thirty-One, according to the company's website, plus there were 22,425 consultants who had not yet begun earning.

In the meantime, she lost her private school position to staff cuts, and took a job with Henry County Public Schools as a reading specialist, soon suffering the same fate because of budget cuts. In 2009 she started graduate school, and a year later she realized that Thirty-One could, as she phrases it, “do it all.” Last summer she received her graduate degree – fully paid for.

Delighted, as most all multilevel marketers are, with the incentive gifts and trips, Mariekan is quick to relate the life changes that she and her team members have realized because of their work. “We call each other ‘sisters,’ and our team ‘Dreamworks,’” she smiles. “We support each other, and get really excited when one of us is able to realize a dream. For example, a woman who had long wanted children was recently able to pay for in vitro treatments.”

The title “Thirty-One” refers to Proverbs 31, the Biblical text about a virtuous woman. Verse 18 (English Standard Version) reads, “She perceives that her merchandise is profitable.” Indeed.

Let Your Candle Shine

Susan Jamison has spent 25 years working in direct sales, beginning when she wanted to earn enough money to pay for private school tuition for her three daughters. She spent 20 of those years working for the same company, and when it closed, she had to make a decision regarding what to do next.

Why PartyLite? Susan’s answer reflects a rich combination

Susan Jamison

PartyLite



Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Based on bayberry candles first made by Mabel Baker in New England and branded in 1973. Headquartered today in Plymouth, MA. Robert B. Goergen, Jr., is president.

What: Candles, flameless fragrance, wax warmers, home decor

How much: Ranked number 31 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News (DSN) Global 100* with \$425 million in sales. Nearly 55,000 consultants selling in 21 countries. A member of the Blyth family of companies (NYSE:BTH).



of business sense and aesthetic sensibility.

"Partylite is an established company that has been around for 40 years. It began with candles, which I love, and then expanded to other great home décor products," she says. "When I signed up, my leader was five hours away, and I'd never been to anyone else's party. It was great to find that all the tools I need are online."

With her long experience, does she believe most multilevel marketing companies are the same?

"Not at all," she insists. "For example, the Partylite consultant kit is free, and I don't have to maintain any kind of minimum inventory. The products are shipped directly to my customers, so no need for me to run everywhere delivering. I invest my time in building my business."

And what else makes for success in multilevel marketing?

"Most people, when they're new to the business, set about contacting their best friends," she explains, "and pretty soon they run out of prospects. I plan parties for different groups, such as neighbors, people I went to high school with, family members, people in our church. That way, I've sort of set up different branches. Plus, part of the Partylite strategy is to play games, and I can tailor the games we play to each group."

Then she adds, candidly: "More than one person has said to me, 'Oh, I could never do that. I can't stand up in front of a group and talk like that.' Well, I grew up right here in Franklin County, and I've been speaking in front of groups since 4H."

Enthusiasm the yin and expertise the yang. A pretty powerful punch.

Cellular Sales

For Crystal Karamaoun, the decision to get involved in multilevel marketing was born of a compelling personal experience. Struggling to cope with an ongoing physical condition that carried with it not only discomfort, but disabling effects such as not being able to close her hand, she decided to go to Sanoviv Institute, a medical clinic that specializes in the holistic treatment of chronic disease. More than a little impressed by how effective the treatments were, she began in earnest to study the work of the clinic's founder, Dr. Myron Wentz, who also founded USANA, a company that develops and manufactures nutritional supplements, plus weight-management and personal care products.

No stranger to the business world, having owned during her career both a restaurant and a hair salon, Crystal investigated both the scientific and the business

Nicolas and Crystal Karamaoun

USANA



Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in 1992 by Dr. Myron W. Wentz, who today is chairman of the board. David Wentz, the founder's son, is CEO. Headquartered in Salt Lake City, UT, the company has a wholly owned subsidiary, BabyCare, Ltd., in China.

What: Nutritional products, dietary supplements, skin care products, energy drinks, weight loss products

How much: Ranked number 20 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News Global 100* with \$649 million in net sales. Operates in 18 countries.

elements of the company and liked what she found:

- Products formulated, tested, and manufactured by the company itself, as she puts it "every batch, every time."
- A marketing structure that offered the new associates the opportunity to earn as much as their more seasoned up-line colleagues.
- No geographic restriction on business building.
- An association with Olympic athletes, the World Tennis Association, etc.
- Traded on the New York Stock Exchange.
- Marketing in 18 countries.



When Crystal's husband, Nicolas, retired from his position as vice president for international sales at Hubbell Lighting, he decided to work with her. Asked why he thought Dr. Wentz opted to use the multilevel model instead of a more traditional sales organization, such as the one he had been involved in, Nicolas responded candidly:

As I understand it, Dr. Wentz debated that issue for some time, because it's true that network marketing does not always have the greatest reputation. In the end, though, he decided that the best way for people to really understand what these products are, what they can do, and how they are different is to hear the stories of the people who use them. As associates, we are required to use the products – not all, of course, but the ones that fit our profile.

The Karamouns call their company "Energy for Life." They describe their mission as "making health and wealth available to all persons," and explain that the core concept of the USANA approach is that "proper cell nutrition is the key to health: when the cells are properly nourished, the body heals itself."

Makeup Your Destiny

Teresa Archer doesn't drive a pink Cadillac – yet, but stay tuned.

Teresa joined Mary Kay Cosmetics in February of this year, and already she's recruited 13 team members. Being the mother of three children, the youngest of whom is only two, she has more than a few demands on her time. Still what she lacks in hours she makes up for with enthusiasm.

"As most people know, the way this business works is you get a facial," she says. "My mom has used Mary Kay since I was two or three, so I know the products. When my friend invited me for a facial, I told her I didn't need a facial, I just want to get started."

Originally eager to get involved because she wanted a chance to meet people, Teresa has not been disappointed. "When a bunch of consultants get together in a hotel event room and do facials, it's like one big girls' night out."

She's also pleased that she is effectively independent. "Essentially, there are no requirements. It's all about how you want to run your business," she insists. "Still, anyone who knows me knows how much I love all the different trips and prizes. If you are willing to do the work, you can get the returns. One of the great things about our products is that customers use them up within a reasonably short time. So it's important to make sure that women are having a good time while they're with you, and then call to follow up and make sure they're happy."

The collegiality of the Mary Kay community is not only a source of friendship for Teresa. It's a strong motivator. "I do quite well with the challenges my director gives me," she admits. "And you know, you don't have to be without a car until you reach the Cadillac level. It starts with a Chevy Cruze, then a Toyota Camry, a Chevy Equinox and a Ford Mustang."

The cars are leased, which means that so long as the consultant (or director, as the more productive consultants are called) maintains her production, she receives a new one to drive every two years. Mary Kay consultants earn the use of the cars and a host of other premiums based on sales, recruitment, and the orders placed (not the sales made) by people on their teams.

For Teresa, the challenge is fun. She sits down with her calendar, plugs in family events, then adds Mary Kay events and highlights them in pink. "I've got great role models in front of me," she muses. "There's a national sales director with a pink Escalade right here in Roanoke."

These are but a few of the multi-level sales organizations. There is a common thread connecting all our featured sales professionals. They were already familiar with or researched the companies and the products. They identified a product line that they could be enthusiastic about and proud to represent. They had realistic expectations about time commitments and income potential. In short, they did what anyone thinking of investing in or starting a new business should always do....their homework. 

Teresa Archer



Mary Kay

Just the facts:

Who, when and where: Founded in San Francisco in 1956 by Mary Kay Ash and her son, Richard Rogers. Today headquartered in Addison, TX and led by Richard Rogers, executive chairman. He owns 52 percent of the business, which has operations in seven countries.

What: Cosmetics and skin care products for women and men.

How much: Ranked number 3 on the 2013 *Direct Selling News (DSN) Global 100* with \$3.1 billion in sales, between 65 and 70 percent from outside the US. Nearly 3 million beauty consultants worldwide with 600,000 in the US and 700,000 in China.



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
"Stand up straight!"
It turns out your
mother was right.

Look and feel invincible... >

A recent article in the *Wall Street Journal* offered new insight on professional image. Current studies show that "striking a powerful, expansive pose actually changes a person's hormones and behavior, just as if he or she had real power."

According to writer Sue Shellenbarger, one study found that simply adopting a "power pose" – as in, standing tall and leaning forward slightly, hands at sides – can increase testosterone levels and lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Additionally, these hormonal changes "are linked to better performance and more confident, assertive behavior".

Another study, by Maarten Bos at Harvard Business School, recently determined that participants hunched over a smartphone or a tablet before a meeting were less willing to interrupt another person – another power-related behavior - compared to those using laptops and desktops. Bos found that their use of a device causing them to use a low-power posture made them feel less powerful and less inclined to actively participate in the meeting.

Coaching and executive consulting firms often analyze the body language and posture of their clients to assess the image they're projecting as participants or speakers in meetings. Their clients are surprised to see their weak posture in videos and report more success and promotions after they adopt a powerful stance and positive, open body language.

Wow – can it really be that simple? This is further support for the theory that our appearance and attire projects an image to others - and that we need to take advantage of this fact. If posture has such a dramatic effect on how others perceive us and how we feel, then it follows that the clothing we wear can help us project a powerful image, also. At least we shouldn't let it hinder us.

At one time, our value in the workplace came entirely from our ability to do physical work. If a man was strong and could work physically hard, or a woman was talented in needlework or cooking, they could find and keep a job.

Over decades and centuries our value in the workplace has changed and is now based more on our ideas, strategies, persuasiveness, and intellectual capital. Employers can't see those assets as readily, but we can project and *increase* our self-confidence, power and flexibility by using our attitude, appearance and attire. 

Questions or comments? Write Kathy at kathy@peacockimage.com

Holiday Office Parties and Gifts >

Office holiday parties and gift giving customs have changed in the past few decades. Years ago, the typical Christmas party in the corporate world was for employees only. No spouses invited, thank you! Lots of alcohol and high jinks were not uncommon, and really not frowned upon. Not so today. We are sensitive to the fact that not everyone celebrates Christmas. We usually (or should) include spouses or guests of employees, and heavy alcohol consumption at office parties is definitely out.

What about a Christmas tree, or would this offend non-Christians? What about gifts? Is it appropriate to give gifts to your boss, your boss's boss, your peers, your subordinates? And if you do that, what kind of hit will that take on your budget? What kind of gifts is appropriate? In the past a good bottle of wine or liquor did the trick, but check out the culture of your company before trying that now. In fact it would be a good idea to find out company policy about office parties and appropriate gifts before you start planning.

Some professionals opt for an office luncheon, and let it go at that. Some offices elect to do a White Elephant party, and I've seen some hilarious times associated with that. If your office decides on that, just make sure there are some guidelines for gifts. Be creative, and give a real white elephant that is fun, but not risqué.

What about the office curmudgeon or introvert who simply doesn't want to be bothered with all this? Or the person of another religion where Christmas is not celebrated? I have a Jewish friend who is very uncomfortable with anything associated with Christmas, and another who thoroughly enjoys it. I also have a Moslem friend who is delighted by the customs, from selecting the Christmas tree, to going to Christmas services, to cooking the Christmas dinner.

So what's really going on here? I think the etiquette surrounding these events is subject to the culture of your particular office environment. So do a little homework and find out what works for your particular group before you pull out the decorations.

Remember the purpose of these holiday gatherings and gift exchanges is to make people feel included. These are opportunities to get to know and bond with, our colleagues. This, in a season, where the world feels a little kinder and, in this writer's opinion, there is goodwill towards men...and women! 🍷



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:

If you work for a religious organization you probably know what's acceptable. But if you don't, here's some practical advice.



Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

Executive Summary:

If giving were all about getting it wouldn't be giving... it would be trading.

Give before you get: A one-month challenge >

Do you ever wake up in the morning and say, "Who can I help today? What person out there needs me?"

Probably not, if you're like most of us in the morning. All we want is cereal and coffee. We might help the kids get ready for school, but we aren't thinking of what we can do for others, especially the random people in our lives.

Yet it wouldn't be a bad thing to try. A giving and helpful attitude never hurt anyone, and it can likely help you in a number of ways.

The benefits of giving

Being known as a person who helps others can be your competitive advantage. It distinguishes you professionally. The key is not to think too hard about what you are going to "get out of it". You will get plenty out of it! Don't worry.

I'm not suggesting you give away your time and talents to the extent that it interferes with your ability to make a living. I am suggesting that giving away some of your time and talents can help you make a better living and have a better life.

Here are a few ideas you might be able to use in service of the give-before-you-get principle. In this economy, so many people have been displaced in the workforce. You probably know more of them than you can count. Have you considered asking them what they're looking for? You might hold the key to getting them back to work.

Another idea is to volunteer for an event related to your profession or to a cause you hold dear. You will meet the best and brightest people by doing this. These are the people who are motivated to go beyond their calling. They are valuable contacts and can become great friends.

Do actions like these have immediate benefits? Not always, and that's okay. You're planting seeds through your positive actions. You may not know in advance what your harvest will be, whether a good friendship or a new job.

When you give of yourself, good things happen.

Are you ready?

Psychologists talk about something called the law of reciprocity. Human beings tend to help those who have helped them. It's not a cynical thing. It may even be tied

to an innate desire to ensure mutual survival.

Here's my challenge to you. Test the "give before you get" principle for one month. Let's call it the GBYG Challenge.

It's simple:

1. Every day, wake up. (Easy one!)
2. Think about helping someone that day, even if you don't know who it is or how you'll help.
3. Look for an opportunity to help someone based on your natural talents, skills, and connections.
4. Do it!
5. Write down what you did in a daily journal.

Your acts of giving should extend beyond your current responsibilities as a family member, friend, or employee. The idea is to give more than is expected, because you want to.

It's great to provide assistance related to your professional goals. Think in terms of solving problems for other people. If you can identify a solution to someone's problem, they will remember you forever. The problem you help them solve could be big or small. The important thing is to find out what it is. This means opening lines of communication with people you want to know.

Give giving a chance

Will you take my GBYG Challenge, pledging to give beyond expectation every day for a month? I hope you will. Even better, I dare you!

A tip: Anytime you contact someone, make your communication about what you can do for that person. Yes, doing this will probably require an adjustment to your thinking, but if you do it, you will stand out in the world.

Most people get ahead by helping others, not by "stepping" on them. What do you want to be remembered for when you die? Hopefully, it will include contributing to the success of others.

If you take my challenge, I would love to know how it went for you at the end of the month. Tell me about the changes, if any, in your life that resulted from this experiment in giving. You can email me at: SamanthaSteidle@gmail.com. 



Being known as a person who helps others can be your competitive advantage. It distinguishes you professionally. The key is not to think too hard about what you are going to "get out of it". You will get plenty out of it! Don't worry.

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Financial Matters

Forget Financial New Year's Resolutions >

Executive Summary:

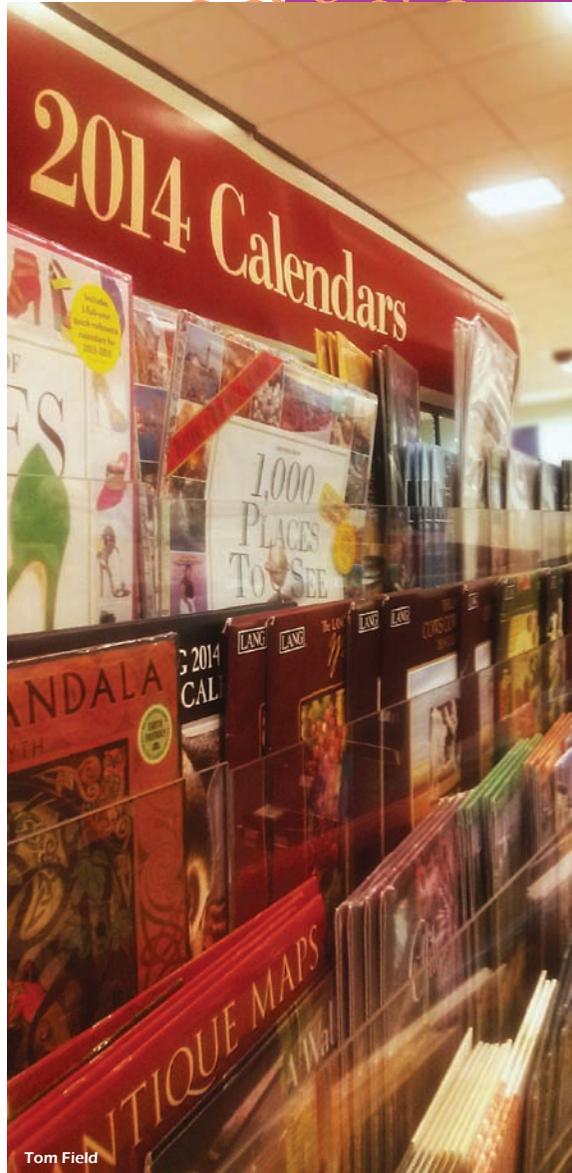
Financial well being is hardly a once-a-year commitment.

By Wayne Firebaugh

It's that time – the season for setting resolutions likely broken by mid-January. I can only offer encouragement for goals such as losing weight or increasing family time. However, if you aspire to improved financial health, I suggest cheating. No, I'm not suggesting something illegal but rather taking a running start towards the New Year with small steps now. Assuming even grandma would endorse that kind of cheating, here are three ways to get running.

Calculate your net worth. Picking a destination is great but charting the route requires a current location. Net worth is your current financial location. To calculate net worth, sum your assets (things you own) and subtract your liabilities (amounts you owe). List assets that contribute to financial independence. So, while it's important to include your 401k and house, don't worry too much about the exact value of china inherited from Aunt Sylvia.

Prepare for the inevitable. Folks often make embarrassed admissions of outdated wills and other end of life documents. Since hiring an attorney is relatively straightforward, not having documents is usually a symptom of the real problem - unanswered questions. Who do I want to get my stuff? Who can I trust to carry out my wishes when I'm not here? Who would parent my kids in a style most similar to my own? Your running start



Tom Field

Barnes & Nobel bookstore in Christiansburg offers plentiful reminders of the new year.

should include conversations about these decisions.

Save a little more than you do now. If you contribute to your 401k, increase your deferral by 1%. If you have an investment account, increase your automatic monthly contributions by \$100. The size of the change is less important than making it automatic.

As you plan for the New Year, get a running start this year. You may even find yourself able to coast through the January cancellation of your gym membership without too much guilt. 



Tom Field

David Helscher: "most small businesses fly under the [HOA] radar."

More than keeping up appearances >

Executive Summary:

Homeowners Associations are charged with enforcement of many rules and some of them may impact your business.

By Cathy Cooper

Whether you live in a condo, townhouse, or single family home in a planned community,

chances are you are aware of the community governance folks. Homeowners Associations (HOAs) and Unit Owners Associations (UOAs) are made up of elected members (owners) from the community. It is their responsibility to make sure the common areas are maintained, snow is removed from the parking areas and private streets, and that the community maintains its uniform appearance. But their responsibility does not end there. Routine maintenance on the buildings as well as more extensive repairs and maintenance, such as roof replacement, are also the HOA or UOA responsibility.

These associations are initially established

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by the property developer and, to protect the developer's investment, voting interest is weighted to the developer. Once the neighborhood and the buildings are complete and the developer has moved on to other projects his or her voting interests end and the HOA or UOA board and the property owners become the decision makers for the community.

Virginia statutes govern the issues which must be included in homeowners documents. According to David C. Helscher (dhelscher@opnlaw.com), an attorney who specializes in property owners associations, "There are wide variations in the details and specificities" of the rules and regulations included in the documents. "The rules may govern exterior paint colors, color of drapery backing or blinds, use of outside clotheslines, placement and type of fencing, for example," says Helscher.

The association documents may also contain restrictions that impact businesses, both home based and those with off-site facilities. Home based businesses may find themselves at odds with the HOA/UOA over client or customer parking, signage identifying the business location, and parking of commercial vehicles or vehicles with permanently affixed signage. In his experience, Helscher notes, "most of these small businesses fly under the [HOA] radar. They don't generate a lot of traffic or parking issues. A home based day care or hair salon, for example, might run into

trouble, since there is more traffic associated with them."

The law requires any purchaser of a home in a community with a HOA or UOA be given, prior to the mortgage closing, a complete set of the homeowner documents. If you're like most people, you would rather have dental work than be made to read hundreds of pages of legalese. But, if you operate or plan to operate a home based business, it's important to know what restrictions you may face in your new home. Even if your business or employer operates from a commercial location, if you drive a company vehicle, especially a large one, you may be in violation of parking rules.

"Just renting" you say? Be aware that any resident of a community with HOA/UOA regulations is subject to those regulations, renter, owner or guest. Flouting the rules will only result in the owner of the property being notified of the violation, and smart tenants try to avoid annoying the landlord. If you are the owner of a home or condo that you are renting out, be sure your tenants know the rules.

Operating your business from a home in a HOA/UOA managed community may require some additional planning, but look on the bright side....your neighbor won't be allowed to build a wild animal enclosure in his back yard...or paint his house chartreuse. It's a good trade-off. 



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At Day's Close by Roanoke County resident Roger Ekirch has been translated into six languages, with three more in the works.

Catching some z's >

Executive Summary:

Suffer from middle-of-the-night wakefulness? You'll sleep easier after reading this.

By Randolph Walker

Roger Ekirch, Roanoke County resident and history professor at Virginia Tech, already had a successful career going. But he wasn't expecting the worldwide interest that greeted his findings on sleep patterns of the past. In fact, when he started researching, he doubted he'd find anything new. "I worried that I would not even have enough to fill a single chapter," he says.

Since the publication of his 2001 article on

pre-industrial sleep, Ekirch's work has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, the *Wall Street Journal*, NPR, Oprah.com and publications around the world. He is a frequent speaker at sleep medicine conferences. His 2005 book, *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*, is in its sixth printing and has been translated into six languages.

At Day's Close is a wide and deep look at Western society in the early modern era (1500-1750), covering everything from crime to street lighting to courtship, but it's the chapter on sleep that has generated the most interest. That's partly due, he thinks, to the fact that so many people have trouble sleeping.

Insomniacs may rest easier after reading

it. "I discovered this pattern of sleep before the Industrial Revolution that otherwise has entirely passed from our collective memory—the pattern of segmented sleep whereby people experience two phases rather than one consolidated pattern."

It hasn't completely disappeared. "It was the dominant pattern of sleep in the Western world and arguably, globally, since the dawn of time, and hence it would take more than just one or two centuries to be transformed into the consolidated compressed form to which we aspire. The form of insomnia that physicians refer to as 'middle of the night insomnia' was not viewed as a problem in the Western world until the late 1800s. The sort of broken sleep that people referred to as 'first and second sleep,' with an hour or more of



SOLUTIONS START **HERE.**



Randolph Walker

Roger Ekirch used diaries, court depositions, medical reports and imaginative writings to research historical sleep patterns.

wakefulness in between, was thought to be utterly normal.”

Waking up in the middle of the night, people might get up and do chores, tend the fire, check on sick children, visit friends, take potions or pills, or pilfer from neighbors under cover of the darkness that was so pervasive in the days before electric lighting.

Most remained in bed. “They reflected upon dreams, they prayed, there were specific prayers for both Catholics and Protestants to be recited in the dead of night. It was, according to physicians [of the era], a prime opportunity to conceive children.”

Modern-day physicians have taken note of his findings. “Some of them are of the opinion that middle of the night insomnia represents an echo, a remnant, a lingering fragment of this older pattern. People who experience middle of the night insomnia should take solace from the fact, from a historical perspective, their sleep is arguably more natural than the compressed

consolidated slumber that we often in vain try to achieve today.”

“Roger has definitely made a big impact on how sleep medicine views what has been ‘normal’ sleep and how it has changed,” says Dr. Bruce Stewart, a sleep medicine physician at LewisGale Medical Center.

Ekirch, a 63-year-old husband and father, is no stranger to sleep problems, suffering from restless leg syndrome and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep behavior disorder. Sufferers from the latter malady have been known to get out of bed and attack family members, mistaking them for intruders. The worst thing Ekirch has done is tackle the night stand, mistaking it for a football opponent.

His academic labors have been tireless, with three other books to his credit. At Tech, he mostly teaches classes in American history. The completion of his upcoming fifth book, on a mutiny in the British Navy, gives him something else to lie awake and think about. 

What to Expect from Healthcare Reform in 2014

Beginning January 1st 2014, there will be many changes taking place in the world of Employee Benefits and Health Care. Below are the provisions expected to impact both employers and individuals.

- The individual mandate tax penalty provisions of the law will take effect. They require all Americans to either obtain minimum essential health coverage through a private insurer or public program or face a tax penalty. There are specified exceptions, and violators will be subject to phased-in excise-tax penalties for noncompliance of either a flat-dollar amount per person or a percentage of the individual's income.
- Significant insurance-market reforms for all individual and fully insured group policies take effect. All plans must be offered on a guaranteed-issue basis. Pre-existing-condition limitations, as well as annual and lifetime limits, will be prohibited, including for grandfathered plans. The size of a small-employer group will be redefined to one to 100 employees (although states may elect to keep the size of small groups at 50 employees until 2016). All fully insured individual and small groups will have to abide by strict modified community rating standards with premium variations only allowed for age, tobacco use, family composition and geographic regions. Experience rating will be prohibited. Small group plans will be limited to annual deductibles of no more than \$2,000.
- All non-grandfathered plans must adhere to annual out-of-pocket spending limits tied to the annual limits on contribution and out-of-pocket spending amounts for HSAs and for the high-deductible health plans required to be linked with HSAs; however, for plans with multiple benefit administrators, this requirement will not be fully effective until the 2015 plan year.
- Standards for qualified coverage, which will apply to all qualified health plans sold in the small-group and individual insurance markets both inside and outside the exchanges, begin.
- Catastrophic plans will be able to be offered both inside and outside the exchanges to individuals who are either under age 30 or who have received an exemption from the law's individual mandate for coverage affordability or financial hardship reasons. Premium tax credits will not be available for the purchase of catastrophic coverage.
- Cooperative plans will be allowed to be sold through state-based health insurance exchanges. At least two multistate national plans will also be offered to individuals and small employers through state exchanges. The multistate issuers must commit to offer plans in at least 60% of states and expand to all state exchanges within four years. Companies may also offer plans only in the individual markets and expand into the SHOP exchange markets over time and offer coverage only in certain service areas.
- Coverage offered through health insurance exchanges will become effective, and premium-assistance tax credits for qualified individuals and families with household incomes of between 100% and 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) will begin. These refundable and advanceable subsidies will be available only for people who do not have access to affordable and minimum value employer coverage and may only be used to purchase a qualified individual health plan through an exchange.
- Expansion of the Medicaid program for all individuals who make up to 133% of the FPL is scheduled to begin. A number of states have either not made a determination about Medicare expansion or have chosen not to expand coverage. In expansion states, mandatory employer premium-assistance programs will begin for those eligible individuals who have access to qualified employer sponsored coverage. States may also create a separate non-Medicaid plan, called the Basic Health Plan, for those with incomes between 133% and 200% of FPL that do not have access to employer-sponsored coverage. Basic Health Plan rules are pending.
- New-employee waiting periods of more than 90 days will be prohibited for all plans.
- A national premium tax on most fully insured health insurance issuers will take effect.
- All health insurance plans must pay transitional reinsurance fee annually from 2014 through 2016. The fee will be a flat amount based on the number of covered lives. By November 15, 2014, insurers, employers and TPAs must report their number of covered lives for the first nine months of the year to HHS, and HHS will communicate the amount due by December 15.
- Nondiscriminatory employer-sponsored health-contingent wellness programs rules for improve and employers may increase the value of workplace wellness incentives from 20% to 30% of premiums. Employers may further increase the maximum reward to as much as 50% for programs designed to prevent or reduce tobacco use. There will be a pilot expansion of wellness programs to individual-market consumers in 10 to-be-selected states.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Call Becky Pollard with Business Solutions at 540-444-4000 or email her at bpollard@businessolutionsinc.net



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Tech Scoop

Gut feeling >

Executive Summary:

At the intersection of art and science, stop to appreciate the view.

By Michael Miller

I got a Spirograph for Christmas one year when I was about 10 years old. That probably seems lame, but it fascinated me at the time. You see, it was the perfect marriage of art and science.

The toy is nothing more than a set of circular templates with geared teeth that allow one to trace out complex patterns on paper. But the cool part is the patterns are essentially based on sine waves, which are fundamental mathematical descriptions of almost all phenomena in nature. For example, if you throw a rock in a pond the ripple pattern that results comes from sine waves. The music you listen to on your iDevice™ is nothing more than combinations of acoustic sine pressure waves encoded by the speaker and decoded by your ear. In fact, almost all patterns in nature can be thought of as a collection of sine waves. And the Spirograph allowed me to visualize these patterns, and set me on a career to observe and understand the beauty of nature that is encoded in its fundamental structure.

College years were delightfully filled with (among other pursuits) exploring the intersections of science and art. I discovered the ability to duplicate the Spirograph patterns on an oscilloscope in electronics lab, much to the displeasure of my physics professor. From the wispy spirals of galaxies lurking in the depths of the universe to the intricate sophistication of in the eye of an insect, I marveled at the structure of the world. And everywhere I turned, from the atom to the star, and even in seeming chaos, all was beauty



Michael Miller

and all was mathematical precision.

I have always been saddened by my inability to effectively communicate the fundamental dualism of science and art to most people, who seem preoccupied by more mundane affairs. But once in a while, I get some help. And today that help comes in the form of the new Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech.

The large performance hall at the Center is a complete marriage of science and art. The gentle curves of the reflectors suspended over the auditorium blend seamlessly with the structural elements to not only provide perfect acoustics for the audience, but in addition overwhelm us with their carefully constructed visuals. Within that space, one can experience a totality of existence as we should expect from such a powerful academic setting – art and engineering perfectly balanced, enabling the highest of human expression through performance.

As Albert Einstein once said, “All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.” 



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Courtesy Steve Vermillion

Steve Vermillion, AGCVA's CEO. "In some instances, the contractor is expected to guarantee a building forever. That's not right."

Building a team of builders >

Executive Summary:

Associated General Contractors is the voice of the commercial construction industry.

By Randolph Walker

In 1918, as the nation balled its economic fist to smash the Central Powers of World War I, there was no single voice to speak

for the nation's general contractors.

At the request of President Woodrow Wilson, leading contractors formed a trade association, Associated General Contractors of America (www.agc.org). Today the association is still fighting for its members, including more than 30,000 general and specialty contractors, service providers and suppliers.

Members build commercial and public buildings, airports, shopping centers, factories, schools, dams, flood control facilities, highways, roads, bridges, ports, public transit, water and wastewater treatment facilities, housing projects, defense facilities, rail, tunnel, and mining operations.

There are more than 90 chapters in all 50 states, including AGC of Virginia, headquartered in Glen Allen, near Richmond (www.agcva.org). Founded in 1924, AGCVA has more than 740 members. Initial dues are \$880 for general contractors. Dues in subsequent years depend on volume, ranging from \$1,010 (covering both national and state dues) for general contractors with \$1 million or less in sales, to \$13,550 for contractors with more than \$200 million in sales.

AGC is the "oldest, largest, most effective" trade organization serving the commercial construction industry, says Steve Vermillion, chief executive officer of AGCVA. "Our focus is to provide service and support to help



Randy Walker

Mike Cagle

these firms overcome the challenges they face every day.”

One challenge contractors are facing is the statute of limitations, the contractor's liability for a project after completion. “There have been some interpretations of the current [state] law that have been very detrimental,” Vermillion says. “It appears that, in some instances, the contractor is expected to guarantee a building forever. That's not right.”

Another issue is public procurement law. “Over the past 15-20 years it has

changed dramatically,” Vermillion says. “It used to be that the competitive bid system, with award to the lowest bidder, was how most projects were awarded. Now there are many variations in contracting methods, and a study is underway in the General Assembly to review these processes to ensure that, among other things, they are as fair and transparent as possible. AGC is working closely with the study committee in this regard.”

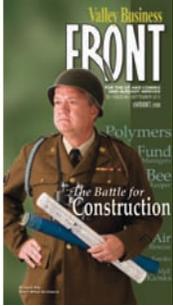
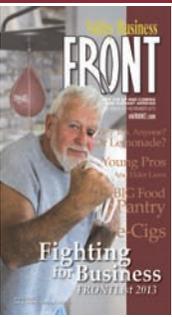
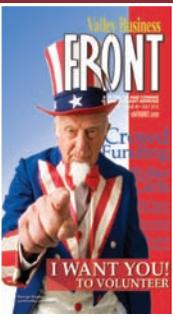
The issue is also a concern for Mike Cagle, new president of AGCVA's Roanoke

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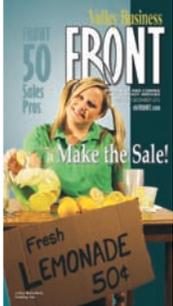
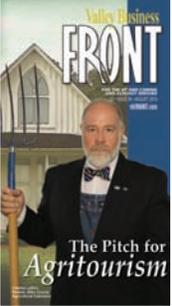
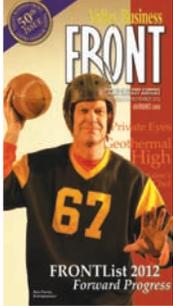
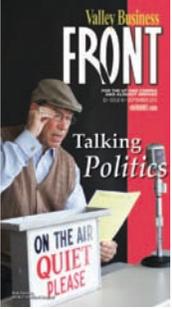
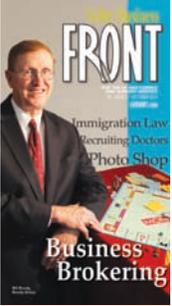
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district, succeeding Aaron Long. "Since about 2005 the state of Virginia has made a major shift from the traditional hard bid form of purchasing construction services to the competitive negotiation format of construction management at-risk," says Cagle. "This has taken a large amount of work that was available for small to mid-size general contractors to bid and shifted it to the larger national construction firms. This has also had a major impact on local subcontractors as many of these CM (construction management) firms bring out of town and out state subcontractors with them."

Cagle is executive vice president of MB Contractors, an AGCVA member. Not every contractor belongs. "We have lost several GC and subcontractor members since 2008 due to the economy," Cagle says. "Building our membership base in Western Virginia is a top priority. This will allow us to strengthen our entire association and allow us to have more local events and networking opportunities in Western Virginia."

Members also benefit from AGCVA's Affinity Programs which provide services and products at discounted rates to members, and from Safety Alliance programs offering access to discounted safety training and support to help ensure safe worksites.



Courtesy Jenny Stadheim

Jenny Stadheim, Western Region District Manager, coordinates events, membership, networking, education and board meetings for AGCVA's Central and Roanoke districts.

"Our industry can be very challenging and being an active member in AGC will give you access to many tools to help meet those challenges," says Cagle. "AGC is the voice of the construction industry and with the support of all of our members, AGCVA becomes a formidable force when supporting, opposing or modifying legislation and regulations which affect our industry on the state and national levels."

AGCVA's Southwest district will be incorporated into the Roanoke district as of 2014, according to Chandler Swope, longtime director of the Southwest district. 



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all photos: Randolph Walker

Longhorns in a pen.

Get along little dogies...or sheep... >

Executive Summary:

Have you ever thought you worked with animals? Well, these folks actually do.

By Randolph Walker

The Roanoke-Hollins Stockyard, located on U.S. 11 north of Hollins University, serves farmers in the Roanoke Valley. Other stockyards are located in Lynchburg, Bedford, and Christiansburg.

Chris Theimer, (pronounced "timer") manager, turns a visitor loose to wander

through rambling, maze-like warren of pens and aisles, with a friendly warning. "Be careful—some of 'em might run over you." Indeed, some of the occupants sound displeased to be away from their pastures.

Col. Mitchell Funk, employing the traditional rapid-fire patter, auctions cattle—bulls, steers, heifers (young females that haven't calved), cows, and calves—plus a few sheep, goats and pigs. Some will go to slaughter, most will go to feedlots, says Theimer.

The yard, which is stockholder-owned with about 10 employees, typically sells off 400 to 500 head every Monday. That number may go down as the pastures of Roanoke, Franklin and Botetourt counties are converted into subdivisions. 

RETAIL / SERVICE FRONT



Yard manager Chris Theimer.



Auctioneer Col. Mitchell Funk.



A sheep awaits its fate.



Robert Robertson of Mount Pleasant brings two 8-month-old Charolais-cross calves for auction.



Keisha Graziadei-Shup

Mary Ellen Apgar

Against the Odds >

Executive Summary:

New director at Hollins University's Horizon Program didn't take the straightest of paths to the position.

By Keisha Graziadei-Shup

"I didn't think I would live to see twenty-five much less graduate college and become the director of the Horizon Program," said Mary Ellen Apgar, 29.

Ten years ago, Apgar was a freshman at Longwood University and was more interested in drinking than studying. She performed poorly and left to return to Roanoke during her third year where she continued taking classes at Virginia Western Community College. The drinking spun out of control and Apgar wound up in jail for drunkenness in public. "...although I should have been

charged with assaulting an officer," she added.

Upon her release, she began a rehabilitation program for alcoholism at the Roanoke Rescue Mission that sobered her and also connected her to Pam Rhodes, an art teacher who graduated Hollins University's Horizon Program, the program for non-traditional students who have been out of school for a while or are going for the first time as adults.

"She saw potential in me... even though I hadn't done well academically," said Apgar. Rhodes encouraged her to go back to school. Two other women also helped Apgar to apply since she was terrified to do it alone. "My biggest fear about going back to college was that I would start drinking again," she said.

After acceptance into the program, Apgar succeeded in her studies and never returned to her old habit, despite her fears.

Apgar landed a job working in Hollins' admissions office after graduation. She felt her degree and prior experience building relationships as support staff at the Rescue Mission and Bethany Hall prepared her. "Admissions is about building relationships and building trust," she said.

In 2013 Celia McCormick, with whom Apgar had worked in her admissions role, and who Apgar considered a hero for the way she empowered women, retired from her position as director of the Horizon Program.

Apgar hadn't been working in admissions for a year yet when her supervisor called her in for a meeting. She was told that Celia was retiring and Apgar was being offered the position. Her response was silence.

"Do they really think I can do this?" Apgar recalled asking herself. As if she could read Apgar's thoughts, her supervisor confirmed that the decision makers wouldn't have asked her if they didn't think she could do it.

Apgar recounted the ways her journey had humbled her. While in rehab, she was ashamed that she was an alcoholic, in rehab at a homeless shelter, and her father was a judge in Roanoke, so she used to hide her nametag if she suspected someone might make the connection. One time, the wife of a different judge was touring the rehab facility and Apgar hid under a table in an effort to not be recognized.

Despite her challenges, Apgar's family was very supportive and it further humbled her that well into her twenties, her parents had to drive her to her classes at Hollins.

Now she was being offered a position of huge responsibility at 28 years old, only a few years after her lowest low. It wasn't an easy decision to make and some commented that Apgar would have "big shoes to fill."

She agreed with that and wondered how Hollins would ever replace McCormick.

But, "At some point, I had to stop asking the self-doubting questions...I had to recognize that I'm not Celia; I'm Mary Ellen. And I thought, and I'm going to bring my shoes," she said.

After her first student orientation, a colleague told Apgar, "You found your shoes."

"That was enough to make me cry," Apgar said. She indeed brought her shoes, and added that she also didn't hide under tables anymore.

She was honored that she was offered the position and added, "It is an honor to help [the students] through challenges and celebrate their accomplishments." 

So much more.

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- > Life-Guard 12 To Get New Home in Lexington
- > Alleghany Gets 55 New Manufacturing Jobs

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



Sean Hayslett Photography

Carter, Chris now DJs during a prime, mid-day slot on weekdays and serves as the station's promotions director.

In 2010 he and his then-girlfriend Ashley were treated to an evening at a comedy show and overnight stay at the Holiday Inn Valley View. "At breakfast the next morning, we heard a lot of the guests talking about how much they enjoyed the show," Chris says. "I thought, 'This is something Roanoke needs on a regular basis.' "

With his years of experience in event planning, Chris quickly lined up sponsors and contacted a national booking agency for comedians. Star City Comedy Club was born soon after.

Funny business >

Executive Summary:

Opening a comedy club is just another way for Chris Carter to entertain people.

By Alison Weaver

Chris Carter's goal since his days at Patrick Henry High School has been to help the Roanoke Valley have a good time.

"I'm a big fan of music and I love to relay the entertainment," he says, explaining why he took an entry-level job at a local radio station straight out of high school. "I was running the sound board for Redskins games. It didn't involve talking; I was just pushing buttons, keeping the game on."

That led to a midnight to 6 a.m. weekend shift as a DJ at WJJS and a stint at a station in North Carolina. As his skills improved, so did his shifts. In 2003 Chris moved back to Roanoke to work for the station he'd grown up listening to: K92.

Better known by his on-air name, Kidd

After trying a few venues, Chris settled on Corned Beef & Company in downtown Roanoke. The upstairs room seats about 150 and the shows regularly sell out. "Our guests like the fact that they can order food or drinks, and they enjoy the atmosphere at Corned Beef," he says.

Word has spread about the quality of the performers. "At \$10 a person, it's comparable to what it costs to go to the movies," Chris says. "Our booking agency does an amazing job. We get national headliners who appear on Comedy Central, Showtime at the Apollo and Conan O'Brien, for example. We've had one or two comedians who weren't so great, but most of them are nonstop hilarious."

Chris says they haven't had any complaints from Roanoke's more staid contingent. "We advertise the show as over 21, R-rated entertainment. Some performers are more risqué than others, but most folks come in with an open mind."

Chris and Ashley got married in January, and she's a full participant in the comedy club venture. "We were already big fans of stand-up comedy. We like to go on cruises and we always go to the comedy shows," Chris says.

The two Carters staff every show. "We arrive about three hours ahead of show time, set up the sound and stage lights, print the online sales list, get the ticket list from Corned Beef, and hang the sponsor banners," Chris says.

Ashley greets the guests and checks IDs; Chris seats them and hosts the show. Plus, Chris says, "Ashley is a graphics and web site designer. She handles all of that and designs the posters and fliers."

Chris has learned to take it slow and adjust to seasonal fluctuations. "During the summer months, there are just too many distractions—family vacations, the lake, etc. So we drop back to one show a month usually." Cooler months draw the sell-out crowds.

The business of making people laugh is booming: the Carters will be hosting a

'Laugh Your Boobs Off' >

Chris Carter says the response to the Star City Comedy Club's irreverently named comedy series—"Laugh Your Boobs Off"—was overwhelmingly positive. The two shows netted \$2,500 for the Virginia Blue Ridge Affiliate of Susan G. Komen. "It was a way to draw attention to Breast Cancer Awareness Month and still have some fun," Chris says. "After all, they say laughter is the best medicine."

similar comedy club in nearby Lynchburg at Phase 2 (formerly Cattle Annie's) beginning in early 2014. 

Mike Hamlar

- *Co-owner of Hamlar-Curtis Funeral Home, Inc.*
- *Masters Degree from Liberty University*
- *President of Hamlar Enterprises*
- *Board Member of Downtown Roanoke Inc.*

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Shop like a Star >

Some quick observations about our retail industry. It's December—perfect timing:

- 3.9%. That's the figure the National Retail Federation predicts for gains from 2013 holiday sales. They call it "marginal" but it's not terribly different than the past ten years.
- Ebenezer Scrooge has a new name this year: he's called "Consumer Confidence." There are record high amounts of uncertainty, particularly from government and political misadventures. Retail industry experts say their stats are certain on this one: spending is proportionately tied to confidence (not just in economics, either). The more uncertain you are the less you buy.
- A lot of merchants still don't get the importance of customer service. One micro-example is a retailer I know who just shut down its brick-and-mortar location. She will cite market conditions, I'm sure, but I'm convinced she lost a perfectly viable market due to piss-poor service. Note to owner-operators: train your people to act properly! In spite of whatever is happening in the world around you (or perhaps more so because of it) the attitude in your shops must be positive.
- The break e-tailers and online shopping get over physical stores on collecting state sales tax is becoming a bigger deal than ever. How can someone like me who opposes new taxes reconcile the "fairness" issue and the "showrooming" temptation? Simple: Don't tax online purchases unless you reduce the sales tax for all retailers. We don't need the state taking more of our hard-earned coins out of our pockets, especially in a rash response to "correct the market."
- The "Shop Local" trend is not nearly as popular as it should be. A few organizations have attempted to brand the movement (including American Express, with its Small Business Saturday promotion, the day after Black Friday), but the effort could hardly be called a great success. I've talked to many merchants about this, and the only demonstrable response I get is a yawn. Our cheerleading is not enough, apparently. Surely there's an entrepreneur somewhere who can exert a little capitalism to weld a measureable incentive.

Okay, clearly, we have some work to do to get our RetailFRONT in a stronger position and closer to the level where it should

continued on Page 50

On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:

The RetailFRONT is the one to watch in December; it's such an accurate gauge.

Density Dashboard >

“The highest density of really smart people in the smallest area.”

That's how Nathan Latka describes the projected outcome of a “new” initiative called the blueprint for Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Network. (Originally sparked by a think tank type outgrowth from the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council almost three years ago.)

We're sitting in Nathan's glass aquarium of a conference room, while all around us sit techies hunched over monitors in the open lab environ, like CSI forensic scientists peering into cadavers, trying to decipher every possible micro-clue as to cause of death. I have no idea what is so intense, but all of them are leaning forward in their workstations, as if they would love nothing better than to be absorbed into the very light emitting from their LED or plasmatic companions.

I'm thinking this lab is a microcosmic example of what this blueprint is all about.

“We want to create an ecosystem that feeds itself,” says Nathan.

As the entrepreneur explains the process, it strikes me that he's talking about refining the process he went through himself. When he launched his Facebook peripheral and mobile app software enterprise just a few short years ago. Only this time, we're talking about a systematic approach that benefits the region at large—not an idealistic young kid hopping around board rooms on his own, in search of venture capitalists or angel investors or networking facilitators or high-risk gamblers or whomever can help bootstrap a new startup.

The objectives of the RBIN blueprint are bold; but more importantly, specific:

- Support 100 businesses / startups
- Secure \$75 million in revenue capital
- Create 1,500 jobs

The timeframe: 3 years

One of the fun, most visible components of the program includes the mentor/ambassador “dashboard.” It's a hub for networking and connecting all the players in the game, from student visionaries, to proven developers, to financing resources, to recruiters—and all nicely packaged with an

continued on Page 50



Nathan Latka

Tom Field

Guest Interview

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Nathan Latka champions the “bold vision” of the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Blueprint.

Field / On Tap

from Page 48

be. There is positive news; and the best one I can think of is gift-giving ideas. Instead of "stuff," also consider experiences! Who's going to remember that sweater anyway?

Gift certificates, season passes or tickets to:

- Our wineries or breweries
- Our theatres, performance venues, museums
- Our favorite teams and sporting events (don't forget high schools, too)
- Our limousine or transport services for a day or night out
- Our local spas or beauty or fitness centers
- Our bed-and-breakfasts or locally operated lodging venues
- Our photography studios or sessions
- Our local restaurants or pubs
- Our dance instructors, equestrian centers, outdoor guides

The giant star on top of Mill Mountain was erected in 1949 as a temporary promotional for merchants and the holidays. Of course, it's been an icon for our entire region now for the past 64 years. What a tangible testament though, to how much our RetailFRONT contributes to our community. It's time to polish our star so it can shine brightly once again. 

Guest Interview

from Page 49

expanding panel of experienced mentors, who have lived the dream to see it materialized in significant capacities.

"The process," Nathan says, immediately grabbing his marker, scooting over to the whiteboard, "is you begin with the idea, move into the dashboard, start the introductions, and head to venture capital. This is an accelerated cash flow.

"Seventy-five percent of Heyo's initial capital [his company] was raised outside the region. [And yet] we're living in the highest density per capita of universities in the country. We are a leading net exporter of talent."

Another way of putting it, is RBIN wants to "bring it home."

"We're the number one innovator hub in the country," Nathan states. I thought maybe he was projecting, but that's never been his style. Nathan's pictures are more "done deals" than rough drafts. And looking at the blueprint advocates, coupled with RBTC influence and folks like tech developer Russ Ellis and workforce recruiting champions like Stuart Mease, it's clear the RBIN is banking on the expertise of tested movers and shakers.

The term "density" peppers Nathan's comments. As in the opposite of scattered and unfocused. Positioning and capitalizing on our region as the choice entrepreneurial-technology magnet looks promising. The speedometer on the dashboard is gaining momentum.

Nathan Latka is founder and CEO of Heyo, a Blacksburg software company. He serves on the board of the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Network. 

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Letters

FRONTfriend

A friend gave me a copy of the most recent FRONT. What a great magazine! The topics were interesting and wide-ranging and the writing was great. I really enjoyed the stories and at all the colorful pictures that accompanied the stories. Keep up the good work!

Christine McGuire
Roanoke

Mission minded

Thank you so much for the wonderful article about Feeding America Southwest Virginia and James Andrews in the November Valley Business FRONT magazine! We depend on great media partners like you and your staff to help us in our mission to feed the hungry in the area.

Walker Nelms
*Marketing and Communications
Coordinator*

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

“ ”
It was, according to physicians [of the era], a prime opportunity to conceive children.

— Page 30

“ ”
You would rather have dental work than...read hundreds of pages of legalese.

— Page 28

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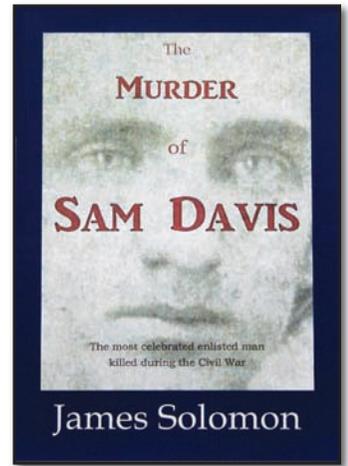
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Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our contributors 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 news@vbFRONT.com



Betrayal in the Civil War

A Virginia Tech historian and Civil War author once told me that an average of a book a day about the Civil War had been written since its end and that most weren't worth the paper that carried their words. Buchanan-based James Solomon's self-published *The Murder of Sam Davis* (Sageesity) would not fit in that category. It is a tight, meticulously-researched and nicely presented tale of "the most celebrated enlisted man killed during the Civil War."

Davis was hung as a Confederate spy, but his case has been puzzling and questioned since almost the day of his death in Pulaski, Tenn., Solomon's hometown. Solomon grew up with the Davis Story. Davis is said to have declared on the gallows, "You, sir, may hang me a thousand times and I would not betray my friends." That has led to what may have been his own betrayal, something Solomon gets into in some detail.

This, basically, is a true crime story that is based at the time of the war and not a tale of large battles and bigger strategies. Solomon delivers it well.

—Dan Smith

Girl Meets Virginia

Take yet another story modeled upon Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, set it in southwestern Virginia a tad later (1970s), and you get Jeannette Wells' *The Silver Star* (Scribner, 2013). Whereas *Mockingbird's* black and white (figuratively, literally) is more sharply defined, I like the interweaving of racism, negligence, chauvinism, machismo, and outright meanness in this quick read of a book. What gives this book

its best authenticity is the voice of "Bean," our young female protagonist and very adept narrator. She's a realistic hero (the best kind); and not only do you see her co-characters the way she sees them, you have no doubt they are honestly drawn. There's a scene of simply picking up snacks and a drink at a convenience store that is absolutely mesmerizing, eye-opening.

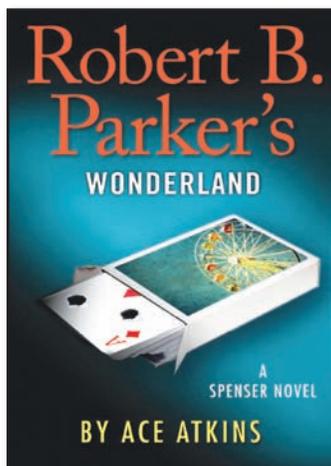
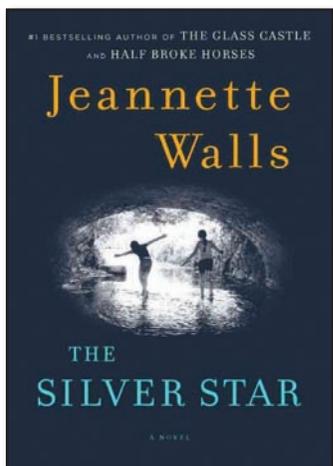
To be sure, we see the flaws of Virginia in the 1970s, but Walls does not cross the line into the hyper-sensitized southern stereotype. Despite the strain of ugliness, there's just enough good to keep on the journey. If Bean and her sister can scrape through the instances of hostility without basic and adequate protection from their own mother—there's hope for just about anyone. Anytime you can root for an underdog at this level of pure, encompassing saturation, you have the makings of a good story.

—Tom Field

Spenser in Wonderland

One of the most iconic characters in detective fiction is Robert B. Parker's Spenser. Following Parker's death, Ace Atkins, an award-winning writer was chosen by the Parker family to carry on Spenser's exploits. The reason for his selection is evident in *Wonderland* (Putnam, 2013). Parker's Spenser is tough, smart, loyal, and funny. Atkins perfectly mimics Parker's characters and writing style in this, his second book under the Parker banner.

Wonderland is the name of a defunct Boston amusement park and dog racing track that is now, along with the condo property next door, the perfect location for a new casino. Spenser's old friend and mentor lives in the condos and



has some tough guys hanging around the building intimidating the residents and doing minor property damage. Spenser figures it will be simple enough to rid the friend of these thugs...until he finds out who's paying them. The money trail leads Spenser and his sidekick-in-training, Zebulon Sixkill, into the world of high stakes, winner-take-all pursuit of the gambling license for the new casino. Everybody Spenser encounters has something to hide. Getting to the truth, while keeping himself and others alive demands all Spenser's tenacity and toughness...in spades.

Through the fist fights, gun fights, kidnappings, discovery of dead bodies, and the twists and turns of his investigation, Spenser keeps his acerbic wit firmly in place providing moments of welcome comic relief. Not as dark as many other detective stories, *Wonderland* is a pleasant read that will keep you guessing, and smiling, right up to the end.

—Cathy Cooper

An MBA's Syllabus

Technically, *The 50 Best Business Books: The Ultimate Time-Saving Guide to the Secrets of Business Success* (Future Publishing Ltd., UK; 2013) is a magazine—one of those glossy reference hybrids designed for the mag-rack impulse sale—but it's something hip business owners, managers, and entrepreneurs would want nestled close by their desktops. You can't help but flip through to see the recommendations along with the easy formatting that happens to be this very publisher's secret to popularity.

To begin, I was thrown by the math...for two reasons. First, it's not fifty books; it shows 75

(plus 10 business apps). I finally figured it out: it's 50 "top ten" books in five major categories, plus five sub-categories with five each. That's forgivable. What might be less forgivable is the forced consistency of ten or five books each for each classification. You notice the problem mostly when one author (Seth Godin, whom I really like) gets far too many mentions (five... really?). Nevertheless, I would recommend this guide, because it confirms you read many of the "right" books if you're in or running a business; and the ones you didn't should be next on your list. I really like the formatting and classifications: management (10); cv/resumes (5); marketing (10); social media (5); sales (10); eBusiness (5); motivation (10); biographies (5); entrepreneurs (10); lunchbreak reads (5); and the ten business apps.

Most recommendations are spot on. The three areas I see as most debatable include: biographies (everyone has favorites here, and Martha Stewart as the sole female success example could raise an eyebrow); the social media category (its relative infancy produces books that are unproven and hardly classic status); and the business apps (with the exception of LinkedIn and GoogleDrive, the remaining apps lauded are laughable as a "top ten"). I've read almost all of the books; and if you're a similar "student" of this genre, you're going to wonder how come some of your favorites didn't make the list. That shouldn't hold you back, though.

—Tom Field

(The reviewers: Dan Smith is a veteran journalist and former FRONT editor; Tom Field is publisher of FRONT; Cathy Cooper is an executive assistant and project manager for Berryfield.)



Bone & Muscle Camp >

Ken D'Amato, D.O., FAOAO, Discipline Chair of Surgery was the program chair for the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) and its first ever **Orthopedic Boot Camp** on Nov. 1–2. The event drew resident physicians across the country, and featured VCOM's Simulation and Technology lab and Anatomy lab and the center's expanded training programs.



Green Scene >

AECP's 14th Annual **Green Living & Energy Expo** was held Nov. 1–2 at Roanoke Civic Center. Dawn Luther of Clean Valley Council plays the part of Dr. Seuss's "Lorax" in their exhibit with children's play area; and visitors were attracted to displays like Greenlight and REEVA's electric car.





Frame job off campus >

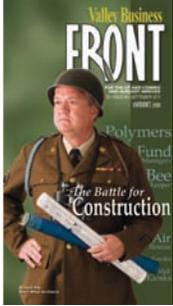
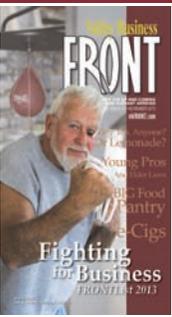
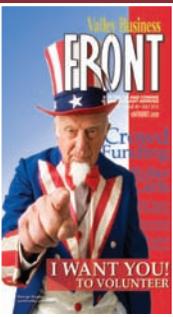
It's not a Fincastle artist Ed Bordett serigraphy, but drive bys can't help but notice the big block of framing just off Prices Fork Road adjacent to Virginia Tech campus as CMG Leasing prepares **The Edge** apartments in response to increasing demand for student housing.



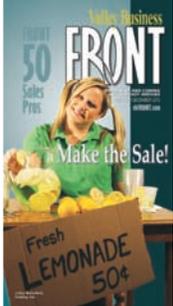
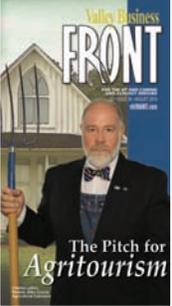
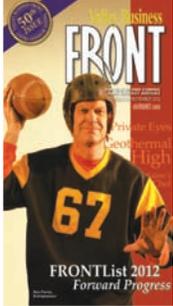
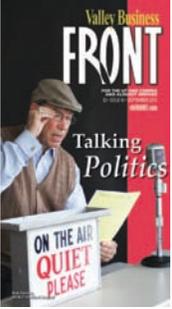
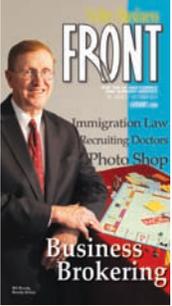
Southern comfort >

The first ever **Southern Life Expo** was held Nov. 15–17 at Salem Civic Center, featuring merchants and vendors showcasing all things southern culture, from fashion, cooking, decor, and more. Gypsy Palooza (a Salem boutique) offered one of the more eclectic samplings of fashion accessories.

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By the Numbers

How We Get to Work – An Update >

By Anne Piedmont

Call this an update. Two years ago this column looked at how workers over the age of 16 in the Roanoke and New River Valleys commuted to work. Data from the U.S. Census 2005-09 American Community Survey showed that 81.7 percent of those drove to work with no one else in the vehicle. The column also noted that it would be interesting to see how the data may or may not change, with changing attitudes and high gas prices.

More recent figures, from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey, show a very slight drop in percentage of solo commuters

in the region, and a very slight, possibly corresponding, rise in commuters using public transportation. Region-wide, 81.1 percent of commuters drive to work alone and 1.5 percent take public transportation – up from 1.3 percent two years ago.

Public transportation is used at a rate far below the state's (4.2 percent) and nation's (4.9 percent), even in areas where it is available. Our region's relatively short commutes may be one reason why commuters drive themselves rather than take the bus, though the growing popularity of the Star Line Trolley and Smart Way Bus may be changing those numbers. Use of public transportation rose in all three of the region's cities and in student-heavy Montgomery County. Franklin and Pulaski counties, and Radford and Salem showed increases in carpools.

The region is interconnected, and people don't necessarily work in the same city or county where they live. Interestingly, the two communities with the highest percentage of resident workers – Roanoke City and Montgomery County – are also the communities with the highest percentage of public transportation users.

	Drive Alone '05-'09	Drive Alone '07-'11	Carpool '05-'09	Carpool '07-'11	Public Transp. '05-'09	Public Transp. '07-'11	Work in Own City or County
Botetourt Co.	85.2%	86.8%	8.1%	6.8%	0.1%	0.1%	33.7%
Craig Co.	81.2%	86.1%	13.4%	8.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.8%
Franklin Co.	81.5%	79.5%	11.4%	12.4%	0.3%	0.1%	58.0%
Roanoke Co.	86.3%	86.6%	7.9%	7.2%	0.5%	0.5%	33.1%
Roanoke City	81.2%	79.7%	10.7%	10.6%	2.7%	3.2%	62.7%
Salem	81.1%	79.8%	7.7%	8.3%	0.7%	1.2%	48.6%
Roanoke MSA	83.3%	82.8%	9.4%	9.2%	1.1%	1.2%	47.5%
Giles Co.	79.4%	82.4%	14.7%	13.3%	0.1%	0.0%	46.9%
Montgomery Co.	75.1%	74.4%	10.6%	10.4%	2.5%	3.1%	80.3%
Pulaski Co.	87.4%	86.3%	8.6%	8.9%	0.3%	0.2%	59.3%
Radford	76.4%	74.2%	10.3%	12.0%	0.9%	1.4%	41.5%
Blacksburg MSA	78.3%	77.6%	10.6%	10.5%	1.6%	2.1%	69.1%
Combined MSAs	81.7%	81.1%	9.8%	9.6%	1.3%	1.5%	54.7%
Virginia	77.1%	77.1%	11.1%	10.9%	4.2%	4.5%	47.9%
United States	75.9%	75.9%	10.5%	10.5%	5.0%	4.9%	72.6%

Controlled Chaos is Delicious >

Executive Summary:

At the tender age of 29, Ted Polfelt is a rising star on the Roanoke culinary scene, as both chef and instructor.

By Jim Shell

It's unusual to hear a cook described as an athlete, but for Ted Polfelt, it was the "athletic ability" displayed by the line cooks he saw during a high-school job that made him want to become a chef. Fascinated by the coordinated movements and "controlled chaos" of a busy kitchen, the Roanoke native enrolled in the prestigious culinary-arts program at Johnson and Wales University in Charlotte. After his graduation, he and his wife returned to Roanoke because they thought it would be a better environment in which to raise their newborn daughter, and the late Al Pollard hired him to work at 419 West Restaurant. That was nine years ago; today, Polfelt is not only the restaurant's executive chef, but also a culinary-arts instructor at Virginia Western Community College. "Ted is the type of chef who makes you want to be better in one's profession," says Ann Melchionna, one of his VWCC students. "He is not a hothead or arrogant; rather, [he is] confident and strong-willed."

It takes a strong will, and a lot of dedication, to meet the demands of Polfelt's schedule. In addition to teaching four classes at VWCC, he works 30 to 35 hours a week at 419 West, and also somehow finds the time to participate in regional competitions of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). He won a silver medal at his very first competition, and plans to continue competing, both for the challenge and to sharpen his skills. Despite the high level he has reached in his profession, however, he believes that it's possible for anyone to become a good cook. "It's a craft," he says, "and it can be taught." In his VWCC classes, he works with a wide variety of students, of all age and skill levels and varying degrees of ambition. Some are aspiring professional chefs, others want to open a restaurant or start a catering business; others are home cooks who simply love to create in the kitchen and wish to hone their skills. Polfelt's teaching methods are much the same as those he uses with new employees in his own kitchen—except, he jokes, "I have to watch my language" in class.

As frequent diners at 419 West know, Polfelt believes in being as creative as possible with the menu, while keeping in mind that Roanoke is still a "meat-and-potatoes town." While his own tastes in food run to such classic French country fare as charcuterie, terrines and pates, and "pickled anything," his goal is, above all else, to give his customers what they want. As president of the Roanoke chapter of the ACF, he gets to flex his creative muscles preparing menus for its Adventure

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

In Brief

Name: Ted Polfelt
Age: 29
Company: 419 West - Roanoke
Title: Executive Chef
Length of Service: 9 years
Family: Wife and daughter

Dinner Club, which serves its 30 to 35 members more daring cuisine at mystery destinations (their most recent meal was served in the corn maze at Layman Brothers' orchard). These meals give Polfelt a chance to "break out the geles and foams."

Polfelt recently passed the rigorous battery of written tests and judged competition required to become a certified Executive Chef by the American Culinary Federation (ACF). It's typical of his regard for the profession that, despite his years of experience, it was only after he earned this certification that he felt entitled to call himself "chef." Those who have worked for and learned from him have not been so reticent about his abilities. At only twenty-nine, Polfelt's future would seem to be limitless; yet his only goal at present is simply to keep improving and proving himself, and to see where his abilities take him. 



Ted Polfelt

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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Helm

Amy Helm has been promoted to branch manager at the Crossroads branch of Freedom First Credit Union; **Sabrina Cobler** was hired as manager of the Vinton branch.



Jennings



Majcikova

The following promotions and hires have been announced by KPMG in Roanoke: **Robert Jennings**, to senior audit manager; **Zuzana Majcikova**, to audit manager; and **Aaron Kees** and **Benjamin Sutton**, to senior associates. **Kelsie Davenport** and **Jessica East** have joined the professional staff.



Montagu

SunTrust Bank hired **Emma Montagu** as the Western Virginia business banking team leader based in Roanoke.



Underwood



Cronise

Brown, Edwards & Company LLP announced that partner, **Mark Woolwine**, has moved to the firm's New River Valley office.

AXA Advisors, LLC announced that **Shannon L. Underwood** and **L. Suzanne Cronise**, both financial professionals with in Roanoke and managing partners of Blue Ridge Financial Partners, have earned a Certificate in Retirement Planning from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Roanoke office of Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. has hired **Mary Winks** as sales manager.

Marsh & McLennan Agency, LLC announced that **Shannon Wyatt** has joined Rutherford, a Marsh & McLennan agency, as director of IT infrastructure in the Roanoke office.



Flattery

including Carilion New River Valley Medical Center, Carilion Giles Community Hospital and Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital.

LEGAL FRONT



Simons

Woods Rogers PLC announced **Brooke Simons** has joined the firm's litigation practice as an associate.

Best Lawyers has named the following Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore attorneys to the 2014 Roanoke Lawyers of the Year: **William Gust**, **Michael Pace, Jr.**, **William Rakes**, and **Bruce Stockburger**.

WELLNESS FRONT

Carilion Clinic has named **Bill Flattery** vice president of the Western Region, leading operations west of Roanoke,



Alderman

Jamie Alderman has been selected to the director of nursing and assistant administrator's position at Warm Hearth at Home, a Warm Hearth Village agency providing companion and caregiver services in the home.

K. Jeffrey Miller, director of clinical operations for Tuck Chiropractic Clinics, has received certification as a medical compliance specialist.

Delta Dental of Virginia announced that **Chris Pyle** has been promoted to vice president, marketing and government relations. **Dr. Joseph Dill** joined the company as vice president

of professional services and dental director.

RETAIL FRONT



Shelor

The 2014 TIME Quality Dealer of the Year has named as its Virginia nominee **Larry Shelor**, dealer principal at Shelor Motor Mile.

Mountain Lake Lodge has named **Michael Rork** as executive chef.

Advance Auto Parts has promoted **J.T. Thompson** to the position of vice president, applications development.

EDUCATION FRONT

Virginia Tech announced the following: **Mark Helms**, director of facilities operations has been named interim vice president and chief facilities officer; **Robert Stephens**, associate

professor of history has been named associate dean for undergraduate academic affairs in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Studies.

Two professors of practice in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech have

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- > LIGHTS...CAMERA...ACTION!
- > What's not open during the shutdown
- > FRONT favorites
- > Assisting Senior Drivers...
- > Roanoke County Property Rights Resolution
- > MORE: Antiques and Flea Markets
- > MORE: Agritourism
- > MORE: Doing good, locally
- > Virginia Tech President Steger Resigns
- > Lorton Retires from Carilion; Halliwill New CFO

- > Dual Winners in VTK Tech Transfer Challenge
- > Advance Auto Shuffles, Eliminates Executive Chairs
- > Interactive Achievement Gets Cash Infusion
- > Ground Broken for West End Center Project
- > Startup Business Workshop in Roanoke March 29
- > Red Sun Farms Bringing Jobs to Pulaski
- > Locking Down the Cell in Roanoke
- > Virginia Tech Climbing the Rankings Ladder
- > Life-Guard 12 To Get New Home in Lexington
- > Alleghany Gets 55 New Manufacturing Jobs

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

Career FRONT



Marie Zawistowski



Blum



Still

of religious studies; and **Carolina Viera**, instructor of Spanish.

OTHER FRONTS



Keith Zawistowski



Burns

Blum, Webb Burns, Fourd Kemper, Eddie Smith, and Susan Still.

Roanoke College announced the following new faculty:

Kathryn Day, visiting professor of psychology; **Justin Garrison**, assistant professor of political science; **Manuel Gomez-Navarro**, visiting instructor of Spanish; **Pablo Hernandez**, associate professor of economics; **Steven Hughes**, assistant professor of chemistry; **Richard Keithley**, assistant professor of chemistry; **Soon Khoo**, assistant professor of communication studies; **Lindsey Osterman**, assistant professor of psychology; **Matthew Petersen**, visiting assistant professor of biology; **Melanie Trexler**, visiting instructor



Alleyne

Vonya Alleyne has been named market vice president, Roanoke operations for Cox Communications. The company also named **Margaret Hunter-Wade** public affairs manager.



Stephens

The following additions to staff have been announced by the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors

been recognized by the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects. **Marie Zawistowski** has been recognized with Society Honors and **Keith Zawistowski** has been recognized with the Award for Distinguished Achievement.

Radford University has named **Irwin Clark** as associate vice president and dean of students.

North Cross School announced the following new members of the board of trustees for 2013-2014: **Brad**



Kemper



Smith

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Herlocker

Bureau: **Christa Stephens**, public relations and visitor services manager; **Catherine Herlocker**, partnership marketing and sales coordinator.

The American Red Cross, Roanoke Valley Chapter has named the following new board members for 2013-2014: **Christina Maxwell**, **Kevin**

Meade, and **Brian Wilson**.



Harris

Justin Harris, digital account executive and **Candice Carter**, traffic department, have joined WDBJ-TV (Channel 7).

Voices for Virginia's Children has awarded the **Carol S. Fox** Making Kids Count Award to **Dr. Douglas Pierce**.

Nikeshia Womack has joined United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd as development associate.



Frauenheim

SiteVision, Inc. has hired **Michael Frauenheim** as web application developer. SERVPRO of Roanoke, Montgomery & Pulaski Counties announced that **Tony Terry** passed the NADCA examination

and was awarded the title of "Certified Ventilation System Inspector" (CVI) and **Shane Stoll** passed the NADCA examination and is now certified as "Air Systems Cleaning Specialist (ASCS). The ASCS designation qualifies Shane to serve as a project manager for residential and commercial HVAC cleaning and restoration projects, including remediation of microbial contaminants within HVAC systems. Shane also qualifies as a Ventilation System Mold Remediator (VSMR).

Compiled by Cathy Cooper

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FRONT Notes



A comprehensive design concept for a multimodal transportation center for Roanoke.

Working on the railroad

As the Virginia Department of Transportation and AMTRAK work toward bringing passenger rail back to Roanoke, a group of students from Virginia Tech has produced a comprehensive design concept for a multimodal transportation center for the city. The design concepts for both of the proposed sites include plans to accommodate rail, city buses, long-distance buses, Smart Way buses, taxis, private automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The plans were unveiled in early November at the Center for Higher Education in Roanoke.

Another advance for Advance

Advance Auto Parts (NYSE: AAP), has announced the rebranding of the Company's eServices product portfolio. Effective immediately, Advance eServices will be known as MOTOSHOP Technology Tools. MOTOSHOP Technology Tools help repair shops serve their customers better and manage their shop more efficiently.

Cybersecurity grant

FoxGuard Solutions of Christiansburg has received acceptance from the Department of Energy

for its project proposal for the DOE's Innovation for Increasing Cybersecurity for Energy Delivery Systems. The \$4.3 million project includes \$3.3 million from the DOE and remaining funds coming from FoxGuard and their partner in the project, Critical Intelligence.

Cancer PREVENTION?

Susan Meacham, PhD, RDN, and Administrative Director of the Preventive Medicine Research Center at VCOM has been granted a patent on a chemical formulation that has demonstrated the ability to kill cancer cells on contact. The formulation could be

used for either treatment or prevention of several different types of cancer. The patent will enable further testing of the formulation.

Top honors

The Credit Union National Association has named Freedom First Credit Union the Credit Union of the Year for 2013.

Growth means jobs

A Fincastle company, Capco Machinery Systems announced the expansion of the company's manufacturing plant. The \$4.2 million expansion will create

about thirty new jobs. While about 94% of Capco's products are exported outside the United States, President and CEO Edward West, 3rd said the option of expanding overseas was "tempting" but keeping the jobs in the US was, for him, a stronger desire.

Stable management

The City of Roanoke has awarded a new five-year agreement for management of the Roanoke Civic Center to current management provider, Global Spectrum.

More by merger

Thompson & Litton (T&L) has announced the merger with SEDA

Engineering, adding mechanical, plumbing, and civil engineering to T&L's established services in those areas.

Building green

A Roanoke firm, Structures Design/Build, LLC, has been awarded the GreenBuilder Home of the Year Award for its "Specht House" in Bedford. The 1,800 square foot home is featured in the December, 2013 issue of GreenBuilder magazine.

Cloud Speed

Roanoke cable and internet provider, Cox Communications Virginia, has increased, by up to 60%, the speed of downloading and uploading in their

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system and now offers free cloud storage for its high-speed internet customers. The new speeds are available to customers depending on their internet package. Customers who subscribe to the Premier D2 and Ultimate packages will see no change in speeds.

Healthy Hokies

The Active Times list of 50 Fittest Colleges in America places Virginia Tech at the top. The rankings are based on fitness, health and

wellness factors, including athletic facilities, team sports participation, campus dining and overall quality of student life.

Investment in Floyd...

Floyd County's largest employer, Hollingsworth & Vose Co. announced plans to expand production facilities in the county. The \$6.1 million investment will enable the company to produce a material used for filtering air without reducing air flow. It is used in air-purifying



Tom Field

Roanoke Civic Center, on an increasingly rare moment with empty parking lot.

FRONT Notes



Valley View Mall

face masks, air conditioning filters and many other products. The expansion will add 17 new jobs to the company's current work force of 130.

...and in Troutville

Virginia Transformer Corp. announced the expansion of their manufacturing facilities in Troutville. The company expects the \$1 million investment will provide opportunities to increase employment. The company supplies power transformers to the local mining industry and employs more than 600 people.

Smart shopper

Valley View Mall is one of the malls included in

the recent launch of new websites by PlaceWise Media. The website aims to connect shoppers and retailers with information and deals and coupons. The site is accessible by smartphone, offers complete social media integration and offers email alerts.

Fast fashion at Valley View

H&M, seller of fashion clothing and accessories for women, men and children will open a store at Valley View in 2014. Based in Sweden, H&M has more than 3,000 stores worldwide and is known for designer collaborations and inexpensive, quick to market versions of runway fashion. The extensive build out for the store will

cost approximately \$800 thousand.

Long live the King!

Krispy Kreme has filed plans to rezone the space currently occupied by the Appliance Outlet on Hershberger Road to allow a 2,800 square foot production facility with a 50 seat customer capacity. The plans did not indicate a completion date and will not impact the K&W Cafeteria nearby.

Not seeing a future

PixelOptics, a Roanoke County based pioneer in electronic eyewear has filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy. The company had run into severe financial difficulty, "having

no liquidity and burdened with substantial debt" according to a statement the company released. The company owns over 400 patents and pending patent applications around the world. One of PixelOptics more news-worthy products, auto-focusing eyeglass lenses, was launched in 2011.

Closing a door in Christiansburg

CraftMaster Manufacturing, a door and window manufacturer owned by Oregon based JELD-WEN, Inc. will cease operations on January 31, 2014. The plant, which employs 109 people, is being closed to improve efficiency within JELD-WEN. Employees are being encouraged to

transfer to other JELD-WEN facilities. Those who do will be given a moving allowance. Severance benefits and job-finding assistance will be provided to those employees who elect not to leave the area. JELD-WEN's closest plants are in North Wilkesboro, NC and Lexington, NC.

New Bank Branches

NewRiver Bank has opened a new branch at 2950 Market Street in Christiansburg. First Bank & Trust has opened its newest location at 7305 Peppers Ferry Blvd. in Fairlawn and MemberOne Federal Credit Union has opened a new Lakeside Plaza branch at 3901 Old Forest Road in Lynchburg.

Entrepreneurial Workspace

The former CVS on Grandin Road in Roanoke is being converted to a

co-working space for entrepreneurs and innovators in the region allowing them to network and share experience and resources. Roanoke developer, Ed Walker has owned the building for the past decade. Roanoke's other co-working space, The Business Lounge, plans to relocate to the Grandin Road space when it is complete.

The "worm" turns

Pulaski will be losing about 240 jobs in mid-2014 as the Caterpillar plant there closes. Caterpillar has struggled to survive a 42% loss in sales of its mining equipment. The announcement from Caterpillar also addressed companywide layoffs and potential for other shake-ups to come. County officials were unsuccessful in their attempts to save the factory.

Up, up and FAAway

The Virginia Tech board of visitors has approved the sale of 26 acres of university land to the Federal Aviation Administration for extension of the Virginia Tech Montgomery Executive Airport's runway. The FAA is expected to pay \$9.4 million for the property. Along with the runway extension, the board approved placing 22 acres around the airport in a permanent easement to improve safety around the runway.

My daddy grew that!

A Floyd County organization, the Sustain Floyd Foundation, has been awarded a \$98,000 grant aimed at expanding an existing program that links school cafeterias with local farms and ranches. US Department of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack said the 71 projects in

42 states and the District of Columbia serve 2.8 million students, 45 percent of whom live in rural communities.

Would you like a permit with your waffles?

The city of Roanoke is citing some homeowners who rent out rooms in their homes. A website, Airbnb (as in Air bed and breakfast) connects homeowners with extra space with visitors to the area who need an affordable place to stay for a day or two. The city's position is that these homeowners are in effect operating a bed and breakfast, even though most don't offer breakfast. The website does not require those listing rooms to offer breakfast. Homeowners who continue to rent rooms without a permit will be cited by the city and taken to court.

Compiled by Tom Field and Cathy Cooper

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

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Jim Shell is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Salem. He is co-author of the nonfiction book *We Were Pirates* and author of the forthcoming memoir *Where We Start From*. He is also a regular contributor to the Hollins Critic, and has published in a number of local, regional, national, and international magazines. [JGSerge@aol.com]

Samantha Steidle is owner of the Business Lounge in Roanoke. She has an MBA from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and has worked in TV advertising, marketing, education and small business counseling. [samanthasteidle@gmail.com]

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

Alison Weaver is a freelance writer based in Roanoke. She contributed to and was a staff writer at the Blue Ridge Business Journal throughout the 1990s before working as a copy editor at The Roanoke Times for 8 years. [alison.weaver03@gmail.com]



I thought, what's the big deal?

— Page 8

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