

Valley Business

# FRONT

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AND ALREADY ARRIVED

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

What began as a simple review of *the business of weddings* — no different than any other FRONT story we would do on any other industry — turned out to be rather revealing. A wedding (or more directly, a marriage) is pretty much the perfect microcosm you can apply to any business. You have the courtship (startup research, feasibility studies, merger or acquisition considerations). There's a promise that this whole new arrangement is going to work out (due diligence, contracts, long term plan). You have places to book, items to rent or buy, activities to schedule (preferred vendor status, traffic reports, service agreements). There's the guest list, showers, bride/groom parties, ceremony and reception (customer relationship management, SOP manuals, performance report). And then, of course, the post wedding—the thank you notes, honeymoon and the years (however many) that start on that very first day after your wedding (what essentially boils down to customer retention, the P&L statement, balance sheet, and annual report).

We don't mean to be crass, but the metaphor works. Truth is, weddings don't have to be sensationalized to be beautiful. And businesses don't have to be restricted to mere spreadsheets to be successful. Sometimes, you just need to throw a little rice. And enjoy the ride.



**Tom Field**

“”

Galleries and performers will provide  
a multi-faceted feast of culture

— Page 35

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Cover photography of William Mahone by  
 William Mahone Photography.

# Valley Business FRONT

P.O. Box 1041  
Salem, VA 24153  
(540) 389-9945  
www.vbFRONT.com

## Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

## Departmental Contacts

Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com
Subscriptions	info@vbFRONT.com
News / Releases	news@vbFRONT.com
Admin / Ops	info@vbFRONT.com

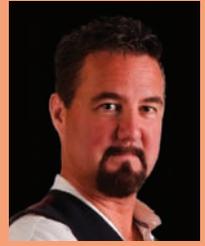
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# JUNE



Jeanne Chitty



Tom Field



Anne Piedmont



Samantha Steidle



Keith Wheaton

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 44.

## Editorial Advisory Board

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

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

# CONTRIBUTORS



Kathleen Harshberger



Rebekah Manley



Gene Marrano



Michael Miller



Kathy Surace



Angie Tabor



Nicholas Vaassen



Randolph Walker



Employees should be able to expect a work environment that operates on acceptance and inclusion

— Page 52

## 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.



Too many interesting details detract from the impact

— Page 20

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Editor's blog: [editrdan.blogspot.com](http://editrdan.blogspot.com)

# Saying, "I Do!"

## When Your Business is Weddings >

### Executive Summary:

*Weddings are big business in the U.S., and this region of Virginia is no exception, as small businesses are rushing down the aisle right along with them*

By Tom Field

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to celebrate the marriage of William and Tammy and Randy and Kevin and Beckie and Mark and Barbara and Marivic. Not to each other (though two of them *are* married and two of them *are* business partners). And not in some mass wedding for an internet posting contest (though all of them *are* online). Rather, this is a story about a wedding alright. But it is about the business of weddings. And in a very real sense, these individuals are quite attached to their businesses. For better or worse. For richer or poorer.

We have here a Cinderella story of seven businesses. Seven fairy tales if you will, of men and women working from down in the dirty ashes all the way up to the grand affair. They each play a part in servicing a wedding. In most cases, weddings account for more than half of their business activities. But what we found is—they love it. Amidst the nerves and hectic pace and overwhelming itineraries and in some cases, the *bridezillas*—the slice of the wedding cake these professionals have on the biggest day of a person's life is what it's all about. And they love it.

In *All Dressed in White: The Irresistible Rise of the American Wedding*, Carol Wallace sums up our fascination with that most noble celebration of getting hitched:

*This country has always supported the individual's attempt to make the most of him- or herself, and maybe in the end, getting married falls into that category. It certainly falls under the description of "the pursuit of happiness." No wonder we celebrate. And if the celebration is grandiose and commercial, exuberant and inclusive and larger than necessary, isn't that the American Way?*

And what is "larger than necessary," anyway? In compiling statistics reported by CNN Money, the Knot, Today.com, costofwedding.com and other sources, the average cost of a wedding in 2012 was around \$28,000. But there are just as many sources that appear adamant to say such "averages" are pointless. It all depends on who you are, what you want to do, and how you do it. Some authorities on the subject take great pleasure in pointing out the many ways a couple (or their parents) can reduce the costs. You can spend weeks reading about creative alternatives to the traditional or expected expenditures. And then of course, you have plenty of financial experts who instruct the couple on how to finance their dream.

If all those alternatives aren't enough to consider, there's always the posting from the young bride who brags, "how I *made* money on my wedding." Most revealing on her recommendations was her list of steps:

- #1 *Guest List*
- #2 *Person to Marry*

Find the richest people you know who will bring lots of money and presents. Then, you'll have to find a mate.

Whether it's \$28,000 or something a great deal less or more, there's a business that will take a slice of that in exchange for servicing the important event. We decided to showcase what it takes to service the life of a wedding; selecting just one "vendor" each. For each business you meet, there are a dozen others right there in the receiving line, waiting for you. In the Roanoke and New River Valley at least, there are a lot of businesses maintaining excellent credentials and reputations; so it was difficult to introduce only one for each area. Here are seven though, with passion, a following, and a proven track record.

We'll gladly be your escort. You can sit with the bride's family or groom's family—we're not picky.





**Marivic Gallimore, Elegance by Marivic**

## *1. Will You Direct Us?*

More than one of our businesses said having a wedding planner was a good idea. Whereas most of the other services you can contract for a wedding are easy to find, such is not the case for planners. There really aren't a lot of options in our region for a specifically dedicated or certified full time wedding planner. Perhaps that's why you often see the stressed "aunt" running around when something's amiss at a ceremony or reception that's not proceeding so smoothly.

Marivic Barbosa-Gallimore is the opposite of the overwhelmed aunt. The founder and CEO of Elegance by Marivic LLC in Blacksburg is certified by the American Academy of Wedding Professionals. But that's just the frosting. In addition to being a planner, Marivic also owns and operates NRV Bridals and Events, a nonprofit consortium of ancillary wedding service providers. The recently launched organization is a hub of all things related to weddings; and though it takes up most of her time right now, Marivic admits she looks forward to getting back to her more typical calendar of coordinating a dozen weddings a year.

"It's just my passion," says Marivic, in her reply to why she enjoys working in an environment which many consider to be high anxiety, particularly for the one person who's responsible for overseeing all the activities.

“ ”

We want to make  
the very best fit  
for your wedding  
— Marivic Gallimore

# COVER STORY

"I love elegance. I love being the very best to make your day the best day and most anticipated day of your life."

Marivic says she's more than a planner, her service is about helping people, and she knows she can be "a big relief for the day." Her business, operated on site and from her office at Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, includes the services of assistants, interns, a photographer, and a public relations specialist. As the administrator of NRV Bridals and Events, she also has the advantage of those resources, which include her own list of certified and preferred service providers in every imaginable capacity.

"We really are a 'one stop shop,'" says Marivic "And we want to make the very best fit for your wedding."

During a wedding, Elegance by Marivic has become very accustomed to hearing those three magic words: "Go get Marivic."

One person with all the answers or who knows what to do whatever the situation. A person who's not the bride or mother of the bride. That's the benefit of a wedding planner.

## 2. Will You Adorn Us?

Barbara Newton is bedazzled. More importantly, she knows how to glam up your wedding party, whether it is subtle and classic or a colorful glitz factor that just says,

**Barbara Newton, SoCrystal**



“ ”

Jewelry allows me to make someone who is already beautiful shine more

— Barbara Newton





"Yes, this is my day." An entrepreneurial sort, Barbara's online SoCrystal.com, featuring Swarovski Austrian crystal in mountings and styles for all tastes, has proven to be a bride's dream book. She also has her selection available at Sherman's Smithman's store in Christiansburg. Jewelers depend on weddings for a significant part of their business, especially between engagement rings and wedding bands. For Barbara, weddings account for well over 75% of her current clientele.

"I am the bling that women nowadays want to bring to the wedding," Barbara says, with quite a bit more enthusiasm than the stereotypical reserved jeweler peering over his bifocals and down his nose.

"Every woman knows Swarovski," she continues. "The lead in the crystal is what gives it the deeper shine."

SoCrystal.com may be a shiny site, but Barbara says her business is really about making the wedding shine.

"I love being a part of somebody else's dream; making someone's dream come true, to be a part of somebody's big day."

Barbara operates her business primarily through the website and networking. She says today, most people already know what they want; so her business is well-suited as a catalog of sorts. And yet, people still get the most excited when she tells them she has a new design. SoCrystal offers pendants and earrings and accessories to coordinate a bridal party or as individual pieces. The group purchases and collections are popular as gifts for the bridal party, as well.

"Jewelry allows me to make someone who is already beautiful shine more," says Barbara.

### *3. Will You Bring Us Flowers?*

For Mark Frye, weddings account for at least 50% of his business. He's been running Creative Occasions for nearly two decades, 13 years at his flower shop in Vinton. As owner, principal and designer, his jobs are all over the board, from small pick up packages to full blown events with lighting, linens and rental equipment.

But so much of a wedding comes down to the flower.

"I love it," Mark says. "I have a passion for this, and I believe you can tell I feel that way when you meet with me."

Mark's doesn't have a signature approach so much as he wants the attention to be on his customers' wishes.



**Mark Frye, Creative Occasions**

"In fact," Mark says, "I'm more flattered when people can't tell I did the flowers, necessarily. It's supposed to be all about the couple."

For Creative Occasions, the 24 to 36 hours before the wedding is the crunch time.

"It's all about the visual," Mark says. "I enjoy bringing that vision to life. From fun to formal, I like how this [business] allows freedom of creativity and how I interpret the couple's ques."

Mark says he is seeing a definite trend toward smaller, intimate weddings. His weddings are typically 75 to 100 people, but he manages flower budgets for 200 guests as well.

Another trend in his business is the increase in mature couple marriages.

Creative Occasions has nine people on staff.

"I want the wedding to be the most beautiful," says Mark.

“ ”

I enjoy bringing  
that vision to life

— Mark Frye



**Beckie Spaid, AmRheins**

#### *4. Will You Dress Us?*

If you have been to any social event in the Roanoke area over the past few years, chances are high you have seen Beckie Spaid. Being a socialite pays dividends when you're marketing a business that serves weddings. You're right in the mix of what works, what doesn't, what people like, and what they don't.

AmRhein's Brides & Formals is quite the happening "salon" for today's wedding party. As marketing director for the business (which also includes two separate "divisions" in fine jewelry and wine cellars) and its three locations (Roanoke and Salem stores, plus the Bent Mountain winery), Beckie is more than familiar with the scene. She says the formalwear business is busier than ever, between proms, homecomings and special occasions. But brides and bridesmaids are the majority of the shop's revenue stream.

The AmRhein's company history is deep, established as a family business in 1921. Since the company opened its formalwear division in the early 1990s, it has developed a broad selection of dresses and bridal gowns, including the exclusive Maggie Sottero line, which Beckie says is one of her favorites. The store also carries formal gowns, cocktail dresses and tuxedos. Along with the staff, Beckie says they find the best thing about the wedding business is the occasion itself.

"It's the happiest part of someone's life," Beckie says. "It's a day of joy, spent surrounded by friends and family. Everyone's happy."



It's the happiest part  
of someone's life

— Beckie Spaid

Beckie does offer a tip about that timeframe before the wedding, though; when you're picking out your dress, for example.

"Don't bring an entourage with you," she advises. "Everyone's got an opinion. Just bring one or two, a mother, best friend..."

That makes it easier to get to the part when you 'say yes to the dress,' Beckie quips.

## 5. Will You Host Us?

There seems to be more places to hold a wedding than ever before in our region. Wine vineyards beckon new brides with elegant photographs on their websites. Hotels and conference facilities showcase their specialized packages to entice new couples who want to give their guest white glove treatment. And there are private operators getting into the business, each with some specific amenity to make a distinction in the competitive arena. Not to mention the parks and natural outdoor settings of our Blue Ridge Region that even the calendar companies recognize as one of the top photogenic destinations in the world.

Even the local municipalities can capitalize on the action.

The Vinton War Memorial is a popular choice for brides

**Kevin Kipp, Vinton War Memorial**

“ ”

Everyone's needs, wants and visions are all different

— Kevin Kipp





and grooms who want that touch of elegance with a dab of convenience thrown in. Unlike a hotel with overnight guests and servicing other activities simultaneously, the Vinton War Memorial provides that sense that you have the whole place to yourself.

Facilities manager Kevin Kipp says weddings comprise "a huge portion of our annual revenue." The facility hosts about 34 Saturday wedding receptions or ceremony / receptions, plus another 35 to 45 mix of rehearsals, bridal showers or wedding-related events.

"It's steady, consistent," Kevin says about the wedding business at Vinton War Memorial. "We know there is a ton of competition; over 35 venues and lots of choices in our market."

Kevin says the staff works hard to keep consistent rates, and their real objective is "to play the role of a consultant."

"I like the diversity of clientele," says Kevin. "[The wedding business] allows for an entrepreneurial approach. Everyone's needs, wants and visions are all different. Our job is to help the client and facilitate a creative vision. We do formal to less formal events, and it's always fun, fresh and interesting."

The Vinton War Memorial is a clean and classic facility with the elegant touches of high-polish and attention to detail, along with pragmatic considerations, such as a large and convenient parking lot.

"It's a real asset to the town," Kevin says. "Coming from the hospitality business my entire career, it's nice having the support of a municipality; and [the arrangement] has contributed to a lot of the success, from access to solid infrastructure to the support of the community."

Staffed by employees of the Town of Vinton, the venue is managed by Kevin, operations/event coordinator Lauren Hodges, and part time cleaning and setup personnel.

## *6. Will You Feed Us?*

There is perhaps no other segment of the wedding / reception event with a higher chance of something going wrong than the catering. The caterer has to satisfy everyone with his product and service, while ensuring the bridal party is still the number one client. On top of the demanding work environment is that constant threat of what a simple mistake can do. One bad review can spoil a caterer's reputation, even if the mishap is rather inconsequential or outside of the company's control.

This unforgiving environment also works in reverse. Outperform other caterers or overdeliver on your contracted promise, and the praise is just as passionate. The husband-wife team of Plantation Creations Catering talks more

“ ”

No wonder we celebrate. And if the celebration is grandiose and commercial, exuberant and inclusive and larger than necessary, isn't that the American way?

— *All Dressed in White*





**Tammy and Randy Scaggs, Plantation Creations Catering**

about their customers than they do their services. Solidifying the company's reputation seems to be job one.

Over 50% of Plantation Creations' business is weddings. Owners Randy and Tammy Scaggs (who also operate Plantation at Sunnybrook, a restored 1913 house and dining and event venue) state their business is all about relationships.

"Our relationships are long lasting," says Tammy. "We become part of [our customers'] lives. Over 75% of our business is from referrals. We have to exceed people's expectations."

Tammy and Randy are also "locals" in the community, born and raised in the Roanoke area, with five children. Plantation Creations employs seven full time people, along with a roster of part time professionals, who assist with individual events and projects. Tammy is the "person out front," as Randy puts it, as he is a chef, spending most of his time in the kitchen. Randy also serves as the personal chef for railroad executives, traveling on the corporate train as they entertain high level clients.

"It's great satisfaction," says Randy, speaking about the wedding business. "We enjoy making an awesome, festive wedding, even though the environment can be uptight. It's an adrenaline pump; fueled by fear of failure really."

“ ”

We have to exceed  
people's expectations

— Tammy Scaggs



#### **William Mahone Photography**

Both Tammy and Randy says most people have no idea of the workload. Their businesses serves more than 50 weddings in a year, with the heaviest schedules in May, June, September and October.

"We just don't mess up," Tammy says flatly, with no tone of bravado. "Our job is to always come through. We're very hands-on; and we've grown every single year, even in the recession."

Plantation Creations thrives on rave reviews. Tammy and Randy claim that response is what their business is all about.

### *7. Will You Photograph Us?*

A lot of businesses can pack up and go home after the wedding. Plenty of them have already provided their service in full once the happy couple is riding off into the sunset, tin cans clanking on the pavement. But for the photographer, though many people see him running around shooting this scene and that composition on the wedding day as the primary extent of his service—the reality is he's hardly even started. For most jobs, the

“ ”

I have to be like a shark—always moving

— William Mahone

# COVER STORY

ringing of the wedding bells is more akin to the shot of a starting gun. If a photographer has 25% of his work done after shooting the last picture, he's lucky. For most professional photographers, the bulk of the work is before and especially after the actual wedding.

William Mahone is building a strong reputation as a top wedding photographer in the region. Although he's experience includes commercial work, the business of weddings accounts for the majority of his revenue for the past five years. Like the other wedding service providers, he talks about the emotional characteristics of the couple's big day, but it's obvious executing the business is always top of mind.

"I have to be like a shark," William says. "Always moving. Knowing where to be at the right time is most important. Time management is the most undervalued element of a wedding."

William says his approach is about "showing the picture as it actually was."

"Some photographers will show a couple at sunset where they are either silouetted or the opposite, they'll blow out the sky. I want to the photograph to be a representation of how people actually see it."

Sure enough, William Mahone Photography's portfolio lacks the overly dramatic, forced imagery, intentional posing, blatant special effects or trendy techniques you often see in wedding photography.

"I've been shooting since I was thirteen. My aunt once told me I have a natural ability for composition. I am mostly self-taught and have an eye for detail."

Given a choice, William says he really prefers the intimate weddings, but he works everything from the party of two at the Justice of the Peace (where he had to serve as the witness) to the 300 person wedding. He's photographed over 100 weddings and says he hasn't had a vacation for three years.

"If I won the lottery, I would still shoot weddings," says William. "I would have more expensive equipment, but I would still be in this business."

Many a guy or gal wants to say "I Do" to a wedding. You can build a business on those two words. 



## Sources >

Here's a list of the seven businesses for this FRONT profile on the life of one wedding.

- **Planner**  
[www.EleganceByMarivic.com](http://www.EleganceByMarivic.com)
- **Jewelry/Bridal Party Gifts**  
[www.SoCrystal.com](http://www.SoCrystal.com)
- **Florist**  
[www.CreativeOccasionsInc.com](http://www.CreativeOccasionsInc.com)
- **Gown/Formalwear**  
[www.AmRheins.com](http://www.AmRheins.com)
- **Venue**  
[www.VintonWarMemorial.com](http://www.VintonWarMemorial.com)
- **Caterer**  
[www.Plantation-Creations.com](http://www.Plantation-Creations.com)
- **Photographer**  
[www.WilliamMahonePhotography.com](http://www.WilliamMahonePhotography.com)

And don't forget the myriad of other enterprises that service weddings:

- **Decor/Linens**
- **Limousine**
- **Rings**
- **Cake**
- **Salon**
- **Entertainment**
- **Minister**
- **Counselor**



## Color in Menswear 2013 >

Menswear has long been an area where tradition is cherished. Fabrics and designs in menswear often remain fashionable for decades, and men seem to like it that way.

However, just when we've adjusted to the relatively recent trend in menswear of slim cut men's suits with narrow lapels on the jacket and flat front trousers with narrow pant legs – and accepted that there's a place for it among consumers—the fashion industry introduces bold new choices.

According to the Wall Street Journal, we can expect those slim suits to appear this spring and summer in pastels or rich deep hues of cherry-red, dusty lavender, and apricot – to name a few. For the man who wants to push boundaries, these suits offer a cutting edge alternative to the linen summer suit or the seersucker suit.

Certainly alternatives in menswear are always welcome. However, these suits are not for every man or every occasion. In most cases this trend is not for the boardroom, but works for a summer wedding or in a social setting.

The more extroverted man might embrace the pastel-hued suit, whereas an introverted man might be comfortable in the rich jewel tones that are slightly more colorful than their usual suits. To be comfortable, choose a color you usually wear but slightly more pastel or jewel-toned.

Men with big personalities or unusual looks can pull off a bold fashion trend more easily. The more reserved man or the man with classic looks may find that his personality and appearance are better showcased in subtler jewel-tone hues. Bright and bold is not always better. Trust your instincts.

Keep in mind, "A slim silhouette is important when you have bright colors," cautions, British designer Paul Smith. "Otherwise it gives the wrong look, like a uniform or a kitschy comedian."

To implement this look, keep other parts of your ensemble simple and understated. Wear a white shirt, a solid understated tie, and classic shoes. Let the suit color be the focus of your outfit; too many interesting details detract from the impact of your suit.

Like so many other seasonal fashion trends, the colorful menswear suit surely will fade from favor and be replaced by a new trend. However, while it's here many will attempt it. If you do, spend some time getting the look just right. The rest of us will appreciate it! 

## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**  
*Black, navy, tan and gray may no longer be the only option for today's professional male*

## Please Reply! >

If you've ever hosted or planned a corporate event, a wedding, a business meal, even a party at your house, this article will resonate. If you haven't, as you grow in your profession, you will undoubtedly be asked to plan or host an event.

RSVP is French. "Répondez s'il vous plait" means, "Please reply." It is a request to inform your host as to whether or not (note the not) you intend to attend. Nowadays the courtesy of responding to an invitation is, sadly, in decline. People are responding less and less, and this phenomenon is widespread. I have seen hosts, event planners and administrative assistants, stressed and frustrated because guests have not responded. If an event is a large business luncheon, and less than 30% have responded, what is one to do when the caterer is asking for numbers? Be aware that caterers have deadlines to order food and assign staff to an event.

In times gone by, people would respond to an invitation on personal stationery. They would "reply in kind" – in the style of the invitation. Today it is common to include response cards with an invitation, indicating a deadline for responding. Some are appalled by this – Miss Manners even calls response cards "horrid." Today phoning, texting, emailing, tweeting, LinkedIn and Facebook are all methods of responding.

### RSVP Etiquette:

- Respond in the same form as the invitation – telephone, email, e-vite, or a good old-fashioned written note.
- Don't give lackadaisical replies such as "I'll come if nothing happens" – tacky!
- Never ask who else is coming – rude!
- "Regrets only" means the host assumes you will attend, unless you say otherwise.
- It is rude to ask to bring a guest. If your host intended that, it would be on the invitation.
- You could say, "I'm so sorry, my college roommate is visiting" and allow your host to say "So sorry you can't attend" or "Do bring her along."
- May a single person bring a guest to an event? Only if the invitation says "and guest."
- May the host phone and ask for a response? Yes, rules of etiquette change to fit the times. It is now appropriate to phone saying something like "...my caterer requests a firm number by tomorrow..."

Remember, responding to an invitation in a timely manner is an effective way for you to project yourself as a smart, savvy professional. 



## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

**Executive Summary:**  
*It's simple really—when you're invited, you need to respond*



## Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

### Executive Summary:

*When starting a business you can start with a good listening session from others who succeeded*

## What you need to know when starting your business >

Are you planning to launch a startup? If so, others who've been where you are want to help. Here are a few insider tips from successful local businesses.

### Minimize risk

Founded in 1993, Roanoke-based Synchrony, Inc. is in the business of improving the performance of rotating machinery and power conversion systems. President and CEO, Victor Iannello, advises new startups to define their competitive advantages and its potential for sustainability.

"What can you do that nobody else can do as well?" says Iannello. "It won't be easy for someone else to replicate that."

Find out if the product you have to offer is both in demand and can be developed at a price point agreeable to customers, says Iannello. Invite a group of potential customers to a nice restaurant and get their feedback. Surveys work well too.

### Get advice

Working with a business advisor is a good idea, says Jay Foster, president of Soft Solutions, a data management firm founded in 1998 in Roanoke.

There are a number of ways to tap good advice for your startup. You can hire a coach or build an advisory board. Make a list of people you can count on for good advice on various aspects of your business.

Another way to give your business a boost is to join an incubator that supports the growth of various firms, as Soft Solutions did. Search the Internet for opportunities. You will likely need to apply for membership, especially if government funds support the project.

Companies that emerge from incubator projects tend to show higher success rates than average.

### Achieve long-term success

MB Contractors, based in Roanoke, celebrated its 100th year in style in 2012, with record earnings of more than \$71 million. An emerging demand for construction gave the firm a boost.

Todd Morgan, president of the contracting firm, advises

startups to consider staffing issues they're likely to encounter: "Be aware that your team will change. Not everyone will 'catch the vision' you have. Look for team players that want to grow with you."

In other words, it pays to hire the right people. Therefore, have a good idea of who those people are. Also, the right person for your company might need a bit of training. It's worth it to invest in the right person.

Make sure each employee understands his or her unique role in the company, says Morgan. Define roles and responsibilities clearly. Finally, make sure your customers "catch the vision" with branding that truly reflects you. Externalize your vision, says Morgan, and you can win customer trust.

To learn more lessons from local CEOs, check out the video interviews on [YourCEOAdvice.com](#). 

*Samantha Steidle is a consultant building entrepreneurial ecosystems and coworking spaces. Visit [RoanokeBusinessLounge.com](#) to learn more.*



There are a number of ways to tap good advice for your startup. You can hire a coach or build an advisory board. Make a list of people you can count on for good advice on various aspects of your business.

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



Randy Walker

The Laymons look to the Bible for guidance

## Consultants consulting the Good Book >

### Executive Summary:

*Increasingly, investors want their portfolios to match their world view; evangelical Christians included*

By Randy Walker

Is mixing business and religion a bad idea? Not only is it not bad, it has been a positive windfall for Rick Laymon.

Laymon is president and CEO of Beacon Wealth Consultants, Inc., one of Virginia's leading companies in the growing field of biblically responsible investing (BRI).

"We serve primarily affluent evangelical Christian clients," he says. "They, like us, really want to integrate their faith values

with how they handle money. We screen their investment portfolios so that they are neither profiting from nor supporting things which are contrary to their faith, namely the abortion industry, pornography or other anti-family causes.”

BRI differs from socially responsible investing, which typically appeals to social liberals, whose values may not align with those of evangelicals.

The term was coined in 2004 by Laymon's friend and colleague Dan Hardt. The concept has been around a long time under labels such as faith-based investing and morally responsible investing, says Hardt, a financial advisor based in Kentucky. “In my mind none of [those terms] really hit the nail on the head. We want to be morally responsible, but where do those morals come from? We realized the foundation of all of this was the Bible.”

BRI accounts for about 5 percent of the investment counseling market in the United States, Laymon says. Within that sector, Beacon is a sizable player. “In our world I believe we are the fifth largest. There's only about 50 firms in the country that specialize in a similar way as we do.”

Laymon started in a large, traditional firm. “When you work for a big firm you really are limited in what you can advise clients.” In 1997, Laymon founded Beacon Wealth Consultants in Florida. In 2000 he moved to Roanoke, where he has an office in Old Southwest.

At an industry conference in Chicago, Laymon met Cassandra Chandler, then owner of Wealthcare Solutions, a New Jersey investment counseling firm.

Like Rick, she had started in a large, traditional firm. “They always would tell you never mix politics or religion with business, so I had never talked to any of my clients about it,” she recalls.

She's now Cassie Chandler-Laymon.

Cassie splits her time between Roanoke and New Jersey, where her son lives. Rick has two children. The family attends St. John Lutheran Church in Roanoke County.

In addition to merging their personal lives—they married in 2012—they merged their businesses. He owns 88 percent of Beacon, she owns 12 percent.

Rick, 43, and Cassie, 44, are both certified financial planners, and also hold the Qualified Kingdom Advisor designation, which is recognized within the biblical investing world.

It's not difficult to find companies that “you can be really proud to own,” Laymon says. These are companies that “value their employees, their customers, their shareholders, their vendors, creating products and services that make the world a better place. We are proactively seeking companies that are on a mission to create positive value in the world.”

The Wall Street crash actually worked to Beacon's advantage, Laymon says, because “we weren't part of the problem.”

“It's been very easy to differentiate ourselves in a challenging market. The value of independent, objective, values-based advice has risen dramatically.”

Beacon advises around 200 clients in Southwest Virginia, typically age 45 or older, with more than \$250,000 to invest. Clients pay a flat fee or percentage, as opposed to a commission.

In addition to the Roanoke office, Beacon has locations in Lynchburg, Richmond, Florida, Ohio, and New Jersey (two offices).

Beacon is growing—fast. An office is planned for New York City. Revenues have doubled since the 2008 crash, and “by the end of this year we're on track to triple revenues,” Laymon says. 



Randy Walker

Elizabeth Wilmer and Robert Sandel of Virginia Western: “This is huge for us,” says Wilmer.

## Unintended consequences of the Affordable Care Act >

### Executive Summary:

*How many hours you work makes all the difference when it comes to health care benefits and the new regulations*

### By Randy Walker

Community colleges across Virginia are scrambling to respond to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, signed by President Obama in 2010 and upheld (mostly) by the Supreme Court in 2012. Although the act is intended to expand health care coverage, one unintended consequence is that many adjunct or part-time faculty members will have their class schedules and income reduced, while still not qualifying for employer-provided health coverage.

One provision of the new law requires employers with at least 50 full-time employees to provide health benefits to employees who work 30 hours a week or more. How does this apply to adjunct faculty, who are typically contracted by the semester credit hour, rather than hours per week?

The law is having a huge impact at Virginia Western Community College. “This past semester we had 315 adjunct instructors,” says college president Robert Sandel, “plus about another 90 full-time faculty members; 60 percent of our credit hours are taught by adjuncts. Adjuncts make this place go.”

“There is a lot of dispute as to how many hours a week a credit hour equates to,” says Elizabeth Wilmer, interim vice president of academic and student affairs. “And the reason for that dispute is, it’s not just time in the classroom that has to be counted. The IRS has said it’s time in the classroom plus preparation time. That’s the dilemma we face—what is the definition of the number of hours

per week per credit hour. Once we have that answer it will be easy for us to schedule, and that's a national question, not just a Virginia question. We really don't know and that's why we've had to go ahead and make our decisions."

Pending clarification, Virginia Western has decided to limit adjunct faculty to six credits in the summer term and nine credits in the fall semester. "That was a conservative decision that would put us in a good position with this law," Wilmer says.

To make up the shortfall in teaching load, Virginia Western will probably hire more instructors, including some full-time positions at an associate instructor rank, Wilmer says.

"This is a good thing because these folks will receive benefits and everything else," Sandel says. "We'll take a lot of these adjunct positions and squeeze 'em into these full-time positions."

However, the new positions may only accommodate 50 of the 315 adjuncts. Sandel acknowledges that "a lot of adjuncts are distraught that their hours are being cut. That's their paycheck."

Compensation for adjunct faculty at Virginia Western varies depending on faculty rank—assistant instructor,

instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, or professor, from a minimum of \$595 per credit hour to a maximum of \$1,256, according to the college website.

While a few adjuncts may get full time positions, "the trend in higher education is in the other direction," says Brian Turner, co-chair of the committee on public affairs for the Virginia Conference of American Association of University Professors.

The law isn't having much impact at New River Community College. "We already have a practice in place of having adjuncts teach a maximum of nine credit hours per semester," says Mark Rowh, vice president for workforce development and external relations.

But many other colleges are affected, as well as other employers with at least 50 full-time employees. "A lot of them are taking a close look at whether they can rearrange their work force," says Heman Marshall, an attorney with Woods Rogers. "Employers are looking at how to balance and rearrange employee hours."

Sandel says Virginia Western supports the Affordable Care Act. "But the dilemma for us as a state agency is, we can't afford to pay the fringe benefit of health care for this large number of folks." 

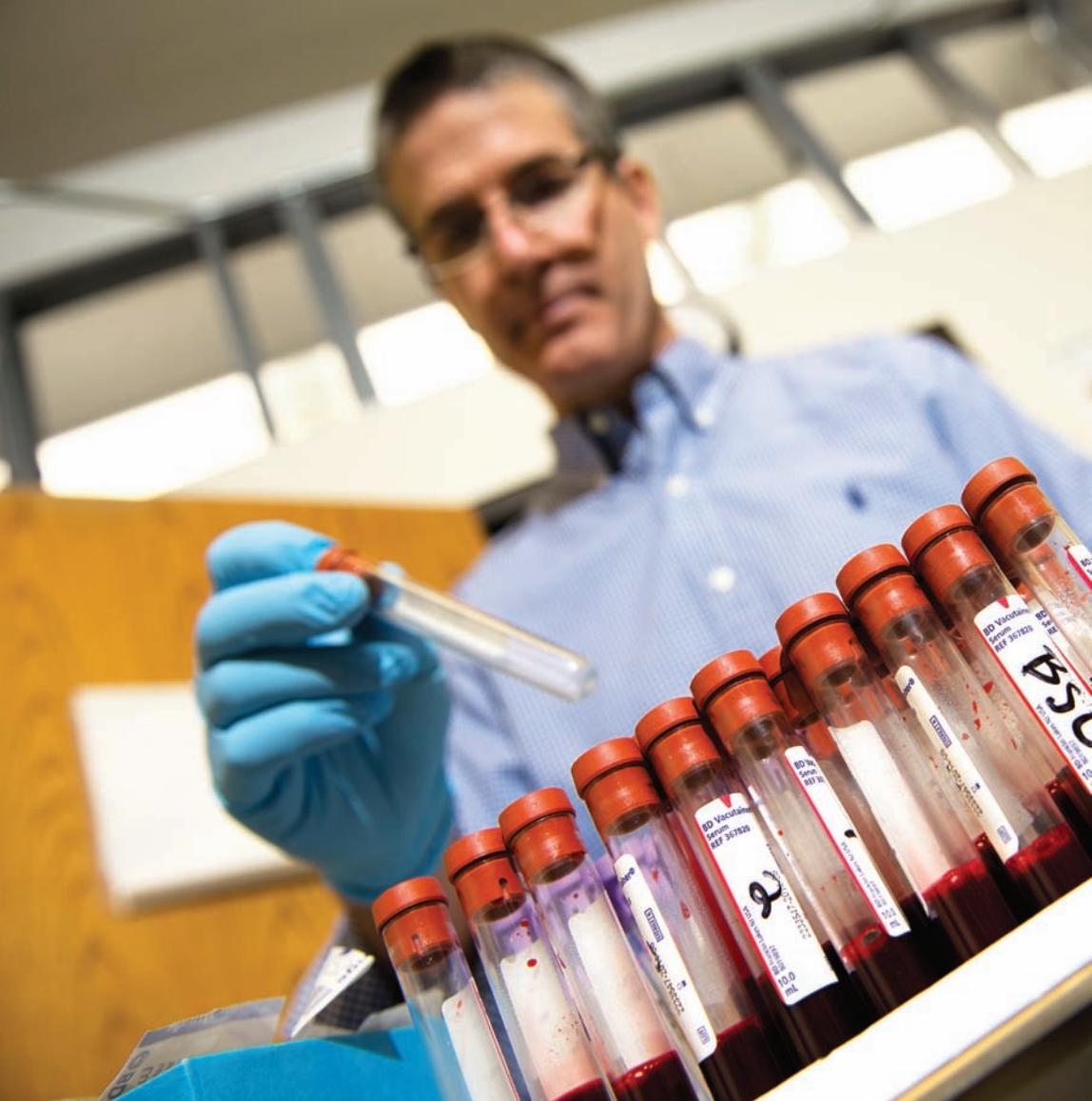
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Kevin Davy prepares blood samples

## New obesity study center opens at Virginia Tech >

### Executive Summary:

*The Fralin Translational Obesity Research Center at Virginia Tech gets to study about one third of the U.S. adult population*

### By Jeanne Chitty

Obesity – it's a huge problem that affects more than one third of the world's population. Despite the \$35 billion fitness industry and the plethora of weight loss

television shows, weight control eating programs, and body-centered publications, the more than 150,000 fast food stores and millions of vending machines continue to lure consumers into loading up on calories, sugar, fats, and sodium that satisfy their hunger pangs temporarily but which may lead to permanent health issues. A few extra mouthfuls here, another snack there... they can pack on the pounds and tip the scales from being merely overweight to being obese. Unbalanced nutrition, lack of exercise, genetics, and the stress of contemporary life can add up to a broad spectrum of serious diseases that increase one's chances for a shorter life full of unpleasant complications.

On the global and national scenes, the World Health Organization and the National



Franklin Translational Obesity Research Center

Institutes of Health are concentrating on the epidemic of obesity, examining its relationship to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, different types of cancer, and numerous other conditions. Here in Blacksburg, researchers at the Fralin Translational Obesity Research Center at Virginia Tech are dedicated to uncovering the complex biochemical, psychological, nutritional, and physiological bases for obesity. Kevin Davy and Paul Estabrooks are the co-directors of this unique center, which received formal approval last December. They coordinate the collaborative efforts of several dedicated teams and about 20 investigators from Virginia Tech and Carilion Clinic.

"We study the causes and consequences of obesity across the translational spectrum

from the level of molecules and cells to public health and policy," says Kevin Davy. "Consider these statistics: About one third of American adults are classified as obese. In the past 30 years obesity rates have doubled. During that same period, overweight rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents. Our center's goal is to improve health and well-being across the country and to design and implement effective treatment programs for obesity prevention."

Some of the members of the center who are engaged in interdisciplinary research include Brenda Davy, associate professor of human nutrition, foods, and exercise, and Richard Winett, professor of psychology. They are studying the role of resistance training in diabetes prevention. Earlier this year funding for a study of how interactive technology can prevent diabetes was granted to Fabio Almeida, associate professor of human nutrition, foods, and nutrition; Richard Seidel, associate professor, department of psychiatry at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine; Wen You, associate professor of agricultural and applied economics; and George Davis, professor of agricultural and applied economics.

The connection between obesity and diabetes is essentially simple, but its mechanisms are complex and cause multiple conditions. Although there are numerous genetic and physiological syndromes that precipitate obesity, most people who have become obese constantly consume more calories than they use. Matthew Hulver, associate professor of human nutrition, foods, and exercise, is teaming up with Kevin Davy and Madlyn Frisard, assistant professor of human nutrition, foods, and exercise, to investigate how overeating a high-fat diet can inflame muscle cells and alter metabolism. Being physically inactive and overweight, combined with high blood pressure and having an immediate relative with diabetes can put someone at an increased risk for diabetes. "Prediabetes



**Muscle biopsies used in research**

and insulin resistance can be reversed by following a healthy diet, increasing one's activity, and losing weight," says Kevin Davy. "Doing so will reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease."

The consequences of obesity are certainly grave. More than 285 million people around the world are impacted by type 2 diabetes. Cardiovascular disease kills 75% of all diabetics. Obese men face the possibility of cancer of the colon, rectum, and prostate, and women have an increased risk of cervical, uterine, and breast cancer.

Hypertension, high cholesterol, lung problems, ovarian cysts, kidney stones, gallstones, gout, genetic disorders, and osteoarthritis lurk in the distressed cells of the obese. Kevin Davy states, "Here at the center we are turning basic science into practical applications. One of our goals is to educate our communities about the consequences of obesity and the benefits of healthy diets, reduced calorie intake, and exercise." He and his collaborative teams at the Fralin Obesity Research Center will make a large-scale contribution to health and lifestyle improvement, one cell and one pound at a time. 

# Priorities of survival

I still find myself thinking about things I learned in this course. Things like how the key priorities of wilderness survival correlate directly to both my business and personal situations. The facility is amazing, too, and extremely conducive to a fun learning retreat.

– Dayna Patrick  
Realtor, RE/MAX All Stars





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## Tech Scoop

### Resistance is futile >

#### Executive Summary:

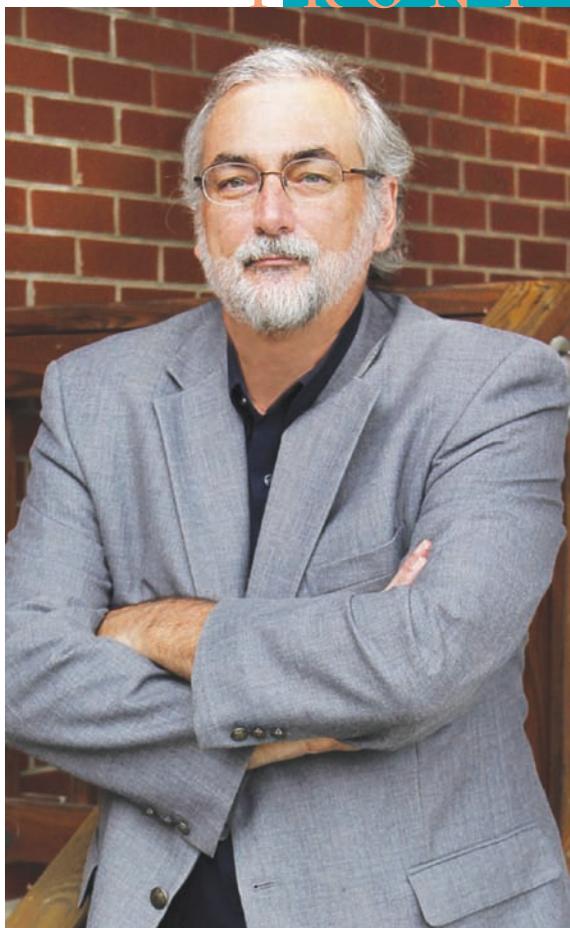
*Infection detection as a first move is superior to immediately prescribing conventional antibiotics*

#### By Michael Miller

Dr. James Heflin, professor of Physics at Virginia Tech, had a dilemma. His 18-month-old daughter had an infection, and the pediatrician believed it was a particularly nasty strain of bacteria called methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, more commonly known as MRSA. The doctor didn't think it wise to wait three days for the results of a culture to confirm the diagnosis, so she admitted the child and began to treat her with one of the few available antibiotics for MRSA. Eventually the culture results confirmed the diagnosis, and the treatment was successful.

This story has a happy ending, but antibiotic resistant bugs like MRSA are an increasing problem. MRSA is commonly found on the skin of healthy individuals, but can enter the bloodstream through a cut or scrape. Most healthy people can fight off the infection with their immune system, but if they are weakened in some way, the bacteria can be deadly. MRSA and other bacteria have an amazing ability to mutate and become resistant to antibiotics, making them a significant threat to the population.

Heflin's dilemma was that if the infection turned out to be something other than MRSA, three days of treatment with the unneeded antibiotic could have contributed to further antibiotic resistance. MRSA can only be treated with a couple of antibiotics now, so removing any from the arsenal is a very bad idea.



Michael Miller

Luckily Heflin's research interests included some cool combinations of polymer science, antibodies and optical technology to develop a sensor that could very rapidly detect the presence of bacteria like MRSA. The process provides a way for capturing the target bacteria on the surface of a tiny optical fiber that has been specially developed to make it sensitive to contamination. By using special polymers to create a thin coating on the fiber, tiny changes in electromagnetic energy inside the glass can be detected, and therefore the presence of very small amounts of bacteria can be determined.

A local tech company provided funding to build a laboratory prototype instrument which Heflin's research team is using to test the idea. If it works, the sensor will eliminate the need to wait days to confirm the presence or absence of a particular bacterium, like MRSA, and unnecessary and potentially dangerous treatments can be avoided. 



all photos: Jeanne Chitty

**Aaron Ewert**

## Fixing up Riverside >

### **Executive Summary:**

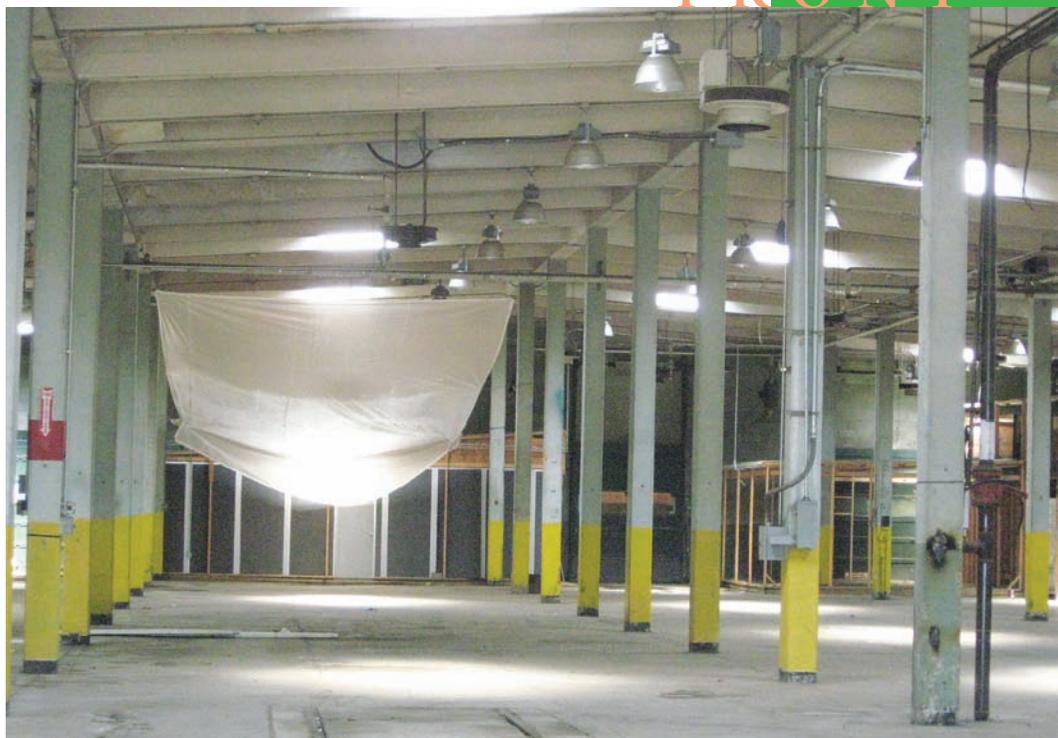
*South Jefferson redevelopment project will redefine Roanoke River as Aaron Ewert and team tackle derelict buildings and property*

### **By Jeanne Chitty**

You can't help but be excited by project manager Aaron Ewert's infectious enthusiasm as he describes his company's plans for turning 22 acres of land dotted by abandoned industrial buildings into Roanoke's newest redevelopment project. Located across from the Virginia Tech Carilion Medical School, the Riverside Project is a huge multi-faceted development that spans the area from the corner of Reserve Avenue along South Jefferson Street to the Walnut Avenue Bridge and six acres beyond. Masterminding this project are Aaron's father, former Roanoke City Manager Bern Ewert, and Roanoke attorney Bill Rakes, who had established their own company called Roanoke River Associates. They are now partnering

with principal Jason Vickers-Smith of the WVS Companies and Lyall architect Burrell Saunders, which designs and constructs large-scale mixed use real estate projects such as Rocketts Landing in Richmond and Belmont Bay in northern Virginia. The team plans to break ground sometime in late spring or early summer on its \$100 million undertaking, initiating a decade-long revitalization of this unused land and 100,000 square feet of industrial buildings.

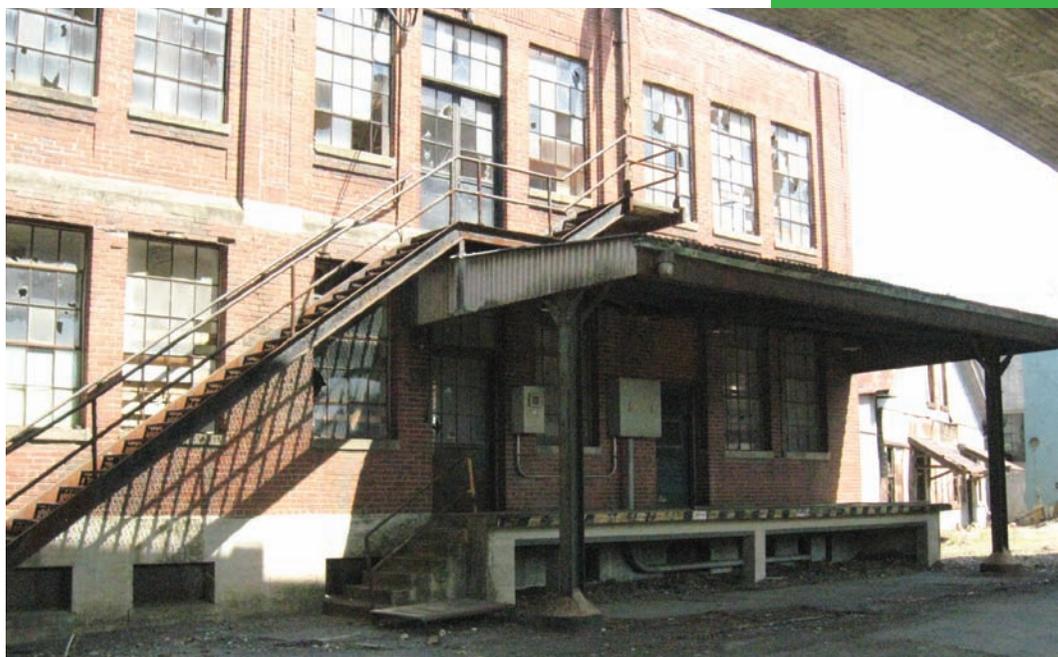
An old mill and scrap yard once occupied the area across from the Medical School. The only reminder of this bygone era is a century-old brick building, which the developers are planning to convert into a coffee shop and restaurant that will maintain the charm of the building's rough brick walls and enormous wooden beams. Along with this renovation in the project's first phase will be a five-story 156-unit apartment building with underground parking, and a long pedestrian promenade that will follow the river. "We are excited about redesigning this space into an urban village, with all of the amenities that people could need. It will be a great place to live under the star, to enjoy dining, entertainment, and exercise right on the river, and to be so close to the downtown scene," exclaims Aaron. "Eventually, we will construct a building



attached to the front of the apartments, where we'll put in retail stores and offices on the street level, so our residents will have the convenience of shopping right at their doorstep."

The next step in the development will be the construction of a greenway ramp that

will connect under the Walnut Avenue Bridge to the already existing walkway below. This will provide access for pedestrians to the river area, as well as to the old trolley barn and warehouse buildings. "These enormous structures will be renovated for new purposes, but we'll still keep the beautiful old iron beams





and many elements of their industrial past," says Aaron with his typical verve. "The old trolley barn is just perfect for a micro-brewery and a gym. Opposite the building right at the base of the bridge, we're thinking of building a kind of Spanish steps, where people can sit and enjoy themselves while eating or watching their children play in the courtyard, where

we'd like to put in a programmed multi-jet fountain. There are other buildings in this area, such as the Virginia Bridge and Iron Works, that could be converted into art galleries, clubs, and performance venues."

Once the area's renovation is underway, the developers will work on connecting the various buildings and activity areas



with walkways and landscaping. Last summer the Roanoke City Council awarded the developers \$10 million for this immense public improvement project. An additional two million dollar grant will be devoted to upgrading the new neighborhood's streets, as well as other infrastructure. Aaron mentions, "We're very grateful for the help that we've received from the City, Curtis Mills at Carilion and Bill Barringer of the Norfolk Southern Railway. Their input has allowed us to energize our project." These economic boosts will establish the Riverside Project as a hot destination for a broad spectrum of visitors, residents, retailers, and business owners. It will offer easy access to the Appalachian Trail and will attract more people to the river and greenway. A wide variety of dining and entertainment options will be available. Galleries and performers will provide a multi-faceted feast of culture. The free trolley connects the Riverside neighborhood to the original footprint of downtown Roanoke, and visitors will have easy access to parking and the highway. To further

enhance its appeal, Aaron envisions additional improvements to the river area near the Honeytree Early Learning Center. "Not only are we going to work hard to clean up the river, but we want to put in a launching place for kayaks and canoes – and maybe even a beach!" the visionary young developer states.

The Riverside Project will be an important statement about the versatility and imagination at work here in the Valley. The dynamic interaction between the developers and the city is exciting in its farsighted plans to reboot the dormant potential of a derelict portion of land. Aaron sums up the overall attraction of the project by creating an acronym for the area's amenities. "What we're providing for residents and visitors alike is the CRATE – which stands for culture/caring, recreation, art, technology/tourism, and education, all wrapped up in a healthcare setting." Clearly, the Riverside Project is a huge present just waiting to be opened and enjoyed. 





Gene Marrano

**Shane Spikes: "We're just kind of a local company."**

## Your Local Vendor >

### **Executive Summary:**

*The vending business has come a long way, and Deli-Matic's Shane Spikes stays on top of that ever-sliding shelf*

### **By Gene Marrano**

Named in January as president of the Virginia Automatic Merchandising Association (VAMA), Shane Spikes and Deli-Matic competes for clients in a corporate world that includes nationwide vending companies. Deli-Matic, headquartered in a Salem industrial park, delivers food, snacks and drinks to corporate cafeterias and break rooms, stocking traditional vending machines or, more recently, self-service kiosks and unmanned convenience stores where customers pull items off shelves and out

of coolers, scanning and paying for them.

There are more healthy products on the menu these days and the vending machines are more complex. Credit card readers are replacing cash in many cases.

Spikes is able to monitor stock levels at the micro marts after an item is scanned; he can also look in on customer sites via his computer and mini-cams installed there. He sees a shift away from machines to many of these markets in the next 5-10 years. "It adds that familiarity," says Spikes, noting that there's also less risk of losing money in a machine that doesn't drop its product.

Deli-Matic prepares many of its food items—Spikes says one of the employees makes a "great egg salad." Being a smaller company with its own kitchen, Deli-Matic also has the ability to deliver prepared foods that clients request. Trucks often roll out in the dead of night and the clients with higher employee counts may be restocked on a daily basis.

Clients don't pay for the machines, which are placed there by Deli-Matic. The company services the machines and supplies coffee to some clients as well. They got out of the school vending business because of the seasonality and tightening restrictions on what could be sold. School officials also wanted them turned off during the school day.

Spikes won't say exactly how many employees and trucks Deli-Matic has, but maybe that's just his competitive nature. He was the shortstop for a Glenvar High School baseball team that advanced to the 2003 Group A state championship game, then played for renowned coaches Abe Naff (Ferrum) and Larry Wood (also his Glenvar coach) at Roanoke College. Both are members of the Salem-Roanoke Baseball Hall of Fame.

Spikes' Roanoke College Maroons jersey hangs on his office wall. He just retired from adult league ball last year and sticks to golf these days. You can't beat the name Spikes for a baseball player, of course. "That's what everybody always says," he chuckles.

Other vending companies and food/drink distributors are also members of VAMA, which partners with similar trade groups in the Carolinas and puts on a yearly joint expo. Not much has changed over the years regulation wise, although vending companies may be required to display calorie and nutrition information in the near future.

That legislation is not in place yet. Cigarettes of course can no longer be sold in vending machines, but that happened "a long time ago," says Spikes. He started as a treasurer for VAMA, rose to Vice-President last year and is now the top officer.

There are not as many smaller, independent vending companies as there used to be. Spikes says Deli-Matic could expand but has chosen not to. "We're

## In Brief

<b>Name:</b>	Shane Spikes
<b>Age:</b>	28
<b>Business:</b>	General Manager, Deli-Matic. The 34-year-old company supplies food, snacks, drinks and vending machines to corporate clients from Botetourt to Blacksburg. Spikes' father Jimmy started the business and is still the company president.
<b>Location:</b>	Salem
<b>Background:</b>	Spikes attended Ferrum College for two years before finishing up his degree in business administration at Roanoke College. He became more heavily involved as a college senior.
<b>Business Philosophy:</b>	"Do what you say you're going to do. That's always been our philosophy. It really reflects on my family as far as what happens out there."

just kind of a local company." Many of the employees have been with the business for "a long, long, time." The retired shortstop has found a new way to stay in the game: "it's definitely a competitive business [and] there's always something new. That's what I enjoy about it." 



Gene Marrano

One of Deli-Matic's sandwiches being prepared.



all photos: Randy Walker

**Michelle Belton**

## Senior care with the emphasis on care >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Companion HomeCare mirrors its senior care service on a family model—a daughter watching out for her mom or dad*

**By Randy Walker**

Michelle Belton had an idea for a senior-oriented business with a unique twist: geriatric home care focusing on companionship,

quality of life and housekeeping, rather than nursing and therapy.

Business peers at a networking meeting shot down the idea. “Oh, you’ll never make it in this business if you don’t do medical,” they told her.

Ten years later, Belton has 12 full-time and six part-time employees, and business is growing. “I stood by my business model and my ideals and proved them wrong,” she says as she drives to a client’s house in her new 2013 Subaru.

Belton, 45, is the owner of Companion Home Care, Inc., headquartered in downtown Roanoke. Her target market is seniors who have typical age-related frailties, but don’t



**Michelle Belton (right) with client Joe Carr. Companion-homemaker Brenda Fleisher looks on.**

require intensive medical support. "I'm focusing on social, emotional and mental aspects of growing older, in addition to daily living," she says.

Belton, from Clifton Forge, was previously in the jewelry business. She opened Companion in 2004. She got the idea for her business as a Meals on Wheels volunteer, when she saw the care seniors were receiving, and thought she could do better.

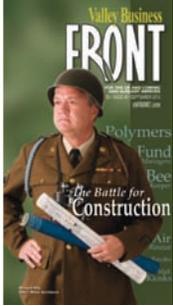
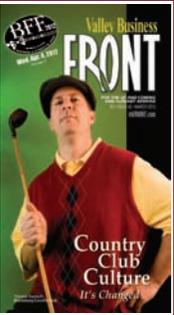
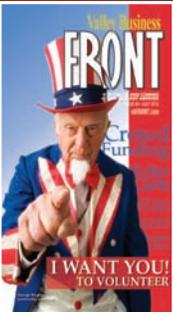
Clients—90 percent are women—may receive care anywhere from four to five hours a day three days a week, to 24-hour care in the case of hospice patients. Many remain clients until the end of life. Belton refers to nursing agencies when needed.

Belton charges \$20 per hour. She accepts private pay and also handles billing for long term care policies, many of which include homemaker riders.



SOLUTIONS START **HERE.**



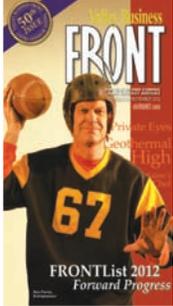


# Coming Up...



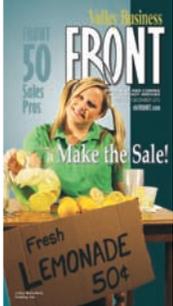
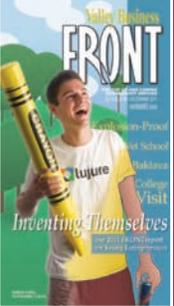
## July 2013 Festivals

Is our part of Virginia becoming the party capital? Isn't there a festival every weekend? On a recent weekend in downtown Roanoke, you had three simultaneous festivals to choose from, mere blocks from each other. Heck, the serious party animal could attend all three. As fun as the festival scene is, each one takes a lot of work. Our July edition takes a look at the people behind the scenes. From municipalities to private enterprises to the intermingling of both (where one contracts from the other) producing a festival is no different than running any business. It just seems like fun and games when the mission statements are all variations of the same two words: "Let's Party."



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Michelle Belton outside a client's house

Belton's employees are called companion-homemakers. They wear khakis and polo shirts with sunflower logos, rather than nursing scrubs. "I like it to look like a family member's coming in to help," she says, and also doesn't want to give the false impression that her employees are nurses.

All of her companion-homemakers are women, as both male and female clients prefer to be taken care of by women. Employees are typically age 50 to 60.

Her "girls" are employees rather than 1099 subcontractors "because it makes me completely responsible for them," she says. "It absolves a company of any liability if they are employing 1099 subcontractors. I wanted total control over my business. I wanted to schedule security and stability in the homes, which you can only do with an employee."

Companion-homemakers provide cooking, cleaning, transportation, assistance with bathing, medication and refill reminders, communication with family members and assistance with socializing. Potential clients realize they need help "when their life at home starts to present safety hazards," she says.

One of her clients is Joe Carr, 87, an IBM retiree who lives at Smith Mountain Lake. Carr says about his companion/homemaker, Brenda Fleisher: "She's the chief cook and bottlewasher and the nicest girl you'd ever meet."

Companion-homemakers often take clients out to eat. "Socialization combats dementia and depression," Belton says.

In addition to improving quality of life, "this keeps clients from being prematurely put into a facility," Belton says.

Carr's daughter, a newspaper editor in Miami, found Belton's website ([www.companionhomecareofva.com](http://www.companionhomecareofva.com)) after an unsatisfactory experience with a previous caregiver. "A lot of my clients' families find me through the internet," Belton says.

Carr's daughter, like many adult children of aging parents, isn't able to provide daily care herself. Carr and Belton's other clients "do not require medical care, they require hiring a 'daughter,'" Belton says. "They need help getting in and out of the shower. They need someone to cook for them. They need someone to make the beds. They need a homemaker. So I liken this to hiring a daughter." 



all photos: Angie Tabor

**Founder and director of Salem Montessori School, Valerie VanderHoeven, in front of the Montessori bead board. A Montessori philosophy is that when children are surrounded by beautiful things they'll want to learn.**

## Exploratory Learning during your first twelve years >

**Executive Summary:**  
*Salem Montessori School sees value in self-paced education experience and multi-sensory techniques*

**By Angie Tabor**

In 1986, Valerie VanderHoeven, founder and director of Salem Montessori School, was a student working towards an early education degree when she first discovered the Montessori method of teaching in

Berkley, CA. The Montessori approach to learning inspired her to earn her certification through the American Montessori Society. Now in 2013, she oversees two Salem campuses of 148 children and 40 staff members.

"I love children. We only have one childhood. It's the most vital time," VanderHoeven said. "If you can meet a child's needs they will grow to be a fulfilled adult."

So, what is a Montessori school? It's a private institution that follows the principals of teaching and learning founded by educator Dr. Maria Montessori a century ago. The idea is to allow children to learn at their own pace in an active learning environment, explore through multi-sensory

techniques and avoid the monotony that's regularly found in traditional classroom settings in both public and private schools. The Montessori method also believes that everything a child puts in their hands is learning based.

Imagine a classroom where as your child solves math equations by playing with colorful Montessori glass beads, simultaneously another student learns science by planting a garden, while another explores art through painting. Among other incredible learning experiences are weekly martial arts and dance training. Salem Montessori School offers children, from infancy to the 6th grade, an education that is exploratory, independent, creative and tactile.

VanderHoeven assures that her school is

"authentic" Montessori. "Any school can carry the Montessori title but they may not be true to the Montessori teachings and methods," she said. You won't find her students stuck at a desk all day staring at a whiteboard.

All lead teachers are certified by the American Montessori Society. Vander-Hoeven oversees a staff of 42. She divides her time between the infants to 3-years-old campus on Roanoke Boulevard and the 3-years-old to 12-years-old campus on Corporate Boulevard, both located in Salem.

Infants and toddlers receive just as much guidance and one-on-one attention as the older children. There is a 4 infants to 1 teacher and 5 toddlers to 1 teacher cap. Lots of focus is on language development, control of movement and



Two boys from the 3-years-old to 6-years-old class wash plates and cups. All students use are responsible for cleaning up after themselves when snack time is over.

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**ENTRÉ**

# CONTRIBUTORS

**Jeanne Chitty** is a freelance writer in Roanoke with extensive corporate experience in the fashion and retail industries. She has worked as a creative director, project manager and account executive. [jeanne.chitty@gmail.com]

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

**Kathleen Harvey Harshberger** is a graduate of Radford University and the Protocol School of Washington. She conducts seminars in business etiquette, international business protocol, and dining skills. She has an international clientele in business, government, and higher education. She is a certified Protocol Officer. [harshbergr@aol.com]

**Rebekah Manley** is a Roanoke-based freelance writer and a graduate of Hollins University. [rebekahannmanley@gmail.com]

**Gene Marrano**, a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, is a journalist in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Roanoke This Week with Gene Marrano" on Fox Radio 910). [gmarrano@cox.net]

**Michael Miller** has worked with intellectual properties and technology innovation. His consulting company is Kire Technology. With more than 25 years as an inventor and technology consultant, working with Fortune 500 companies and startups, he screens businesses for the World's Best Technology Showcase and mentors tech startups through Development Capital Networks and the

National Science Foundation. [mbmiller2@gmail.com]

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

**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]

**Kathy Surace** is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain

for a number of years. [kssurace@aol.com]

**Angie Tabor** is a graduate of Hollins University. She is a former staff writer for the Salem Times-Register and has won two awards from the Virginia Press Association. [atabor@hollins.edu]

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

**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]



[the freelance economy] has become a new way of life for many people — Page 58

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exploring. "It's a very nurturing and peaceful environment," VanderHoeven said.

The children are not just Salem residents but come from other counties and various socioeconomic backgrounds. "Our school is for all children. Whether a child is advanced, has learning difficulties or physical delays, every lesson is fulfilling. It meets the needs of the child," VanderHoeven said.

Lesley Steedly, education director, has been with the school for two years. Both she and VanderHoeven encourage curious parents to attend a monthly Open House or take a tour of either location. "We have vision and a high standard school," Steedly said. "It starts with a deep respect for the child." As for tuition costs, VanderHoeven suggests interested parents contact the school as tuition can vary depending on a child's age group and length of stay at the school.



**Founder and director of Salem Montessori School, Valerie VanderHoeven, poses with some of the children who attend her school.**

This year Salem Montessori School plans to celebrate its 20 year milestone. VanderHoeven is proud to see how far her school has come. Anniversary plans are still in progress. The staff and students are looking forward to the event and more extraordinary learning experiences. 



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Town of Blacksburg

**Blacksburg residents use the Huckleberry Trail for commuting as well as recreation, says town manager Marc Verniel.**

## Greenways: Highly valued amenities >

### **Executive Summary:**

*Ask anyone who has walked, biked, jogged, strolled (or supported) any one of the expanding greenways in our region and you get the same response: "I love it"*

**By Randolph Walker**

When planners started laying out the Roanoke Valley greenway system in the 1990s, they adopted a 12-foot width, which seemed adequate for the expected traffic. Now they're not sure it's wide enough. "It's a good problem to have," says Phil Schirmer, Roanoke city engineer.

In the Roanoke and New River valleys, greenways are growing. They're contributing to quality of life, and may even be boosting property values.

The Roanoke Valley greenway program was established as a partnership between



Dan Smith

Liz Belcher

Roanoke, Salem, Roanoke County and Vinton, which formed the Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission in 1997. Some 26 miles of greenways with bicycle/pedestrian trails have been built in the Roanoke Valley, according to [www.greenways.org](http://www.greenways.org).

The still-uncompleted Roanoke River Greenway, the centerpiece of the Roanoke Valley system, could eventually stretch from the Montgomery County line to the Franklin County line. The project has cost \$30 million so far, including those parts already finished as well as money awarded for sections not yet built, according to Liz Belcher, Roanoke Valley greenway coordinator. In Salem and Roanoke County 80 percent of the money has come from federal or state grants, while in Roanoke, federal and state funding accounts for about 50 percent with local government contributing 40 percent.

Walkers and cyclists might someday travel all the way to Botetourt County. "We would like to eventually tie into the Roanoke regional greenway system," says Pete Peters, Botetourt's director of parks, recreation and tourism. The county has been working with the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission to develop a comprehensive trail plan.



Town of Blacksburg



Randolph Walker

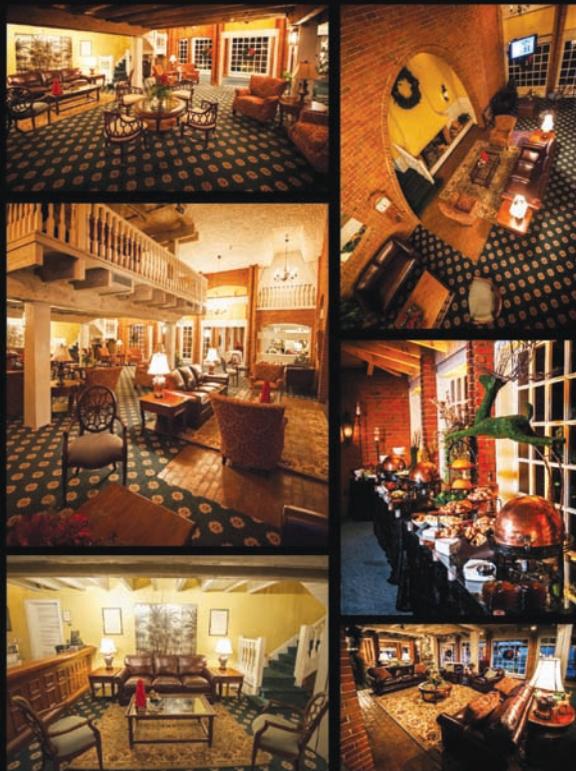
The Roanoke River Greenway in Wasena Park

Plans are afoot in the New River Valley, as well. Christiansburg is working on extending the Huckleberry Trail, and Blacksburg is working on spurs that eventually will connect the Huckleberry to the Jefferson National Forest, says Marc Verniel, Blacksburg town manager.

It's hard to imagine Blacksburg without the Huckleberry. "We have a pretty active population here in general," says Verniel. "It's an expectation that these types of amenities are provided here."

Whether they're walking to work or just walking, users are improving their health. Steve Buschor, Roanoke's director of parks and

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recreation, points to research from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "From a health perspective, for every dollar we spend on establishing greenway paths and trails, the community is recovering four dollars in medical cost avoidance."

The trail that leads to cardiovascular health also leads to economic benefits.

Objectives from the Roanoke Valley's 1995 greenway conceptual plan include using the greenway system as an economic development marketing tool, using greenway linkages to complement and enhance tourist attractions, and increasing the value of land that lies contiguous to a greenway.

"We see the benefits," says Botetourt County's Peters. "It improves the quality of life for residents, and number two, it draws traffic. The Roanoke region is making a name

for the outdoor assets we have, and we want to be a part of that."

Buschor refers to the "proximate principle," which states that homes near green space increase in value. "People want to live near a green edge. The beautiful thing about greenways is they're entirely edge. Ultimately what we will see in our community, and we're starting to see in our community, you're seeing neighborhoods redeveloped, houses restored, people putting on decks overlooking the greenway. We're seeing people reinvesting in these homes. I think ultimately we will see an increase in real estate valuation over time."

"When we started this, we had a lot of NIMBY folks," says Schirmer. Now, Belcher notes, when people advertise their houses on the greenway, "they put the for-sale signs in the back instead of the front." 



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## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*Personal ambitions tend to support public good when it comes to a community's bragging rights*

## Cheerleading Camp >

Hey kids, it's time for summer cheerleading camp. Yay. This year's program is better than ever. Whether you're already part of the squad, super talented, or you're intimidated by the very sight of a pom pom and the only split you'll attempt is a banana one, you really don't want to miss this year's camp.

Even with the lack of funding, our camp is a strong one. In fact, we believe the shortage in an operating budget may have produced our best program ever, with more promising results. People have stepped up to take on the challenge. We're going to have a winning season. And we're going to look good doing it.

I am proud and excited to introduce you to our instructors.

First, we have our returning instructors. These are the coaches who know the ropes. They're tried and true. They know how to keep us in formation. It is my pleasure to welcome back our assistant coaches from the chambers of commerce, the economic development departments and other related municipal units, and the tourism and visitors bureaus. It's the mission of these cheer experts to assist you, provide you with resources, and show you techniques so you can be the best you can be. Let's give it up for these professionals.

And now, I'd like you to meet a few of our new instructors. They're not really new, but they're taking on the role and we're looking at them in a whole new way. They're passionate. They're inspirational. They bring energy to our team. And attention to our game. Good people.

People like **Mary Miller**. The Queen of regional promotion. The owner / president of IDD, Inc in Blacksburg has her hands full enough running a business in one of the most competitive industries—and yes, she has a special interest in all things technology. But Mary is way more than the technology council. She clearly loves the Roanoke-New River Valley region, and you hear it every time she speaks. The very essence of a cheerleader, but the kind with extra credibility and integrity and heart you'll listen to, even when she doesn't have a megaphone.

There's **Bart Wilner**, another technology company owner. The Entre Computer president serves on the visitors bureau, and is the kind of guy who dresses for the part—figuratively and literally. Bart's smooth and calming voice is what talent scouts look for, and whether it's for Hollywood or Madison Avenue, the whole southern hospitality demeanor works quite well for Virginia's Blue Ridge.

And we have yet another cheerleading expert from the technology sector. **Bonz Hart** is already legendary for show-

casing the Roanoke Valley as a great place to work. The founder / CEO of Meridium is a master of employee recruitment. Bonz reminds everyone how important the sense of “place” is. Your job, quite simply, is a spot in the community. The more attractive that community is, the more it enhances your vocation. Isn’t that what a cheerleader does? Build up the energy around the team and the crowd and the game to enhance performance. Of course Bonz wants the stadium itself to sparkle, too. All the better.

In addition to our three stalwarts from the industrial / commercial enterprise side of the equation, we have equally enthusiastic leaders from the special interest and project development camp.

**Samantha Steidle** is heating up the scene on the entrepreneurship / startup sector. (Full disclosure: Sam’s a recently acquired FRONT contributor.) Samantha’s passion is the entrepreneur and everything that surrounds an individual who’s building on a dream. She confided that she never wants to say anything negative about our fair city, even if it is in the tiniest regard. She acts as if this is the greatest place on earth, and she’s convinced Roanoke never gets enough credit. That’s some serious pom pom shaking.

Speaking of building on a dream, **Ed Walker** is everybody’s favorite cheerleader who you never see grandstanding, but you always see his results. The developer snatches up projects and turns the derelict into the darling. It’s as if he’s the cheerleader both the players and the home team crowd look to when the score is not favorable and you just need that extra push to move ahead. You get motivated when Ed does a cartwheel. Everyone likes to see that.

Our most unconventional cheer coach for this year’s program is **Jason Turner**. Operating what began as a side-interest blog, his *Roanoke Doesn’t Suck* enterprise has morphed into quite the sensation.

Jason says the purpose of his digital outlet is to promote all things Roanoke. His brand would have some people think he’s targeting a younger generation, but the content (especially the popular Facebook postings) are worthwhile for anyone with a vested interest in the area. An average cheerleader might have difficulty with the “We Don’t Suck! How ‘bout You?” cheer, but Jason has the crowd on its feet.

There are more cheerleaders than you think in southwestern Virginia.

You don’t have to be a cheerleader. You may not even like cheerleaders. The very word may conjure up notions of fluff and fakery and pretense in your mind. You might even believe the idea of a promoter is undignified in some way.

But a place can die, dry up, fade away, and become rather irrelevant without enthusiastic support and genuine advocacy. If it makes you feel better, substitute

champion for cheerleader.

Because that’s what these people really are who rally to build up our community. They’re champions in every sense of the word. Championing

our state, our region, our towns, our neighborhoods, our businesses, our people, and our very way of life. Apparently, there are some of us who don’t really see anything special going on. There are even some high level leaders who make a point to push that agenda into the mainstream. We’re not special, they say with great authority and a highbrow wisdom that supposedly enlightens the uninformed. If we think we’re building or improving or bettering ourselves on our own merits, that’s a bad thing.

I don’t get that.

When people think that where they live is special—you can tell. When my children finish school and go off into the world to seek their fortunes, they may or may not settle into this little pocket of Virginia. But they will always know it’s special.

Give me a “Y.” Give me an “E”.  
Give me an “S.” What’s that spell? 



There are more cheerleaders than you think

# Guest Commentary

By **Keith L. Wheaton**  
and **Kianna Davis**

## Executive Summary:

*With attention to diversity, a company can realize successful market relations and a competitive edge*

The modern business environment has entered a critical period of change. Minorities are moving into the majority, new generations of workers are entering the workforce, and companies are rushing to be more inclusive of underrepresented groups. Adapting to social and cultural changes must begin with top executives and must be supported by all areas of the firm, especially human resources. Recruitment, hiring, and training processes must effectively highlight the inclusion of employees from all sociocultural backgrounds. Eliminating tension over diversity issues by installing a system of inclusion will place more focus on the well-being of the organization, and will foster a more collaborative and innovative workplace.

Corporations in the DiversityInc Top 50 – PricewaterhouseCoopers, Procter & Gamble, AT&T – treat diversity as an asset to their success. Efforts to promote diversity are important both within the company and in the surrounding community. Including unique perspectives from a diverse group of employees may lead to more effective community outreach and a higher customer retention rate.

According to DiversityInc, fifth-ranked Procter & Gamble ties performance bonuses of top executives to diversity results. Commitment of top executives is essential to the success of any diversity program implemented within a company, so that employees at other levels will

## Diversity in the Modern Marketplace >



Tom Field

**Keith Wheaton**



A company must adapt to social and cultural shifts in order to be competent in modern markets

follow suit. Opportunities for networking, mentoring, and philanthropy may also attract and retain talented employees who offer unique contributions to the workplace.

The bottom line is that a company must adapt to social and cultural shifts in order to maintain a successful business and to be competent in modern markets.

Employees should be able to expect a work environment that operates on acceptance and inclusion. By emphasizing a commitment to diversity, a company can capitalize on the unique knowledge, skills, and abilities of a diverse employee base, as well as the support of customers from a variety of geographic locations, cultures, family structures, and age groups. 

*Keith L. Wheaton is president of JBT Media/Wheaton Consulting, Inc.; Kianna Davis is marketing manager with Wheaton Consulting.*

## Letters

### Preserve to Play

Thank you for the excellent article on the Roanoke Regional Partnership ["Recruiting Outside," May 2013] and their efforts to market the Roanoke region's outdoor amenities. Beth Doughty and Pete Eshelman have done a fine job. I would add that it's not enough to promote the natural wonders that Roanoke has to offer; you have to protect them as well. That's where the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy comes in.

Since 1996, we've permanently protected more than 16,000 acres of land and 34 miles of streams around Roanoke from urban sprawl and overdevelopment, including Carvins Cove Natural Reserve, Mill Mountain Park and parts of Roanoke County's Read Mountain Preserve. It's our job to make certain that Beth and Pete have something to sell to potential employers and entrepreneurs. Hats off to all involved in this collaborative effort!

**David C. Perry**

Executive Director  
Blue Ridge Land Conservancy  
blueridgelandconservancy.org

### Memory-Maker

What a privilege to have been led by this man along my journey....from his seat on the Kirk Family YMCA corporate board, to memory-making hikes along the AT, John B. Williamson III is a class act and true gift to this community.

A book could be written about him, but great job in this piece ["The Disappearing Executive Desk," April 2013].

**Pam Rickard**

Roanoke

### Godspeed, Mr. Smith

I wish you much joy and success in your new venture (Dan Smith). You have been a great friend of writing and writers in the Valley, and I deeply appreciate that. "You mean a hell of a lot to me" goes both ways. God bless.

**Bill Cochran**

Catawba

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

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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](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com)

### Time for SciFi

*Clockwork Phoenix 4* (Mythic Delirium Books) is an anthology compiled and edited by Mike Allen of Roanoke, an arts reporter for a local daily newspaper. Mike's off time is filled with writing tales from the dark side. His first novel is due out this summer.

This anthology defies genre, offering bits and pieces of SciFi, horror, paranormal and more, while a vein of plain creepy runs throughout. Having cut my reading teeth on Hans Holzer and Stephen King, I couldn't have been happier devouring this new collection.

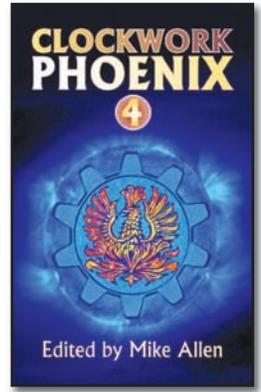
That said, I didn't love all of it; I'm not the biggest SciFi fan, but my favorite was "Lesser Creek: a Love Story" for it epitomizes the collection. It is a ghost tale full of perceptions, misconceptions, assumptions, deep feelings and unquenchable hunger. Eighteen times the anthology offers a drink to appease the thirst of wanton readers, succinctly and precisely.

— Heather Brush

### Warrior

There probably aren't many people left who know that John Steinbeck, one of the three or four best novelists of the 20th Century, was a war correspondent in every war from WWII to Vietnam. The new collection *Steinbeck in Vietnam: Dispatches from the War* (University of Virginia Press) is a collection edited by Thomas E. Barden, a University of Toledo English Professor will give you an idea just how good he was at this kind of writing.

Don't expect an anti-war tome from Steinbeck, who was working for Long Island's Newsday newspaper in the late 1960s, when he was 64



years old and a towering literary figure. He was hawkish on American involvement in Vietnam and I'm certain he annoyed many in his intellectual circle, but his dispatches—regardless of what you think or thought of the war—are pure Steinbeck: wonderfully wrought with impeccable craftsmanship and solid journalism. Suspend what you know and what you believe about Vietnam and immerse yourself in this small volume. It is a worthy journey.

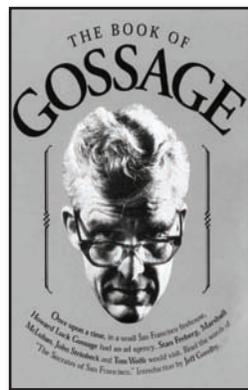
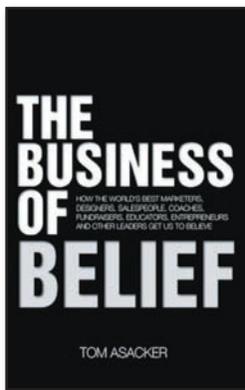
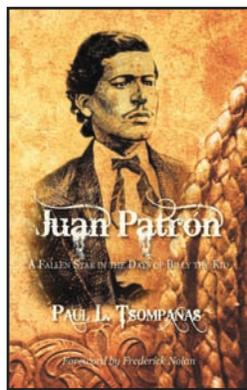
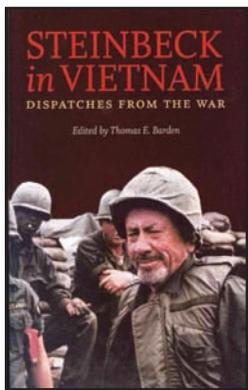
—Dan Smith

### Shoot'em Up

"They say it is very healthy here / None, scarcely, die a natural death / They don't have much opportunity / There is too much lead in the air."

"Too much lead" appears to be a fair description of conditions in New Mexico, during the famous—or infamous—"Lincoln County War" of 1878, which put a period to the life of a remarkable man, Juan Patrón, of that County. And present-day researcher and author Paul Tsompanas has followed the intricately interwoven leads to create an absorbing account of that long-ago conflict, between two rival factions who settled their differences by means of Colt and Winchester.

In *Juan Patron: A Fallen Star in the Days of Billy the Kidd* (Belle Isle Books) the author, who has served as senior staff member to a Congressman, and later became an award-winning reporter for newspapers in California and New Mexico, has put together a fascinating story, full of detail and hair-raising episodes, featuring, among many others, the sad criminal path of William Bonney, "Billy the Kid", whose 21 victims equaled the years of his misspent life. This is a well-written, well-edited book, inclusive of many useful maps and illustrations, definitely worth a reader's interest, especially those seeking



tales of the great Southwest, where men were men, and all too often, became young corpses.

—Richard Raymond, III

## Lead to Believe

"Great leaders of all stripes make it ours by making us feel that we are at the center of things," writes Tom Asacker in his newest book, *The Business of Belief: How the World's Best Marketers, Designers, Salespeople, Coaches, Fundraisers, Educators, Entrepreneurs and Other Leaders Get Us to Believe* (CreateSpace). Understanding and empathizing with your audience's beliefs in order to connect effectively is at the core of this important business book.

The Business of Belief is another short read (128 pages) like his other best sellers, *Sandbox Wisdom* and *A Clear Eye for Branding*. To explain the complex concept of belief, Asacker broke his book up into three parts: Part 1—What They Know, Part 2—What They Do, and Part 3—What You Can Do. Within, he vividly illustrates what belief is, how it is created and how, as a leader, you must gain it's insight to be effective.

My favorite part was that each brief chapter is intelligent and can stand alone. I found myself putting the book down several times to dwell on thought-provoking ideas. If you are interested in becoming more influential, this is the book for you!

—Kimberly Kolb Eakin

## Smart Ad Scapbook

With the plethora of biographies on advertising legends, the likes of Ogilvy, Bernbach, Burnett, Lois and Reeves, it scares the heck out of me that interested and vested parties might miss out on Howard Gossage. From a purely philosophical or

intellectual perspective, there isn't a mind rising any higher than Gossage's understanding of the industry. "The Socrates of San Francisco" may have slipped under so many radars simply because the man just wasn't around that long, less than 20 years in the ad business. *The Book of Gossage* (The Copy Workshop), compiled by Bruce Bendinger, should be required reading by ad professionals; certainly if you're going to read the other masters.

I see Gossage as more akin to Mark Twain than Socrates; his self-deprecating humor is mesmerizing. He doesn't mind pointing the finger at his own industry when needed. The copywriter who created a big stir from his small firehouse agency during the *MadMen* period had a genius, cultish following from folks like John Steinbeck and Tom Wolfe, who would visit his shop. Who could resist insights like "Disimprovement [is when you] make things worse by trying to make them better. I like to imagine a better world where there will be less, and more stimulating advertising. Nobody reads ads...people read what interests them, and sometimes it's an ad. I don't know how to speak to everybody, only to somebody." And perhaps my favorite: "The chances of an outstanding advertisement coming from anything but a creative dictatorship are so slim as to be negligible. The best ads are almost always traceable to one man."

—Tom Field

(The reviewers: Heather Brush is an artist and freelance writer. Dan Smith of Roanoke is working on his first novel. Richard Raymond, III of Roanoke is a retired engineer and writers club member. Kimberly Kolb Eakin is an entrepreneur, small business advocate, pistol shooter and wine connoisseur. Tom Field is an entrepreneur, FRONT publisher and programs chair of AAF Roanoke advertising club.)



## Forks, Corks and more >

The Blacksburg Partnership's annual **Fork & Cork** wine festival was definitely sold out as a huge crowd packed the First & Main shopping complex on April 27. In addition to the vineyards showcasing their wines, the event included food, music, art, dance and entertainment, as well as a mix of artisans and vendors such as the Oil & Vinegar booth above.



## Speak Up >

**Shari Harley** entertains the crowd at **Roanoke Regional Forum** on May 13. The author of *How to Say Anything to Anyone* and popular speaker told the audience of business professionals and students that the people you work with should know what you consider to be a deal breaker, and what you do and do not enjoy. Oftentimes we don't discover those beliefs until it's too late (i.e. employees resign; customers leave).



## After 5 in Salem >

Salem's Farmers Market is the gathering place for **Salem After 5**, a summer concert series held on Fridays. The band Domino kicked off the 2013 season on April 26; with upcoming events planned May 31, June 28, July 26 and August 16.



## Mining for Vinyl >

The **Roanoke Music Collectors Show** was held April 27-28 at the Ramada Inn, where enthusiasts packed the room at times, searching for treasures (mostly old albums and 45 records from all genres). Organizer Greg Neal said this was the second show for Roanoke.

## Spinning to Stop >

A garden of pinwheels is displayed by **Children's Trust Roanoke Valley** at the Colonial Avenue roadside portion of the arberetum at Virginia Western Community College. "Pinwheels for Prevention" is in recognition of April's Child Abuse Prevention Month.



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

# The Freelance Economy >

By Anne Piedmont

A 2011 article in The Atlantic (<http://bit.ly/11Sx8Jw>) called the rise of the freelance economy the “industrial revolution of our time.” Also dubbed the “creative class” by Richard Florida, senior editor at The Atlantic (among other things) and an expert on the subject, it has become a new way of life for many people.

Whether by circumstance or choice, 4.2 percent of the workforce in the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas finds itself self-employed. For some, it may be a temporary sojourn; for others, a new lifestyle. Someone toiling away on a computer in the guest room or tinkering in a metal shop in the garage might be creating the next big thing. They are risk-takers and they’ve given up job security and employer-funded health insurance and retirement for more freedom.

The percentage of workers over the age of 16 who are self-employed in their own not-incorporated business is lower in our region than that of Virginia (5.0 percent) and the United States (6.5 percent). The percentage of freelancers also varies significantly among the region’s cities

and counties, from a high of 8.1 percent in Giles County to a low of 3.0 percent in Radford. (A future column will explore in more depth the industries and occupation where freelancers work at the city and county level.)

The overall percentage is identical across both MSAs, but variations exist between the two for both the occupations and industries (according to the 2011 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates).

**Total Self-Employed in Own Not Incorporated Business**

Botetourt County	4.9%
Craig County	4.3%
Franklin County	7.2%
Roanoke County	4.2%
Roanoke City	4.5%
Salem City	4.2%
<b>Roanoke MSA</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
Giles County	8.1%
Montgomery County	4.1%
Pulaski County	4.5%
Radford City	3.0%
<b>Blacksburg MSA</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Combined Region</b>	<b>4.2%</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>5.0%</b>

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The percentage of workers within industry classifications shows slight variations between the Roanoke and New River Valleys, according to the 2011 ACS Three-Year Estimates. The Blacksburg MSA has a higher percentage of freelancers working in Construction. The percentage of the self-employed working in Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Mining is highest in the Roanoke MSA.

## Workers by Industry Self-Employed in Own Not-Incorporated Business

Industry	Blacksburg MSA	Roanoke MSA	Region	Virginia
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, Mining	19.9%	22.2%	21.4%	21.6%
Construction	20.7%	11.9%	13.9%	8.6%
Manufacturing	0.2%	1.2%	0.8%	1.1%
Wholesale Trade	0.0%	2.7%	2.2%	3.1%
Retail Trade	1.7%	1.4%	1.5%	3.2%
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	4.6%	1.9%	2.5%	5.4%
Information	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	2.4%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	9.4%	3.9%	5.3%	5.4%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administration, Waste Management Services	10.7%	12.0%	11.6%	7.7%
Education, Health Care, Social Services	1.5%	1.9%	1.7%	2.8%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodations, Food Services	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%	3.3%
Other Services	17.2%	16.0%	16.3%	14.3%

Shifting to the occupations of the self-employed, the region tracks fairly closely to the state averages.

## Workers by Occupation Self-Employed in Own Not-Incorporated Business

Industry	Blacksburg MSA	Roanoke MSA	Region	Virginia
Management, Business, Science, Arts	3.4%	2.8%	3.0%	3.9%
Services	5.6%	9.2%	7.8%	8.2%
Sales, Office	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%	3.2%
Natural Resources, Construction, Maintenance	12.2%	9.5%	10.3%	10.5%
Production, Transportation, Material Moving	2.7%	1.9%	2.2%	3.7%

The demographics within the freelance economy serve as another reminder that there are differences within the broad region, local conditions and traditions that affect how people work and live.



Michael Leigh

## Lessons in leadership >

**Executive Summary:**  
*Mike Leigh helps leaders improve and get lean.*

**By Rebekah Manley**

Imagine leaving a career to help people grow theirs. Last year, former Navy man Mike Leigh left a 13-year career with General Electric to start Leadership Resources. As owner, 46 year-old-Leigh assists with the micro and macro challenges of business.

On the micro level, he helps people achieve goals in both their personal and professional lives. His results-driven approach helps business leaders make long-term changes in their attitudes and behaviors. These improvements contribute to both office

and home life. Leigh says, "I started my business because of my deep desire to help people be more successful on a more personal level. People and organizations have an unlimited potential to make of themselves whatever they choose, and I want to help them tap into that potential." This personable process requires strategy. For example, Leigh could zero in on delegation, strategic planning, productivity, time-management improvements or client satisfaction strategy. "It all depends on, and starts with, the needs and goals of each client, and ensuring they get a measurable return on their investment. In some cases, the goals themselves are not even clear, so we lead our clients through a process to help

them identify what is truly important to them," says Leigh. For example, if a business is struggling with retention of key employees, Leigh might lead the team through a development process to improve their satisfaction and engagement with the company.

On the macro scale, Leigh is a Lean Consultant with Kaizen Healthcare Innovations, LLC. The "Lean" term means exactly what it sounds like; cutting bits down to a healthy size—essentially streamlining. This continuous improvement strategy is derived from Toyota's manufacturing philosophy. It's most common in manufacturing, but it is also becoming popular as a strategy in healthcare and government as a way to reduce waste and cost and provide better service to customers.

Leigh served as Lean consultant in GE's Energy business and applies that knowledge to healthcare by helping patient care reduce errors and wait times. Lean also supports physicians and employees by eliminating

wasteful activities. "This allows them to focus more on providing care," says Leigh. He recognizes municipalities, like healthcare, are also challenged with providing better service for less. Lean assists with those challenges. For example, lean reduces and eliminates wasteful activities such as running around, searching for supplies, excessive paperwork, etc. and allows providers more time with patients. Additionally, lean improves turnaround times of operating rooms, hospital beds, and expensive diagnostic equipment to help eliminate the need for costly expansions.

Like the strategies he employs, Leigh is "leaning" down his life. He searched for what truly mattered to him, family and helping others, and made essential cuts to serve the source. Last summer, GE announced a corporate restructure that eliminated his position. He had several opportunities to stay with GE in a different role. Leigh realized, "none of them would be as gratifying as my previous position unless I was willing to relocate again or increase my travel, neither of which I was willing to do." His family moved 12 times in 17 years and he explains, "When we fell in love with Roanoke upon arrival in 2007, we immediately decided this is where we wanted to stay." With his new business, he can honor that decision and avert travel. Rooted in Roanoke, this multi-marathon and Iron Man competitor, will not become stagnant. Along with growing his business,

## In Brief

- Name:** Michael (Mike) Leigh  
**Age:** 46  
**Business:** Kaizen Healthcare Innovations, LLC Leadership Resources  
**Location:** Roanoke  
**Background:** Raised near Green Bay, Wisconsin and pursued engineering at Milwaukee School of Engineering. After college he served 10 years active duty in the US Navy, followed by 10 more years in the reserves where he retired as a Commander. After active duty, he had a 13-year career with GE Energy as a manufacturing leader and lean consultant. His family has moved 12 times in 17 years, so when they fell in love with Roanoke upon arrival in 2007, they immediately decided this is where they wanted to stay. Now, he strives to serve more in the community, and more directly help other leaders through two businesses.  
**Philosophy:** Success is achievable to anyone who first sets worthwhile goals, and then relentlessly pursues them.

Leigh joined Kiwanis club and will pursue volunteer firefighting in Roanoke County. 

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million to  
**\$71** million  
in annual revenue



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# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



Roark

**Holly Roark** has been appointed as vice president and office manager of First Bank & Trust Company, Lynchburg office.

**Tom Floyd** has been named vice president of real estate at Member One Federal Credit Union.

**Mary Ann Bowen** has been promoted to manager of Scottrade, Inc.

**Adam Peters** has joined Greystone Financial Group as a financial services representative.

**Adam Alexander** has been named business banking relationship manager

for SunTrust Bank, Western Virginia.



Fitzwater

**Norman V. Fitzwater** has been elected to the National Bank board of directors, Blacksburg.

## LEGAL FRONT



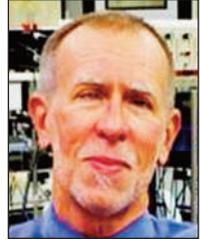
Hale

**Heather Hale** of Woods Rogers has been installed as president of the 2013-14 president of the Virginia Legal Professionals Organization.



Shaw

**Amanda E. Shaw** has joined Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore as an associate attorney, medical malpractice group.



Wyeth



Miller

## WELLNESS FRONT



Tyson

**Charlotte Tyson**, R.N., MBA, has been appointed chief nurse executive at LewisGale Regional Health System.

The Edward Via College of Osteopathic



Perry

Medicine (VCOM) - Virginia Campus has promoted **Dr. Richard Wyeth** to associate professor; hired **Michael Miller** as senior innovations officer; appointed **Eryn Perry** to administrative director for research;

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Reilly

promoted and awarded tenure to **Christopher Reilly, Ph.D.**, professor.

The Carilion Clinic Foundation has hired **Betsy Whitney** as annual giving officer; and appointed **Abney S. Boxley, III, Nicholas C. Conte, H.E.(Buddy) Derrick** and **Cynthia Lawrence** as new



Whitney

board of directors, joining existing board

## Have a career announcement?

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

chairman **Warner Dalhouse** and members **Nancy Howell Agee, Robert G. Bennett, George B. Cartledge, Jr., Robert Fralin, James A. Hartley, David Herrick, Shirley Holland, Bill Kingery, Vernice Law, Minnis E. Ridenour, and J. David Wine.**

## TECH/INDSTRY FRONT

**James A. Squires** has been named president of Norfolk Southern Corp.

**Teresa Hamilton Hall** has joined Appalachian Power, Roanoke office, as a corporate

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# Career FRONT



Hall

communications consultant.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

**Kamilia Lawson, Skip Slocum, and Ciara Anderson** of Community Housing Partners became certified EarthCraft of Virginia Real Estate Professionals.

The New River Valley Association of Realtors has named **Nancy Page** of Page & Associates, Christiansburg, Realtor of the Year; **Priscilla Morris** of Long and Foster Real Estate Inc., Blacksburg as Ethics in Action Recipient; and **Sheila Miles** of Long and Foster Real Estate Inc., Blacksburg as the Good Neighbor Award Recipient.

**Jay Gauldin** has joined Poe & Cronk Real Estate Group.

**Michelle Dykstra** has been hired by Hall Associates as the director of sales and marketing for the City Market Building/Charter Hall, Roanoke, and liaison between building tenants,

the Market Building Foundation, and Hall Associates.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

**Rachel Geiersbach** has been promoted to vice president, legal for Advance Auto Parts.

**Cunninghame West** has been named head chef at Mountain Lake Lodge.

## SENIOR FRONT



Thomas

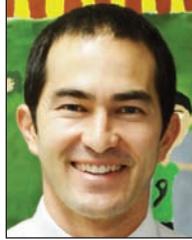
**Jesse Thomas** has been named dining general manager for Showalter Center at Warm Hearth Village, Blacksburg.

## EDUCATION FRONT

The Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation Board of Directors added four new members to its 30-member board for 2013: **David Dantzer, Byron Randolph "Randy" Foley, Jeff Marks,** and **Robert Rector.**



MacDonald



Ahn

The 2013 McGlothlin Awards for Teaching Excellence were awarded to **Pamela J. MacDonald,** Macy McClaugherty Elementary School, Pearisburg; and **Steve Ahn,** Abingdon High School, Washington County.

**Dr. Francis Serio** has been named dean for Bluefield College's School of Dental Medicine.

**Joe Carpenter** has been named vice president university relations at Radford University.

Virginia Tech has announced **Michele "Shelley" Duke** as the 2013 recipient of the William H. Ruffner Medal; **Ben J. Davenport Jr.** and **David E. Lowe** as honorees of the Alumni Distinguished Service Awards; Virginia Tech Transportation Institute director **Tom Dingus** as Champion of



Wilkins



Marcum

Change; and **Tracy D. Wilkins** as recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award.

**Todd Marcum** has been recognized with the 2013 Marshall University Alumni Distinction Award.

**Dr. John J. Rainone** has been named the fourth president of Dabney S. Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge.

## CULTURE FRONT



Thompson

United Way of Roanoke Valley has announced the promotion of **Lara Thompson** to director



Petersen

of workspace giving and **Amy Petersen** to director of major gifts.

**Freda Carper Smith** has joined the staff of United Way of Franklin County as director of resource development.



Jupiter



Maeser



Surber

## OTHER FRONTS

**Frankie Jupiter** and **Nadine Maeser** have joined WDBJ 7 as news staff reporters.

**Brandi Surber** has

joined Access Advertising & Public Relations as an account executive.

Compiled by Tom Field



We screen their investment portfolios

— Page 25

# So much more.

**vbFRONT.com**

- > 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

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

- > Alleghany Gets 55 New Manufacturing Jobs
  - > Richfield Cuts a Ribbon on Rehab Center
  - > Roanoke's Luna Sells Secure Computing Group
  - > Norfolk Southern Cuts 140 Roanoke Jobs
  - > South Peak Plans New Hilton Garden Inn
  - > A Broadband Step Forward for Roanoke Valley
  - > Carilion Rolls Out (Stair) Wellness Campaign
  - > New Dentists Office Features Green Technology
  - > Girl Scouts Head New CEO of RVSPCA
  - > David Bandy New President at Spectrum
  - > Taubman Selects Art Museum Professional as ED
- and much more (of course; hence, the name)**



**The Waterfront Country Club Pool and Fitness Center**

*SML Country Club Plans*

**The Willard Companies**, owners of The Waterfront Country Club, a private golf and country club at Smith Mountain Lake, plans to design a new fitness center and pool building, relocate the swimming pool, incorporate a new fitness and recreational area, and create a new short game area for the club. Estimated costs for the renovation are \$1.4 million.

*RIDE Westward*

**RIDE Solutions** has expanded to Region 2000 and is now available as the "one-stop-shop" for alternative transportation information to commuters and employers in that region.

*Entrepreneurs Win*

The **VT Knowledge-Works** Fifth Annual Entrepreneurship Challenge's Tech

Transfer Challenge had two winners this year: Keraesthetics and NanoSpin. The winning teams will receive \$100,000 worth of mentorship and business support services over a two-year period, including assistance in developing the overall business strategy as well as the presentations and plan documents needed for investor discussions and product launch. The winning concept in the Student Business Concept Competition was PureAir: Emergency Asthma and COPD Inhalers. Stephen Epstein won \$10,000 in scholarships plus summer workspace at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center.

*Market Sharing*

**Warm Hearth Village** has partnered with **Good Food, Good People** to offer a farmer's market and share program. GFPG links

the agricultural community in the Blue Ridge Mountains / Piedmont area, the region's market shoppers, fine-dining chefs, CSA sharers and the local food movement. One can purchase a share of the crop and each week it is delivered to the Village Center at Warm Hearth.

*Garage Door Open*

**Hall's Garage Doors** opened up a second showroom on Wildwood Road in Salem.

*VT Silver Sustains*

**Virginia Tech** has achieved its second silver rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of sustainability achievements through its Sustainability Tracking, Assessment, and Rating System (STARS) program. The score is the highest achieved to date by any college or university in

Virginia and is the third highest score among Atlantic Coast Conference institutions.

*Channel 7 Grows Politics*

Collaborating with Virginia Tech and Roanoke College, **WDBJ 7** has expanded its election and political coverage with the addition of Dr. Robert Denton, who joins senior political commentator / analyst Dr. Harry Wilson. Denton is the chair of Rice Center for Leader Development in the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech and serves as a professor and department head in the Department of Communication. Wilson is a professor in the Department of Public Affairs at Roanoke College and serves as the director of the college's Institute for Policy Opinion and Research. Both men are veteran political reporters who have covered political issues, campaigns and elections.

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### *Volvo's Better Buildings*

**The Volvo Group** has partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy Better Buildings, Better Plants Program, designed to reduce energy costs, strengthen competitiveness and promote greater energy security. Volvo Trucks manufacturing facility in Dublin is part of the program, which will expand its existing Save Energy Now LEADER program.

### *Flowers Grafted*

Vinton-based Roanoke Valley florist **Creative Occasions, Inc** is merging with CORSAIR Floral and Décor, LLC. The acquisition expands the event landscape business and creates a broader scope of selection and services to brides and corporate clients.

### *Theatre Moves In*

**Roanoke Childrens Theatre** has announced it is moving to The Dumas Center for Artistic Development.

### *Cox's Second Screen*

**Cox Communications** has announced its Cox TV Connect app that will support Amazon's Kindle Fire, Google's Nexus and Samsung's Galaxy Tab 2 and Note tablets. Customers can download the free app on their devices, with access to more than 90 national cable channels. In

addition to the newly supported devices, the application creates a 'second screen' experience for customers to watch live television programming in their home on their iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch device.

### *VUP goes Mobile*

**Virginia Utility Protection Service (VUPS)**, also known as Virginia 811, announced the launch of its VA811.com mobile site. The new mobile site will allow easy access for excavators, homeowners and utility operators to the most used pages of the VA811.com website.

### *Beer Distributor Award*

Salem-based beer distributor **Blue Ridge Beverage** was awarded the "Bill Coors Quality Award" at the annual MillerCoors Distributor Convention in Orlando, Fla. The award honors the distributor in the national distribution system which excels against the company's exacting quality measures. The Archer family owned Blue Ridge's Waynesboro, VA, operation achieved the highest score possible in all MillerCoors quality measures earning a total portfolio score of 100% and a focus brands score of 100%.

### *Attractive Data*

**Appalachian Power** announced a new effort

to help lure large capital investment and high-tech, high-paying jobs to the area. The program targets a growing industry by identifying sites in western Virginia that are independently qualified to meet requirements to support a data center. The Appalachian Power program is part of an American Electric Power (AEP) effort to identify optimum data center sites in the company's 11-state service area. Both Roanoke County's Center for Research and Technology and Wythe County's Progress Park met the criteria and are the first two sites to receive the designation.

### *Caring Grants*

**The Junior League of Roanoke Valley** announced the 2013-2014 recipients of the Care That Counts grants. The grants are awarded to nonprofit agencies in need of assistance with sliding scale childcare. Recipients included Jill's Buddy Camp, Salem; Mill Mountain Theatre, Roanoke; Total Action Against Poverty Transitional Living Center, Roanoke; YMCA Magic Place, Roanoke; Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest VA; West End Center,

Roanoke; and Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline.

### *StellarOne chooses Thalhimer*

**StellarOne Bank** has selected Cushman & Wakefield | Thalhimer as its sole provider of real estate services for existing and new facilities across the organization as well as a primary provider of real estate services in the special assets arena. The engagement includes not only representation of the bank in real estate transactions but also assistance in development and implementation of the bank's strategic real estate plan.

### *Hokie & Cav Hike Tuitions*

**The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors** approved tuition and fee increases of \$532 and \$1,296 respectively for resident and non-resident students. Mandatory tuition and fees for Virginia undergraduate students will be \$11,455; out-of-state students will pay \$27,211 annually. Average room and board fees will rise by \$396 per year for a total of \$7,650. Comprehensive fee will rise by \$79 to \$1,752;



**Mountain Lake Lodge board of directors mark the grand re-opening of the property**

thus the total cost for a Virginia undergraduate living on campus will be \$19,105 and a non-resident living on campus would be \$34,858. Tuition and fees for resident graduate students will rise by \$610 to \$13,023 and for non-residents by \$1,322 to \$24,588. Virginia and Maryland veterinary students will pay \$21,796 and non-residents will pay \$47,458. The student financial aid budget will also increase by about \$1 million, to protect needy students from future tuition increases. Under Funds for the Future, some students will not incur tuition increases during their tenure at Virginia Tech. Total financial aid available to qualifying students exceeds \$400 million.

The University of Virginia Board of Visitors voted to increase tuition for in-state undergraduates by 3.8 percent and for out-of-state students by 4.8 percent for the upcoming school year. Virginians will pay about \$450 more and out-of-state students will pay roughly \$1,825 more. The board also approved increasing on-campus housing prices by about 3.5 percent and meal plans by about 2.9 percent. And starting this fall, incoming engineering students will pay an additional \$2,000 per year to cover the program's higher expenses.

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#### *Reopened Mountain*

**Mountain Lake Lodge** is officially open. Formerly the Mountain Lake Hotel & Conservancy, the facility

is now operated under new management.

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#### *Moog gets AMT*

**Moog Inc.** has acquired Aspen Motions Technologies.

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#### *Wine à deux*

**Wine Gourmet** has purchased The Wine Cellar in Staunton and will open up its second location there.

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#### *Investing in HomeTown*

**HomeTown Bank** has introduced HomeTown Investments Services, for financial planning, brokerage services and insurance products through its relationship

with Infinex Investments, Inc.

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#### *Housing Collapse*

**Timber Truss Housing Systems** of Salem has closed after 52 years of business.

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#### *BBW Moves*

**Better Building Works, LLC**, Energy and Design Consultants has expanded and moved to its new location at Kirk Avenue and 2nd Street in Roanoke.

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#### *Market goes Solar*

**Solar Connexion**, a renewable energy contractor in Blacksburg, recently donated and

installed a new array of nine photovoltaic panels on the roof of the timber frame pavilion at the Blacksburg Farmer's Market at Market Square Park. This expands the original system from 1 kW to 2.16 kW, and more than doubles output.

#### *Salon Moves to Roanoke*

**Cynthia St. Pierre** has relocated her salon to the first floor of the 401 Campbell Lofts in downtown Roanoke.

#### *Goodwill's Economic Goodwill*

**Goodwill Industries of the Valleys'** job programs and placement produced a quarter billion dollar economic and fiscal impact on Western and Central Virginia Communities, according to its report commissioned with Elliott D. Pollack &

Company. The Goodwill model of training people with employment barriers and then placing them in a job, had an impact on the economy and government of \$243.6 million in the area, an increase of 12% over the 2011 report. Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, a 31-county area, was responsible for 3,206 jobs and 723 indirect jobs, with a total impact in wages and economic output of more than \$237 million. The taxes to local and state government created by Goodwill's employment numbers generate another \$6.35 million.

#### *VWCC's Free Dual Enrollment*

**Virginia Western Community College** has announced it will offer free dual enrollment courses for the 2013-14 academic year at high

schools in the region to include the counties of Botetourt, Craig, Franklin and Roanoke; and the cities of Roanoke and Salem.

#### *IA Spills over to JC*

Roanoke's **Interactive Achievement** and **Jefferson Center** have partnered to provide extra office space for IA's growing workforce.

#### *Online Sales Tax*

A bill to require collection of sales taxes online passed the United States Senate by a 69 to 27 vote. The Marketplace Fairness Act would require Internet retailers to collect state and local sales taxes for online purchases and send those taxes to the state where the shopper lives. Currently, online retailers can be required by a state to collect sales

taxes only if they have a physical presence in the state. The proposed law exempts retailers with less than \$1 million in revenue from collecting the taxes.

#### *Roanoke's Fortune 500*

The **2013 Fortune 500** list has been released, and Advance Auto Parts ranks number 409 at \$6.2 billion. Twenty-three Virginia companies are on the list of the nation's largest companies.

#### *Opening Primary*

**Primary Residential Mortgage, Inc.** has opened an office at 3922 Electric Road, Suite 1B, in Roanoke County.

#### *Compiled by Tom Field*

**Additional FRONT Notes posted online at [moreFRONT.blogspot.com](http://moreFRONT.blogspot.com).**

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

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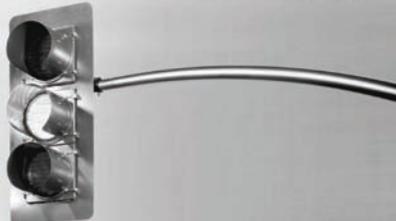
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