

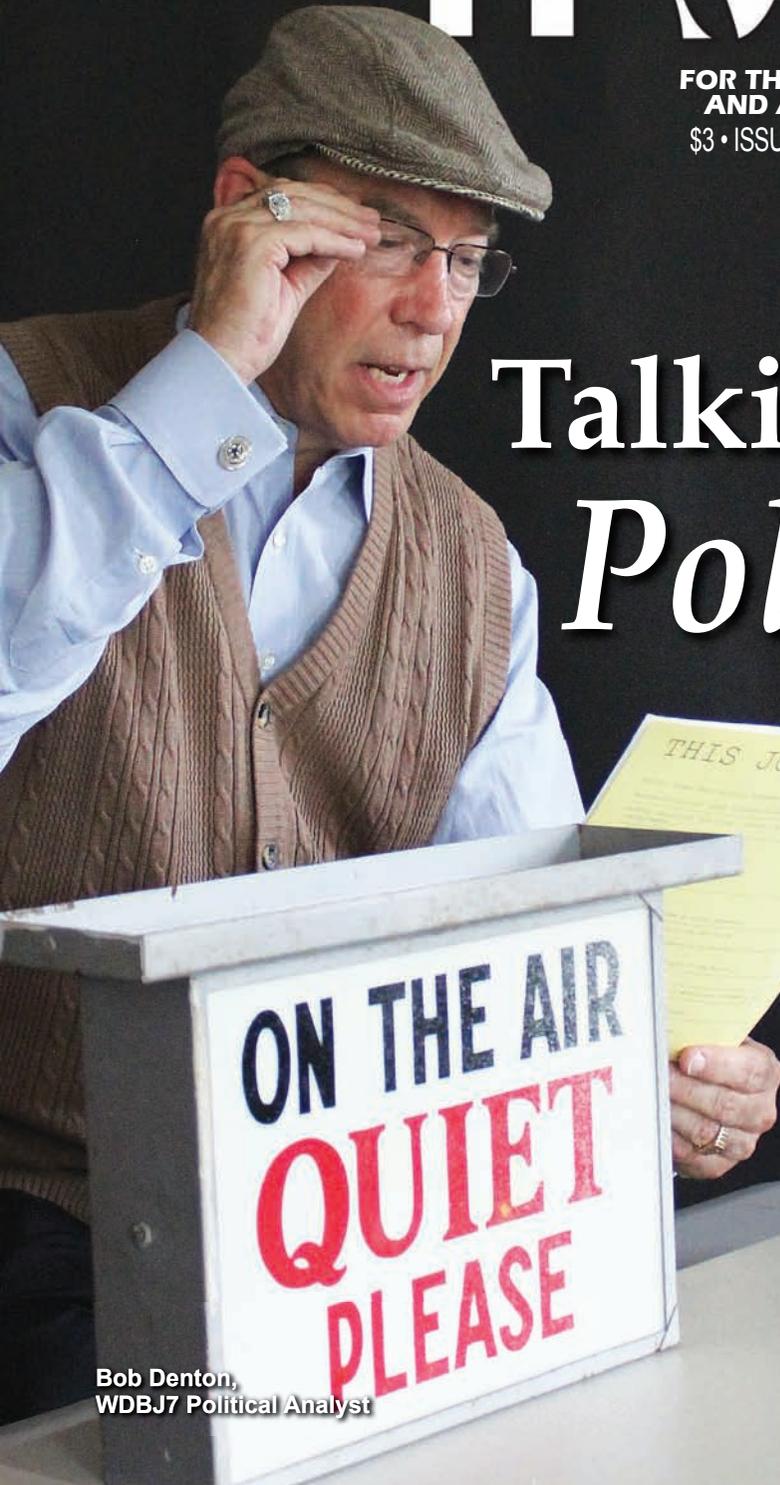
Valley Business FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 60 • SEPTEMBER 2013

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Talking *Politics*



Bob Denton,
WDBJ7 Political Analyst

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WELCOME to the FRONT

Herm Reavis loaned us the props for our FRONTcover this month. The vintage microphone and on-air sign came out of his garage, meticulously arranged with artifacts and stories documenting his more than six decades in the radio business. In this market everybody who knows radio knows Herm. He's good to know; I picked up far more than two symbolic items in that box. Who else do you know who loved his work and the people he worked with enough to name a tree after it all? The prettiest tree in Herm's yard is named for Mel Wheeler, complete with plaque. (Mel, of course, was the founder of family owned and operated Wheeler Broadcasting, including five radio stations in this market.)

One's vocation can be a passion, filled with a richness of friendships and an appreciation that sustains. A shelter, if you will, like a large tree.

Thanks for the props, Herm. More importantly, thanks for your poignant lesson and gentle reminder of why we do what we do.



Tom Field

“ ”

In one afternoon, what was once seen as a rite of passage had become the gateway to unspeakable crimes

— Page 44



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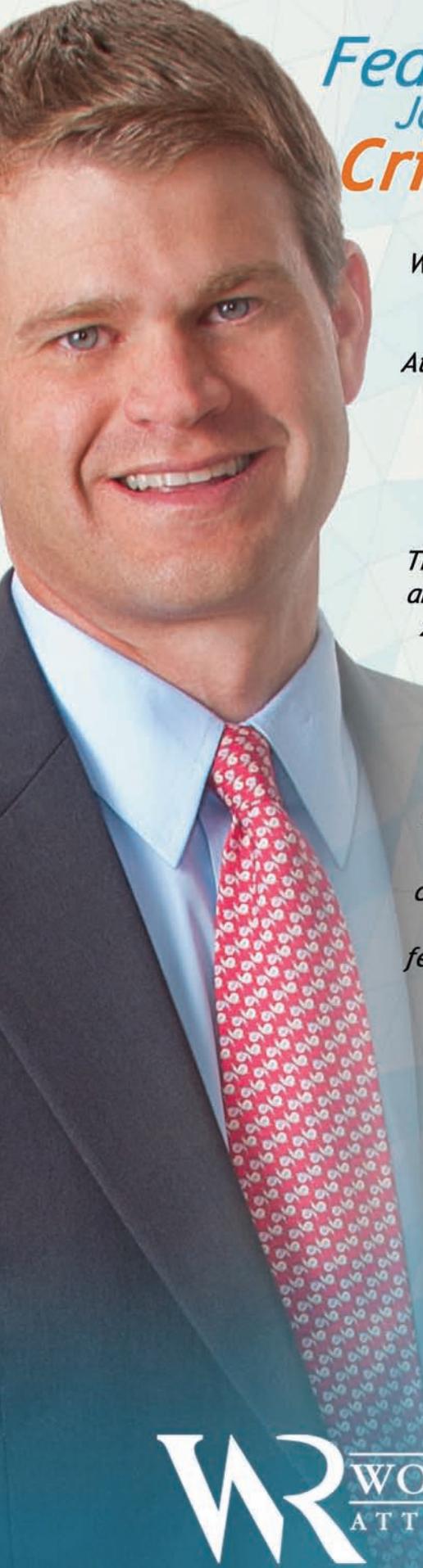
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A portrait of Thomas Cullen, a man with short brown hair and a light blue shirt, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket and a red tie with a white pattern.

Federal Prosecutor Joins **White-Collar Crime Practice**

Woods Rogers PLC is thrilled to announce that Thomas Cullen, previously the Deputy Criminal Chief in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia, has joined us as our newest principal. He will head our white-collar criminal defense and government investigations practice group.

The former federal prosecutor in Virginia and North Carolina will represent organizations and individuals in a wide variety of investigations and enforcement proceedings conducted by federal and state agencies.

"I look forward to helping Woods Rogers provide clients with a prosecutor's perspective," Cullen said. "With all the resources federal law enforcement has to bear, it's important for clients to have someone who can navigate the process to bring about the best possible outcome."

Cullen has substantial litigation experience, having tried dozen cases, briefed and argued in appellate courts, and conducted and argued hundreds of pre-trial hearings and motions.

THOMAS CULLEN
WOODS ROGERS PRINCIPAL

WR WOODS ROGERS PLC
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DEPARTMENTS

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Art direction and cover photography of Bob Denton by Tom Field.

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FRONT

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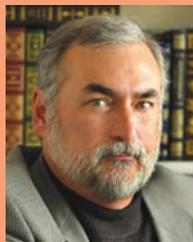
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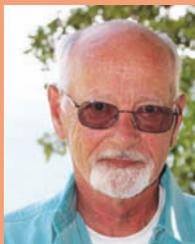
Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 68.

Editorial Advisory Board

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

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

CONTRIBUTORS



Ed Elswick



Tom Field



Kathleen Harshberger



Becky Hepler



Whitney Puckett



Samantha Steidle



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

“

Behavioral factors in particular may increase their risk for traffic accidents

— Page 41

“

Here I am a developer, but up there, I'm just a green bean boy.

— Page 59

2013 Members

Nancy Agee Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford Claire V (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Woods Rogers (Legal)
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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.

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Making Punditry Pay

The Business of Talking Politics >

Executive Summary:

Covering politics is a lot like walking a tightrope... be sure, be steady, and whatever you do, don't lean to one side or the other.

By Randy Walker

Politics is big business for local TV stations. Campaigns poured \$3.1 billion into local TV advertising in 2012. That money went disproportionately into battleground states, including Virginia. The western part of the state reaped the bounty as campaigns spent more than \$27 million fueling the seemingly nonstop political ads than ran on the CBS, NBC, ABC and Fox affiliates, making Roanoke-Lynchburg one of the hottest political advertising markets in the country.

While political advertising is more pervasive than ever, political news coverage by local stations is declining nationwide, according to "The State of the News Media 2013," compiled by The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism.

"In local television, newscasts in recent years have placed an even greater emphasis on traffic, weather and sports, reduced the number of edited package stories on the air and shortened the lengths of stories, trends that may reflect the economic strains affecting the industry," the report states. Percentage of the "newshole" devoted to



all photos: Randy Walker

John Carlin keeps his political persuasion out of the report.

politics and government declined from 7 percent in 2005 to 3 percent in 2012.

Local newscasters, however, say they're as strongly committed as ever to presenting relevant political coverage, even while recognizing that politics isn't a ratings magnet. As John Carlin says, quoting Dan Rather, "If you just listened to what the consultant said, all you'd cover is kindergartners and kittens."

Here's a look at a few of the reporters, commentators and news directors who shape political coverage in Western Virginia—their approach to presenting political stories, their personal opinions (yes, they have opinions), how they handle community involvement, and how they interact (or deliberately don't) with the advertising side of the business.

How diligently does John Carlin strive to present the news neutrally as co-anchor at WSL5? During his five years away from the station, Carlin was approached by both parties to run for office.

It's not that he doesn't have opinions, or that his colleagues don't know them. "It's discussed so often in the course of editorial meetings, you know where everybody stands," he says. "Although most journalists I've known, I would classify as being left-leaning, in this newsroom I think it's about a



Bob Denton keeps his ID badges as souvenirs of the conventions and rallies he's attended.

50-50 split. People here are all over the board, but our policy is neutrality.”

Another policy: advertising does not affect news coverage.

For 21 years, Carlin was a gatekeeper, helping to decide which stories got covered. Then, he left the station to work in public relations for Ferrum College and at his own agency. In his new role, he found himself knocking on the gates.

“The smaller [media outlets] would say something like, ‘Well, I don’t know if we can give that editorial coverage, but if your client would be willing to buy an ad, we could certainly look upon that more favorably.’ It was sort of that gray area. At WSLs there is no gray area, period. There’s an absolute firewall in terms of political advertising, in terms of any advertising.”

While neutral on the air, Carlin, who returned to WSLs in July, is an advocate off-screen. He co-founded the Blue Ridge Marathon and is chair of St. Francis Service Dogs and the YMCA of Roanoke Valley board.

Carlin’s warm personality, perspective on the valley as a whole, and advocacy of the YMCA make him a strong leader, says Y president, Mark Johnson.

When Carlin left the station in 2008, one of his issues had been incorporating board meetings into his routine. The

issue came up when he was contacted about returning. "The station has really become a community-focused station, and Melissa Stacy, the news director, and Leesa Wilcher, the general manager, assured me that that's exactly what they wanted me doing, in addition to reporting stories."

If a news story involves one of his organizations, he has said, he'll let another team member cover it.

The election night team at WSLS no longer includes commentator Bob Denton. The loss of Denton should not be taken as evidence of diminishing commitment to political coverage by WSLS, Carlin says. "I think it'll be the same as it's always been."

Carlin says he wishes more people were engaged with the political process.

"As a news organization we try to keep them (the viewers) engaged, but when you look at viewer surveys, politics is never among the topics that are of most interest to our viewers."

As a journalist, however, "you've got to judge each story on its merits and go forward. But on the other hand you still have to have compelling information on the air, or they won't watch."



Bob Denton is an academic, but not the ivory-tower type. He was a few yards away from President Obama when Obama made his "you didn't build that" gaffe. He was there when Oliver North came out to speak with no tie and the media thought he was trying to appeal to Everyman. (Actually he was ill and didn't want to constrict his neck, says Denton).

"I am in the field, I'm at campaign events. I want to get a sense of the people, the crowd, the excitement," he says.

Having turned 60, the Virginia Tech professor can look back on a career full of achievements. He's the head of Tech's Department of Communication, the author, co-author or editor of 24 books, and a go-to man who was quoted in the media almost 600 times in 2012. He had a program on Blue Ridge Public Television for 11 years. He was a political analyst for WSLS for 21 years, before switching in 2013 to WDBJ. He's still going strong.

But while his own career has been satisfying, he's filled with unease when he looks at the wider political landscape.

"We have not only the right, but the duty to participate as a democracy," he says. "A democracy is only as good



Bob Denton (holding pictures of himself with Mitt Romney, left, and President Obama, right) has met every president since Jimmy Carter.

as the knowledge of its citizenry. And by every measure over the last 20 years you can see a decline in political knowledge across this nation. That worries me because like a computer, faulty information in generates faulty results.”

He educates, as a commentator and professor, teaching political communication to graduate students in writing and answering the phone calls and emails of reporters.

Denton will offer opinions if asked. His background is conservative. “I’m a hillbilly from Boone, North Carolina. I was raised Southern Baptist, I raised my right hand and served on active duty. I was a captain in the United States Army. I worked in business. I know what it is to make payroll.”



But he's not a single-party loyalist. He sometimes votes based on individual candidates' positions, especially locally, and his comments draw complaints from both sides equally, judging from emails and comments. As a young advertising man, he produced "those awful attack ads" for both Republicans and Democrats, he says apologetically.

Denton is as kindly and genial in person as he sounds on TV. "Bob is a heck of a nice guy in addition to being a fine scholar and colleague," says fellow pundit Larry Sabato.

Several times, Denton has turned down the opportunity to leave academia—temporarily or not—for the rough and tumble of running for office. "Each time there were family considerations, job considerations," he says. In addition, "for me to enter a campaign, it would be essential to be



Harry Wilson, wearing a Penn State shirt, in his Roanoke College office. On the wall is a framed cover of Sports Illustrated featuring Joe Paterno, the late coach of Wilson's beloved Nittany Lions.

able to maintain my beliefs, values and firm issue positions. Frankly, that's tough to do today."

Denton's personal warmth shouldn't be mistaken for a lack of candor. "Bob speaks his mind and does so in a fair, honest way," says Sabato. "He will speak truth to power, which is what academics are supposed to do."

He's equally displeased with politicians on either side.

"For the first time in my life I'm trying to fight cynicism. I so believe in this nation, I so believe in our system of government. I am so disappointed in our public leadership—both sides, without question. Intellectually it's hard to argue for term limits, but a professional politician now has lost the notion of public service and I guess that kind of dates me. I guess I have an idealistic view of what our leaders should be. For the first time in my life, I'm concerned."



Denton's fellow academic and colleague at WDBJ, Harry Wilson, tells his students that politics isn't rocket science. That's a good thing. If politics were rocket science, democracy would be in trouble.

"It's not something that the average person can't understand," says Wilson. "You have to pay attention

to it. It doesn't require a vastly superior intellect. That's how I see my role, trying to make things more understandable for people."

He does it as a writer, analyst, and Roanoke College professor.

On a summer afternoon at the college, Wilson is comfortably dressed in shorts and a Penn State polo shirt. It probably wouldn't displease him to say he looks more like a football coach than an academic. Based on his office, a visitor couldn't guess what he does for a living—there's hardly a political souvenir in sight. Instead, the walls are covered with Penn State football memorabilia.

"If you want to see who I am, you can look around my office," he says. "It's not that I don't enjoy what I do, in fact I love what I do."

What he does has brought success and recognition. He's the director of the college's Institute for Policy and Opinion Research. He has a long list of publications, including a book on gun control.

"The academics in that field pretty much fit into one camp or another," he says. "I'm more in the gun rights camp than I am in the gun control camp."

"Sometimes in the classroom I tell people where I stand politically, but then I make the opposing argument, I would like to think, in as compelling a fashion as someone who really supported the opposing argument can make it. And I tell my students, if you're going to arrive at a position, you need to be fully aware of what the opposing arguments are and examine those opposing arguments. Then you can decide which one makes more sense."

Given Wilson's opinions, who does he root for on election night? "Because I also do polling, if I'm rooting for somebody, I'm rooting for my last poll!" He laughs. "I want to be right more than I want my person to win."

Like Denton, Wilson has concerns about the political climate in Washington.

"The rhetoric has always been there. Even in campaigns it's not much worse than it was 100 or 150 years ago. In that regard I don't know that things have changed. I'm not the first person to say this: what we hear from people particularly when they leave the U.S. Senate, is what happens behind the scenes, that's what's changed. There is polarization and unwillingness to work across the aisle.

"They're not just playing political gamesmanship. They do that sometimes of course, but sometimes they're actually representing their constituents, and their constituents want very different things. That to me



Jeff Marks in WDBJ's master control room.

is the real source of the problem. It's not just a political polarization, the country is really polarized."



As WDBJ's president and general manager, Jeff Marks is responsible for ad revenue. There was lots to be had in the 2012 election season, when Virginia was a swing state. But those dollars flowing into the advertising department never influence news judgments. There's a "Chinese wall," says Marks—as in the Great Wall of China—between the advertising side and the journalistic side of WDBJ.

To take a non-political example, suppose a store is planning a grand opening, and the owner asks the ad rep for news coverage. "Under our policy, a sales person cannot bring that to the newsroom," Marks says. "We want our advertising people to play softball with our news



people, and be friendly, but there's just certain areas where it's inappropriate for people in the sales end of the business to influence the newsroom and they all know it. We just don't have that issue here."

Marks started in radio and television news in his home state of Kentucky, and is a former chairman of the Radio-Television News Directors Association (now the Radio Television Digital News Association). "I will not permit anyone with a vested interest, whether it's promoting a client or his or her own agenda, to try to influence news judgments made by the journalists. That's very clear and the team knows it."

That doesn't mean that journalists don't have opinions or don't vote. "You sort of have an idea of where your colleagues are when you're in the newsroom. The notion that everyone in the newsroom is liberal is crazy. I know that I have people on all sides of the gun discussion in our news organization."



Community journalist Gene Marrano with the tools of his trade: camera, laptop, digital audio recorder.

On the other hand, Marks says he doesn't know the political views of senior reporter, Joe Dashiell. "Joe's worked here 30 years, I've seen lots of his work. I don't know if he's a Democrat, a Republican, an independent. I don't want to know."

Whether reporters discuss their opinion with each other or not, says Marks, "in the newsroom my experience is, what you have is a room full of skeptics who try to apply the same screens and the same filters to everyone who's talking to them."

When considering newsworthiness, they don't worry whether an individual story will boost or sink the ratings. "If you start doing that you're on a slippery slope about what we're going to cover and what we're not going to cover," he says. "That's true whether it's health coverage, political coverage, sports coverage. We're quite aware of what the research says about what our audience is most interested in: weather is by far the number one thing across the country that people are interested in, in local news."

"Political coverage falls into that category. People don't say they're interested in political news at a high level, in research. But what we know is, they're interested in the effects of politics. They're interested in tax rates, they're interested in hot button issues. It's the role of our journalists to cover those issues in the context of campaigns, in the context of legislative action, or whatever."

Marks also knows that political coverage will be sure to irritate somebody.

"Viewer feedback is the cheapest form of research there is. What we in our business like to say is, when the complaints are roughly equal between people on the left and on the right, then you know you're probably doing a good job."



As a freelance community journalist in radio, television and print, as well as a volunteer in several organizations, Gene Marrano wears a lot of hats, and his approach varies according to the venue.

In addition to freelancing for local and national publications, he edits and writes for the twice-monthly Roanoke Star, hosts an interview show eight times a year for Cox Cable, and hosts a weekly news magazine on Fox Radio 910 AM.

A Cave Spring resident, he serves with Roanoke County's Planning Commission, its Capital Improvement Program citizens advisory committee, and the Roanoke County Community Leaders Environmental Action Roundtable (RC-CLEAR), which has drawn criticism from Tea Party activists. He's also a member of ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability.

"In print I really try to remain objective," he says. "I have my opinion on things, but when I'm writing, I try to be fair about it. I'll mention the objections that some people have to a particular viewpoint.

"On the radio show, I think if you listen to my show you might get an idea of how I feel about an environmental issue. You'd probably pick up more of a slant."

A former sales rep from Long Island, Marrano came late in life to journalism. He moved to Roanoke in 1995. A couple years later he walked into a radio station and got a freelance assignment. "It's easier in a town like Roanoke to try something new."



When Jim Kent first came to Roanoke in the 1970s, there

WFIR news director Jim Kent says the 35 plus demographic is “a pretty politically savvy audience.”



were three commercial radio news operations, plus public radio. “Two were really hot and heavy, they competed all the time, and they broke stories,” he recalls. “[W]ROV and WFIR fought each other tooth and nail for stories.”

Now, he says, “you don’t see many radio newsrooms much anymore. It’s not very cost effective. A lot of stations have just gotten rid of it.”

Kent’s news operation isn’t going anywhere. As news director at WFIR-AM, he benefits from economy of scale, supplying news to FM sister stations in the Mel Wheeler group: Star Country, the Vibe, Q99 and K92.

“We have the luxury of being able to focus on this narrow demographic for the AM station. If we had to stand alone, it would be harder. News is expensive. You’ve got to have boots on the ground to do news.”

As a news-talk station, WFIR draws an older audience, the 35 plus demographic. “Those folks are more interested in current affairs and news. They’re a pretty politically savvy



audience, they're mostly news listeners. Most people who care about news care about politics."

Although WFIR's talk shows, including Rush Limbaugh, are conservative, the news is pitched "right down the middle," Kent says.

The Roanoke Valley's Morning News, hosted by Joey Self, airs weekdays 5-9 a.m. Stories typically run a minute or less. "It's always a task of what to leave out," Kent says. "You almost have to use shorthand. A newspaper can background it. We really can't, but if they're interested they can go and find out more information."

While the airwaves won't be as politically saturated in 2013 as they were in 2012, the gubernatorial media machines are gearing up quickly. "I must have 40 news releases a day from these guys," Kent said in August. "They're always trying to get surrogates on to talk about this issue or that issue. This campaign is hot."

Stay tuned. 



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
We've all heard "you are what you eat", but it can also be true that you are what you wear.

Dressing Up vs Dressing Down >

Dressing well for everyday life has gone out of fashion. Everywhere we look we see the most casual of outfits. Even business casual seems to be quite dressy compared to the attire most of us wear daily.

I like looking my best. Even when I go to the gym, I freshen my lipstick, comb my hair and don clothes that look good. When playing tennis, I begin with fresh makeup and clean hair. When I finish, I look terrible, but I start the set looking good.

It won't surprise you, then, to learn that I dress up to go to appointments and run errands. You never know who you'll meet, and I want to make a good impression. Even when dressed casually we should choose clothing of a cut and color that flatters us.

Looking well-dressed has perks:

- It makes you feel happy and proud of yourself.
- People treat you better; you get upgraded in hotels and on airplanes.
- You make other people feel happy just to be in your presence.
- You create a sense that your outing is an "occasion".
- Wearing interesting outfits gives you something to be excited about and banishes the "blahs"
- Dressing up makes you stand out in a crowd and gives you a cachet of importance.
- Dressing well makes you memorable.

I have heard the arguments for dressing down. Comfort is high on the list. J.J. Martin recently noted in the Wall Street Journal that, "It's a myth that good-looking clothing has to be a torture chamber. There are plenty of presentable—even very chic—options that are comfortable." Perhaps its not so much physical comfort, as it is feeling like a fraud in elegant clothing. That's a shame, because clothing helps us to cross lines and become anything we want to be.

Other people don't want to give the impression they feel superior to others. Contrary to this way of thinking – dressing nicely shows respect for others. Dressing badly shows disregard for others and for yourself.

Another argument for dressing down is that appearance shouldn't matter; rather who we are and what we do should matter. Despite this argument we are still judged on our appearance. Dressing very casually communicates that we don't care how we're perceived. Maybe that's the point. 

Kathy Surace is an Image Consultant with Peacock Image and can be contacted at Kathy@peacockimage.com.

Money Manners >

Let's talk about the etiquette of money. In Victorian times it was very poor form indeed to talk about money and many, including yours truly, retain that attitude. Those who talk about their finances or brag that they are anything more than "comfortable" are not well received in some circles.

A little restraint is in order. We need to show some basic common courtesy when it comes to money. Do you know the person who refuses to leave a decent tip, or the one who constantly brags about how much they earn, or how much they pay for clothes, cars, vacations? All of the above are financial faux pas, or social blunders. It's from the French and means false step. The opposite of putting your best foot forward!

Here are some money etiquette mistakes that we should avoid both in our business and social lives.

- Being a skimpy tipper. Here's a tip on that: servers earn very little money, and rely on tips for their income. As of 2011, the federal minimum wage for wait staff was \$2.13 per hour plus tips, and the general federal minimum wage rate was \$7.25. Unless your waiter snarled at you, or deliberately dropped spaghetti in your lap, please tip 15-20%, and really, err on the side of 20%.
- Talking about how much money you earn. Taking every opportunity to share one's affluence just makes one look like a showoff, and no one likes a braggart.
- Similarly, talking about how much you paid for items, be it jewelry, clothes, cars and even houses is a no-no.
- Not re-paying hospitality. We all have them: the friends or associates who always accept your invitation, but never reciprocate. That usually ends up with those people being ostracized, and not included in events.
- Offering unreasonable proposals when negotiating. Be very careful here. The fastest way to end a negotiation is to make a ludicrously low offer. It indicates that you aren't serious, and it can be very insulting. Do your homework, find out the true value of things, and never make your opening offer too low. This rule becomes even more important in the international business arena.
- Mixing business with friendship. Always dicey and usually ends badly.
- And need I say it? Asking for or lending money to friends, relatives, or associates. It usually ends badly for both parties. If you have some extra money, it's best to give it, rather than lend it. You'll feel good about it! 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:

Friends and associates may not call you on it, but if you display a tactless approach to money matters, they are probably talking to each other about it.

Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

Executive Summary:

Technology continues to advance and solidify its place in every aspect of our lives, so learning how to use it to grow your business is important.

Run a small business? There's an app for that >

Have you ever heard the phrase "business automation"? It might bring to mind futuristic images of computers, conveyor belts, even robots.

What it's really about, though, is software.

Specifically, it's about applications that can automate business processes, such as your company's sales cycle and all that goes into that. Or it might be used to automate communications with customers through text messages, increasing convenience for them. Applications are even available to automate the tasks of knowledge workers, keeping track of where they are with projects and to-do lists.

The potential applications of technology for business are infinite. Yet they should always have a strategic purpose.

"Technology should not exist for the sake of technology," says Brian Lanham, president of Roanoke, Va.-based Lotic Factor, a technology consulting firm that develops applications for businesses. "It should exist to automate or enhance a business process."

Harnessing technology to run a better business helps you earn more money. It's that simple.

The power of automation

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The three top reasons for not harnessing technology to improve business processes are expense, lack of expertise, and not having a chief officer in charge of managing the customer experience, says Lanham.

Lanham says companies need to know three things in order to arrive at the conclusion that automation will benefit them. They need to know:

1. How they make money
2. How technology supports that
3. How customers experience the sales process

If your company doesn't have a strategic plan, that's the place to start. A technology firm like Lotic Factor can help you create a strategic plan, and then tailor technology solutions to support it.

The technology developed for you can have the dramatic effect of allowing you to scale operations without having to hire many employees. You could go from having a ratio of 10 employees for every 100 clients to having a ratio of 20 employees for every 1,000 clients.

The bottom-line impact of a well-executed business automation plan ought to be impressive. Doing things in a smarter and more efficient way results in both savings and earnings.

Such investment in your business makes you stand out from your competition, and encourages customer loyalty. Give some thought to what processes your company could automate. Then imagine the potential impact on the bottom line. You might be surprised at what you can do better. 

Samantha Steidle is a consultant building entrepreneurial ecosystems and coworking spaces. Visit BusinessLoungeDevelopment.com to learn more about promoting entrepreneurship in your area.





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Randy Walker

Hartman is a neat-desk guy. His employees joke that they're going to put a bunch of disorganized papers on his desk while he's on vacation.

Providing clients with a lot more than tax returns >

Executive Summary:
CPA Jason Hartman is in it for the long haul.

By Randy Walker

Jason Hartman never did use the antique Remington Rand adding machine in his office. He did use, years ago, the suitcase-like "audit bag" he keeps in a corner. Similar bags in the hands of IRS auditors must have created stress in many an office, but in Hartman's hands, confidence.

Hartman conducts peer reviews of other CPA firms around the country, and is an arbitrator for the Roanoke Better Business Bureau, in addition to serving clients. Some of his clients have been with him since he started at Brown

Edwards as a staff accountant in 1986.

"One thing that differentiates us is our focus on long term relationships," he says. "A lot of our work is family owned businesses, privately held companies, not just serving as the auditor of the company or preparing the company's tax return, but coordinating all of that with the planning for the owner's personal situation, their estate planning, family planning. I think it's reflected in our client retention rate. We don't have a lot of turnover in clients."

Another reason for the firm's client retention rate may be the specialized teams that serve specific industries, including local government, higher education, financial institutions, construction, non-profits and manufacturing. Any team may be composed of CPAs from any of Brown Edwards' locations—Bluefield, Bristol, Charleston, Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, Christiansburg and Roanoke. "We bring the right team to the client based on their expertise, not necessarily their geographic location," Hartman says.

While the firm's chair, Domenic Pellillo, works at the Bluefield office, Roanoke is the headquarters and largest office, with 55 employees and around 35 CPAs. "My role is overall oversight, coordination, setting direction, hiring, marketing," Hartman says.

He also continues to serve clients like Dennis Montgomery of Salem Tools. "Jason has been the partner in charge of our annual audit since we contracted with Brown Edwards & Company many years ago," says Montgomery. "Jason is always looking out for our best interests and continues to bring issues and opportunities to our attention as the legal and financial landscape changes."

One topic he's discussing with clients is the new Financial Reporting Framework issued by the American Institute of CPAs. Many privately held companies, whose financial statements are not required to comply with generally accepted accounting principles, may want to ask their CPA whether they should use it.

"There's been a lot of frustration among

In Brief

Name:	Jason Hartman
Age:	51
Company:	Brown Edwards
Position:	Area coordinator for Roanoke
Type of business:	Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
Location:	South Roanoke
Background:	From Franklin, W.Va.; M.S. in accounting from James Madison.
Personal:	Lives near Boones Mill with wife, Christie, and son Elmer, 3

privately held companies with the complexity of accounting rules. A lot of the accounting pronouncements are written [by the Financial Accounting Standards Board] because of incidents that occurred at very large companies. For the most part the same rules are out there for Exxon as for a locally owned company in Roanoke. And it's become costly and added a lot of complexity to the financial statements over the past decade to comply with a lot of those standards.

"So the AICPA has put out this new framework. The idea is that companies would issue financial statements in accordance with this Financial Reporting Framework for small- and medium-sized entities, rather than being in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and thereby [the statements] would be a lot simpler. The key factor is the users of those financials have to be willing to accept that—bankers, insurance companies, lenders. If they do, hopefully the process will be simplified."

Hartman isn't all business. When he gets to his Franklin County home, he likes to go into his garage and work on his collection of vehicles, including a '65 Corvette convertible, a '72 Impala, and a '72 Chevy pickup, which is his favorite, well-preserved old pickups being rarer than old Corvettes. The son of a mechanic, he's not afraid of getting greasy. "I grew up around it all, so it's become my hobby," he says. 



Randy Walker

King Tower

SuperVision...a tool for supervisors >

Executive Summary:

A new legal app can't shout "Objection!" in a courtroom, but it can help human resource managers decide if they should consult an attorney.

By Randy Walker

iPhones can navigate maps, make hotel reservations, and help tune guitars. Now they can even provide legal information.

While not a substitute for a lawyer, Spilman Thomas & Battle's new SuperVision app

offers tutoring on employment and labor questions. Targeted to corporate executives, general counsel, business owners and human resource professionals, it will be most useful to "all levels of HR from executives on down," says Eric Iskra, chair of Spilman's labor and employment practice group.

Spilman's chief innovation officer, Skip Lineberg, came up with the idea, according to Iskra, who is based at Spilman's Charleston, W.Va., headquarters. The firm's lawyers authored the content. A beta (trial) version was released in January. Version 1.0.1 was launched in July. Apple users can find it in the Apple app store by searching for "supervision" or "Spilman." Several hundred copies have been downloaded since January, according to Tiffany Fridley, Spilman marketing specialist.

Once SuperVision is downloaded, wireless access is not needed. The free app runs on iPhones and iPads. An Android version is not yet available. Non-Apple users can access the program on Spilman's website, www.spilmanlaw.com.

SuperVision will be updated periodically to reflect changes in the law. Users will be automatically notified when updates are available.

King Tower, in the Roanoke office, leads Spilman's labor and employment practice in Virginia. "In labor and employment law there are issues you have to consult an attorney for, but the most effective way to use those legal resources is to be as well versed as you can be about human resource and legal issues in advance," he says. "For years we've done seminars for HR executives that deal with these issues, but we decided to use this technology. It's a decision-tree model of how you can analyze some common employment law issues."

The welcome screen lists three HR situations: a salaried employee who is asking for overtime pay; an employee who's leaving and needs to be paid final wages; and an employee who is complaining on social media. Additional scenarios will be added, Tower says.

An example: clicking on "Salaried but asking for overtime pay" brings up an explanation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The "next" button leads to a question: "Does the employee spend more than 80% of her time in the management of a permanent department/office or unit of the employer?" Clicking "yes" brings up another question: "Does the employee supervise two or more full-time employees?" Examples of supervisory functions are given. Clicking on "yes" brings up the result: "Executive exemption applies... Therefore, the overtime and minimum wage regulations of the FLSA do not apply to this employee."

Clicking "next" brings a disclaimer and



Eric Iskra

a recommendation to contact Spilman for specific advice on particular cases, along with Spilman's phone number and email.

The app isn't intended only for clients. "We've made it available to anyone," Tower says. "We plan to look at the data as to whether it's just our client base or broader, but I assume it's going to be broader. Like most firms we view everybody as either a client or a prospective client."

"Many firms, some small, some large, have released apps, to serve up information in a way that's useful to clients," says Kent Zimmermann, a Chicago-based management consultant to law firms. "I've seen some from the big firms and some from the small firms. It still qualifies as innovative and forward thinking. I think it's smart. The legal profession is not widely perceived as a beacon of innovation. By releasing this app they have an opportunity to differentiate themselves from competitors in a way that distinguishes them in the minds of their clients and prospective clients." 

THE MUSCULAR SYSTEM



Tom Field

Shaun Moore and Ashley Austin are certified massage therapists.

Body Language Arts >

Executive Summary:

This business can help you learn to speak and understand a new language...the language your body uses to tell you what's going on.

By Tom Field

When you think about it, the location of Green Tea Massage & Wellness Center makes perfect sense. The little Oakdale Plaza strip mall sits right off US 220 in Daleville, just past Lord Botetourt High School. This has to be the busiest spot in all of Botetourt County. Cars zipping by, students and school busses merging, trucks downshifting as they hit the slope, and every other car either pulling out or pulling in to one of the many merchants generously sprinkled along both sides of the highway.

In other words, Green Tea is right in the mix of all the commerce, all the rush, all the noise, and all the stress. When you step inside, you're already primed for de-stressing. Indeed, you immediately sense you have stepped into another world. And yet, it's a clinic. Go figure.

"We really emphasize the fact that we are a clinic," says owner Carrie Nolan. "The distinction is that we are a massage practice. We don't accept gratuities, most of our clients come because they have issues or want to prevent them. Our focus is on the clinical side, not really the pampering spa" (though she acknowledges some clients do visit simply for the relaxation benefits).

Carrie's associates, Shaun Moore and Ashley Austin nod in agreement. All three are CMTs (certified massage therapists), and can't seem to emphasize enough that their service addresses the practical. Each of them maintains eye contact, sitting in a way that you don't realize until later proves they are completely focused on you. You wonder if they can tell just by looking at you if you have a pain. You question if they can hear an almost indiscernible pop from one of your joints. They're that attentive. It's as if the trio not only practices body language, they understand the dialect.

"We're an integral part of the healthcare team," Shaun explains. He's in his 40s, and of the three (Carrie's in her 30s, Ashley, 20s), has the most diverse background, from teaching to physical education to financial management. The educator side comes out frequently, as he references his anatomy charts and describes how he goes about "relaxing and retraining muscles" and

addressing the “speed bumps” to break up adhesion during a treatment. Shaun says there is ample information shared at both the beginning and end of a client's visit.

“I'll say, 'let me share what we did,' at the end [of the session],” Shaun says, “and then we'll go over what was discovered and where to go from there.”

Ashley also points to Green Tea's distinction from the spa approach.

“We're constantly communicating,” she says. “We provide recommendations to improve a person's well-being.” That takes listening, and examining, and responding—which is a different level than the massage sessions you might get at spa or resort.

Carrie Nolan started Green Tea Massage & Wellness Center in March, 2011. She says as a nursing student, she developed an appreciation for the clinical side of the business. With her husband and co-owner, John, they started the practice by setting up a clinic model, complete with individual patient records and the expectation of monthly visits from the majority of clients. Customers come from all walks of life, but if you had to settle on one principle

demographic, it's “35 and older, professional, and health-conscious,” Carrie says.

Carrie says the therapists really get to know their clients. To illustrate, Ashley says she asks about details such as sleeping patterns, and Shaun adds he concentrates on posture and core.

“We're focused on our client,” Carrie says. “We don't charge a different rate depending on the service.”

Green Tea is open Monday through Saturday and will come on site as needed. The business supports numerous community events such as Wine & Wellness, the farmers market, and particularly sport- and health-related causes, like Race for the Cure and Adventure Cycling.

Charts, books, information on stretching, muscle use and sports performance adorn the office. Like most massage studios, the ambience is peaceful and relaxing—but you sense the additional element of knowledge and understanding.

Not unlike a process you might find when learning a language. The body language. 



Tom Field

Green Tea owner Carrie Nolan wanted to set up a clinical model.

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Tech Scoop

Thinking critically >

Executive Summary:

"I read it on the internet" may be the blaring-horn, flashing-light warning of the information highway.

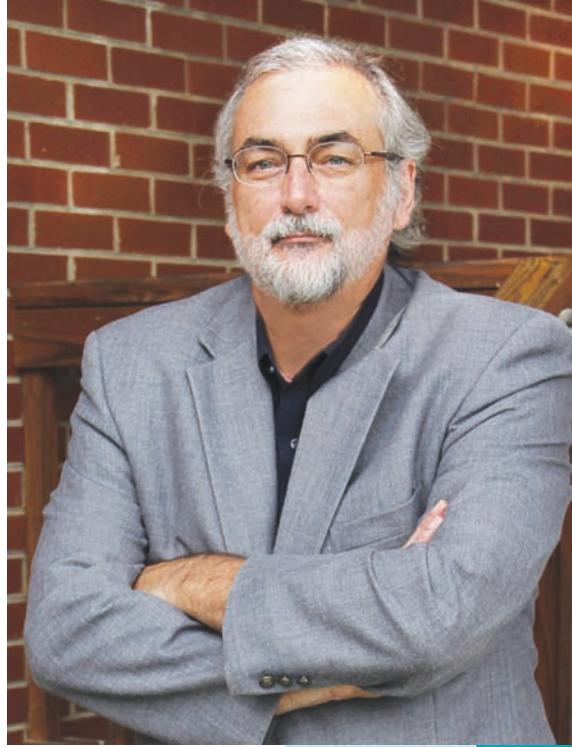
By Michael Miller

I think we can all agree that nearly universal internet connectivity has fundamentally altered the world. Probably the two most important changes resulting from the worldwide web have been instant and global communication and free access to the world repository of information. The internet provides a way to instantly transmit information to an audience of monumental proportions, never before possible.

Unfortunately, a side effect of instant and global communication is the instant and global transmission of false or misleading information. Scams of every imaginable sort abound. But to me, the most dangerous aspect of our brave new world is the internet-enabled soap box.

There was a time when snake oil and goofy politics were peddled in person, and you could at least use the face-to-face aspect of communication to help judge the veracity and value of the message. But the anonymous nature of communication over the internet has removed that intuitive filter, and we often are prone to imagine some vetting of the truth has magically occurred before a blog post is released into the wild. Not so.

Here's a mild illustration of the problem. I read a post by a friend, whom I consider to be a normal thinking human being that was about how Dannon "uses bugs in its yogurt!" The post provided a link to an online petition to the company to make them stop using a dye called Carmine, which can be derived from the crushed bodies of tiny insects. Furthermore, the Carmine has been linked to severe allergic reactions and even anaphylactic shock.



Michael Miller

Thirty seconds of searching on the web turned up the fact that the dye in fact can be derived from a particular insect, but can also be produced by a number of other chemical reactions. In any case, once the chemical is turned into a product, it's just an additive, like the various preservatives we find on a food label. And yes, a tiny percentage of the population is allergic to Carmine, but a tiny percentage of the population is allergic to almost everything (not all at the same time, of course).

Now, it's perfectly fine if you want only natural foods with no additives or processing. However, I would remind you that Jane Austen likely died from a disease caused by drinking unpasteurized milk. But the point is to not just knee-jerk to everything you read on the web.

Remember, nobody out there is your friend, and nobody is checking on this stuff you read. You need to apply some critical thinking skills. In other words, use your head.

To quote from one of my favorite movies, *A League of Their Own*, "It's that lump three feet above your...".

Well, you know what I mean. 



all photos: Tom Field

Open architecture with naturalistic motif

Work Spaces

"Shhhhhhhhhhh!" >

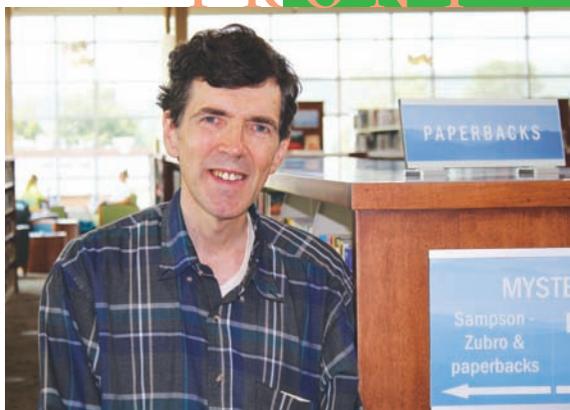
Executive Summary:

Working in a library can be quite quiet...but it's still stimulating to the staff and guests in Glenvar.

By Tom Field

There was quite a bit of fanfare when the new Glenvar Library opened in west Roanoke County this summer. Though hardly the largest library you'll encounter, the combination of open architecture, modern amenities, and picturesque setting is something to celebrate. And when you've been waiting as long as area residents have for this facility—a serious upgrade from the cramped and outdated blob of a structure it replaced—it's a wonder someone didn't commission a parade with full colors and marching band.

In fact, one gets the notion the staff would like to shout about the arrival of their beautiful new work space. But we all know the rule. Librarians never shout. It's not permitted.



John Vest, librarian: "New people are coming in"

"[The new Glenvar Library] turned out really great," says branch librarian John Vest.

"There has been a lot of anticipation for many years. It's a wonderful view, the landscaping and architecture is really nice, and we especially enjoy the naturalistic motif."

Vest shows off the new digs, practically gushing over the tremendous improvements such as technology access points, the computer lab, and the attention to details such as design and ergonomic features in the kids and young adult sections.

The programming feels better in the new building (TED talks, author visits, classes, etc.) and there are so many new people coming by for the first time, Vest says. It's quite the showplace.

The new Glenvar Library makes a very clear statement that libraries don't have to be stuffy. Just don't shout about it. It's not permitted. 



Children's area



Computer lab



SALEM CIVIC CENTER SERVES UP SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE WITH ITS SIGNATURE SPIRIT

The Salem Civic Center has long been recognized as a landmark for major sports events, trade shows, concerts, conventions, seminars, and city meetings. It is at the heart of the James E. Taliaferro Sports and Entertainment Complex, which extends over 65 acres and also encompasses the Salem Football Stadium, and the Salem Memorial Baseball Park. Every year more than 650,000 people enjoy the numerous activities that the sizeable facility hosts. Every March thousands of college basketball fans flock from all over the country to cheer for their favorite premier teams as they compete in the NCAA Division III Championship Basketball games in the Civic Center's spacious coliseum. The Roanoke Valley Horse Show, which is both the largest all-breed show in Virginia and the longest running sporting event in this area, attracts throngs of visitors every June. Year after year children and adults alike enjoy 12 days in July of free entertainment at the famous Salem Fair. Musical superstars like Michael McDonald, Scott McCreery, Def Leppard, Kenny Chesney, and Lynryd Skynyrd have brightened the arena's stage, as have Bill Cosby and Larry the Cable Guy. Debra Hite, the Center's Booking Coordinator, states, "On every day except Christmas, we host gatherings for

different organizations, parties of all sizes, and numerous events that are guaranteed to attract people with a wide range of interests, ranging from animals, cars, minerals, comics, and roller derby to Sesame Street, gems and mineral shows, and the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra."

With all of these shows, celebrations, and meetings to produce, it is remarkable that a small but mighty staff manages this huge task. Carey Harvey cutter has served as the Director of the Salem Civic Center for 30 years. After starting in 1968 by working in the office, he became a statistician for minor league hockey teams. His enthusiasm and business savvy propelled him into his positions as assistant promotions manager and then assistant Civic Center Manager. When he was promoted to Director in 1983, John Saunders took his place, and since then the two have used their talents to accelerate and fine tune the growth of the Civic Center, as well as the Red Sox games in the Baseball Stadium and events such as the Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl and the Summer Music Games of Southwest Virginia. Wendy Delano, the Sales Manager of the Civic Center, remarks, "All of the events that we have here make a positive impact





on not just Salem, but the surrounding communities as well. With so many visitors overflowing into hotels, restaurants, and entertainment areas nearby, everyone benefits from what we do.”

Versatility, variety, and value are keywords that accurately describe the Salem Civic Center’s approach to renting its Meeting Rooms, the Community Room, the Arena, and the Annex for social functions. John Saunders says, “Approximately 60,000 people hold their meetings annually at the Center. We have the Rotary, Lions, and Kiwanis Clubs every week in the meeting rooms, as well as several other local groups.” Each of these newly remodeled rooms varies in size and features audio-visual equipment for presentations. For guests requiring additional space for seminars or parties, the Center offers the Community Room, which can be configured as one, two, or three separate units as needed. The 21,000-square foot Arena can be transformed into an endless number of arrangements for specific occasions such as ceremonies, banquets, weddings, and receptions, thanks to the mobility of the risers and creativity of the Civic Center staff.

In fact, thinking outside of the box is one of Samuel Terry’s trademarks. The Civic Center’s caterer is well known for his creative thinking when it comes to last minute details and juggling multiple deadlines. “Whether it may be bringing in an ice sculpture for a wedding, painting a pirate ship backdrop for a party, producing 2,700 boxed meals for a single event, managing four different events at different locations simultaneously...no problem,” says Samuel Terry, the Food and

Beverage Manager of Salem Catering. “We’re going to make it happen. We enjoy making our customers happy!” In addition to serving 500 lunches to weekly meeting attendees, Sam prepares the food for his events from a more varied menu. “We are very conscious about our customers’ needs, especially when it comes to food allergies and ethnic preferences,” he mentions. From breakfast business meetings to formal banquets for 1500, from vegetarian dinners to concession food, Sam and his small staff produce each plate with attention to detail and quality. They also work with clients outside in the community for catered parties. “We have great loyalty to one another and especially to the city of Salem,” Sam states proudly.

Truly, Sam and his team put the icing on the cake for the Salem Civic Center and all that it does to bring entertainment, education, and economy to our community.



Salem Civic Center
1001 Roanoke Boulevard
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www.salemciviccenter.com





Jeanné Chitty

Watts Up! Batteries + Bulbs: a Brilliant Power Couple >

Executive Summary:

There's no need to be in the dark when making choices for lighting and battery power.

By Jeanné Chitty

We're all familiar with the symbol of a light bulb lighting up to signify a good idea. It seems fitting that this icon should herald the rebranding of Batteries Plus®, the largest and fastest growing battery and light bulb franchise in the country, as Batteries Plus Bulbs®. As it signaled its front-running position in the \$17 billion light bulb replacement industry in the US, Batteries Plus Bulbs has established its new identity in more than 560 locations in 46 states and Puerto Rico. Roanoke is fortunate to have two stores near both malls, one located on Valley View Boulevard and the other on Electric Road. Their highly-trained staffs are not only experts at helping consumers select cost-effective, energy-saving lighting for their homes and businesses, but can also provide a wide variety of batteries for

phones, cameras, electronics, vehicles, and uncommon objects as well.

With the proliferation of so many types of light bulbs, the choices we have nowadays are daunting. As if the walls of bulb boxes weren't mind-boggling enough, the lingo that we have to decipher is hardly illuminating. Remember how easy it was to find a pack of 60watt bulbs? Now we're confronted by a bewildering display of bulbs in all shapes, sizes, wattages, lumens, colors, voltages...and you have selections that go way beyond your basic incandescent and fluorescent bulbs into the realms of reflectors, halogens, xenons, LEDs, halides, dimmables, high pressure sodiums, compacts, and neodymiums. Members of the Batteries and Bulbs team will shed light on these perplexing terms for shoppers, knowing that their searches will be rewarded among the astonishing supply of over 15,000 light bulb products, ranging from basic bulbs for decorative lamps, track, and recessed lighting to bulbs for other items such as aquariums, medical equipment, cars, and trucks.

Justin Schaper, Regional Manager, says, "Our customers are looking for advice on which bulbs to purchase, based on specific applications, cost, and energy efficiency. More and more people are becoming aware of the Energy Independence and Security

RETAIL / SERVICE FRONT

Act (EISA) of 2007, which calls for the phasing out of all incandescent light bulbs by 2014. It's not that we won't be able to use any that we may have, we just won't be able to buy them by sometime next year." Pondering the price of replacing your incandescent bulbs with LEDs as the New Year looms ahead? Although LEDs were more expensive when they first hit the market, they are now much more reasonably priced and are very practical, when one calculates their longevity. Schaper states, "When designed correctly, an LED will last 20-30 years and takes one-fifth of the energy of a regular incandescent bulb. Whether it's replacing their current light bulbs with LEDs or other energy-efficient lighting options, we'll help guide consumers through this confusing process, discuss lighting options, and help them find the light bulbs that are right for them."

Roanoke shoppers may feel the power when they walk between the aisles of thousands of batteries for everything imaginable, from watches, digital cameras, laptops, cell phones, and vehicles to more unusual electronic instruments and even vintage toys. With this ever-expanding inventory, it's no surprise that Batteries Plus Bulbs is the country's leader in the \$30.7 billion battery replacement industry. "One service that few people know about," says Schaper, "is that our company will test your car's

battery for free. In the event that you should need a new one, we will install one while you wait." Specialists at the in-store tech centers will also test, condition, design, and put together custom battery packs for rechargeable household and business products such as vacuum cleaners, cordless razors, wheelchairs, exit signs, cell phones, iPads, iPods, MP3s, electric golf carts, and drills. The Batteries and Bulbs technicians will install batteries for countless other items including watches and keyless remotes. Schaper adds, "Another service that Batteries and Bulbs is proud to offer its customers is our in-store recycling program. To keep our environment clean, we use EPA-approved methods to safely recycle batteries, light bulbs, and certain electronic devices."

As the company grows, Batteries and Bulbs continues to dazzle the competition with its outstanding array of over 45,000 kinds of batteries, light bulbs, and accessories. Roark Capital Group, a private equity firm based in Atlanta, owns this successful franchise, as well as such recognizable businesses as McAlister's Deli, Auntie Anne's, Schlotsky's, Arby's, Cinnabon, Carvel Ice Cream, and several more. You can keep up with current developments by following Batteries Plus Bulbs on Twitter at: twitter.com/batteriesplus and like them on Facebook at: facebook.com/batteriesplus.com. 



Justin Schaper

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Tom Field

CAUTION and COURTESY... Senior driver ahead >

Executive Summary:

Age is not the determining factor for safe driving but it is an important consideration.

By Cathy Cooper

Our society and many around the globe are rapidly aging and are expected to continue to do so for several decades. In addition to this undeniable demographic trend, we must also consider the following facts: (1) The personal vehicle is still the primary means of transportation and independence in the U.S., (2) Senior drivers aged 75 and older are greatly over-represented in crash rates on a per-mile-driven basis, and (3) The typically increased degree of fragility seen in seniors greatly magnifies their risk of injury or death for any level of crash severity compared to that experienced by younger occupants.

—Virginia Tech Transportation Institute website/SMASH group

Roanoke and the surrounding areas have become something of a retirement mecca. This brings many benefits to businesses and culture but it also adds to the traffic, particularly in congested shopping and residential areas.

Nationwide, the number of senior drivers is expected to triple in the next 20 years. Many of the drivers on our local roads and streets are seniors, both natives and those who have moved here. What does that mean to other drivers? If you or a family member are one of the seniors behind the wheel, what do you need to know?

First, the good news. Senior drivers are not the leading cause of traffic accidents. That dubious distinction still belongs to young, inexperienced drivers. Senior drivers, considered to be those over 70, are generally safer drivers since they tend to “self restrict”. This means they are less likely to drive during bad weather, after dark, or on busy highways. They have a very low incidence of drinking and driving and are less likely to speed and more likely to wear seat belts. They often drive more slowly than the speed limit, perhaps in recognition of their reduced skill or an exaggerated perception of speed.

But the other side of the coin is that senior drivers more often have physical limitations like vision, memory, and other medical issues and medication issues that put them at greater risk than middle-aged or other experienced drivers. Behavioral factors in particular may increase their risk for traffic accidents: poor judgment in making left-hand turns; drifting within the traffic lane; and decreased ability to change behavior in response to an unexpected or rapidly changing situation. Statistics show that

older drivers are more likely than younger ones to be involved in multi-vehicle crashes, particularly at intersections. The American Geriatrics Society says “the number of accidents per mile driven goes up around age 60, and gets much higher after 75.” Drivers older than 65 years have some of the highest accident rates, second only to teen drivers.

Jon Antin, Director, Center for Vulnerable Road User Safety at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, says, “...as we age as a nation, we must look for opportunities to address these concerns in a more systematic way than we are currently if we are to successfully deal with the rising tide of seniors, not just in the transportation arena, but in all of society's key institutions.”

State efforts to require older drivers to be tested for vision, rules knowledge, and behind the wheel skills have met with strong opposition from seniors and groups like AARP and others who say requiring such testing for only one segment of the driving population is discriminatory. So far, only California has such requirements in place and then only for drivers 70 and over who have been involved in two or more accidents in a year.

Many seniors recognize their reduced capacity for driving but have little or no choice but to continue driving. Retirement may require them to work part-time, a lack of assistance may mean they have to go out for groceries, prescriptions and medical appointments. Very few live in a walkable community, and walking may be more difficult and risky than driving. Lack of public transportation, affordable shuttle services and delivery services for food and other commodities add to the need for driving. In many cases it is just too hard to give up that uniquely American independence found in getting into one's own car whenever one wants. It's tough for a person who has been independent for so many years to admit that he or she needs help with a simple thing like going to the grocery store.

How does a community like ours, where seniors are an integral part of who we are, deal with the dilemma of senior driving and highway safety?

- Cut 'em some slack. Don't crowd, honk at, or display aggressive behavior to that senior in front of you in traffic. It's rude and it may only compound the problem,

distracting them or confusing them. Imagine how you would feel (or WILL feel) if it were you being honked and cursed at.

- If you have a parent, friend, or neighbor that you suspect may be having difficulty, invite them to ride with you on errands or to pick up a few items for them while you are out. Be respectful of their pride by not giving the impression that you don't think they can do it themselves, only that it's a considerate thing to do, especially if the weather is bad.
- If you have occasion to be a passenger in a senior's vehicle, don't carry on in a way that will distract or upset the driver. Observe the driver to evaluate how well he or she seems to manage and if necessary, gently point out dangerous issues, like crossing the lane lines, being too close to the median, a pedestrian preparing to cross in front of the vehicle, a school bus with flashing lights. Once the trip is over you may want to have a calm and frank conversation with senior drivers about your concerns and offer suggestions to help them improve. Lieutenant Joe Mills of the Salem Police Department, whose own mother recently gave up driving, says, “I've been very surprised by how reluctant families are to have the conversation. I understand the notion that no adult child wants to be viewed as overbearing, controlling or disrespectful in the eyes of their aging parent, but it is important to the safety of the driver, their passengers, and the driving public.
- If you are a senior driver who has concerns about your safety, talk to a family member or check out the DMV website and local senior centers for driving improvement classes or speak to your doctor about a driving skills assessment.

We see signs everywhere encouraging us to “share the road” with bicyclists and to be aware of motorcycles, and to “slow down, children playing”. Maybe we need to add one more reminder...“Be courteous to older drivers”. Remember, that grey-haired couple in front of you is probably somebody's grandparents. 

For tips on how to talk to a senior about their driving skills, medical skills assessment, and driving schools for seniors, go to vbFRONT.com and click on the “MORE FRONT” icon.

How much will Marketplace health insurance cost?

Prices of Marketplace plans have not been set yet. Prices will be available Oct. 1, 2013, when open enrollment starts and you can begin shopping.

How will Marketplace health plans be priced?

All insurance plans available through the Marketplace will be offered by private insurance companies. The insurance companies will decide which plans to offer and how much each will cost.

All Marketplace plans must be approved by state insurance departments and certified by the Marketplace. Prices are approved by state insurance departments as required by state law.

Some Marketplace health plans will have lower monthly premiums and may charge you more out of pocket when you need care. Some will be higher-premium plans that cover more of your costs when you need care. Others will fall in between. All plans will cover the same list of essential health benefits.

Starting in October when you use the Marketplace to compare plans, you'll see prices for all plans available to you. Prices will show any cost savings you may be eligible for based on your income.

How can I get lower costs on Marketplace coverage?

When you use the Marketplace, you may be able to get lower costs on monthly premiums or out-of-pocket costs, or get free or low-cost coverage. You can save money in the Marketplace in three ways. All of them depend on your income and family size.

- You may be able to lower costs on your monthly premiums when you enroll in a private health insurance plan.

- You may qualify for lower out-of-pocket costs for co-payments, coinsurance and deductibles.

- You or your child may get free or low-cost coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Will I qualify for lower costs on monthly premiums?

It depends on the size of your household and the amount of income you earn every year. The lower your income, the higher your savings will be. In general, people at the following income levels will qualify to save in 2014. (The amounts below are based on 2013 numbers and are likely to be slightly higher in 2014.)

- Up to \$45,960 for individuals
- Up to \$62,040 for a family of two
- Up to \$78,120 for a family of three
- Up to \$94,200 for a family of four
- Up to \$110,280 for a family of five
- Up to \$126,360 for a family of six
- Up to \$142,440 for a family of seven
- Up to \$158,520 for a family of eight

If you fall within these thresholds, you'll see the amount of savings you're eligible for when you fill out your Marketplace application. Prices shown for insurance plans will reflect the lower costs.

These lower costs are handled with a tax credit called the Advance Premium Tax Credit. But these tax credits can be applied directly to your monthly premiums, so you get the lower costs immediately.

Will I qualify for lower out-of-pocket costs?

When you get coverage through the Marketplace, you may be able to get lower costs on deductibles, copayments and coinsurance.

As with the premium tax credits, whether you qualify depends on the size of your household and your annual income. For getting lower out-of-pocket costs, the threshold is lower.

Health insurance companies offering coverage through the Marketplace must lower the amount you pay out of pocket for essential health benefits if your household income is below the following amounts. (Incomes below are based on 2013 numbers. They are likely to be slightly higher in 2014.)

- Up to \$28,725 for individuals
- Up to \$38,775 for a family of two
- Up to \$48,825 for a family of three
- Up to \$58,875 for a family of four
- Up to \$68,925 for a family of five
- Up to \$78,975 for a family of six
- Up to \$89,025 for a family of seven
- Up to \$99,075 for a family of eight

Plans in the Marketplace are separated into four different categories: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum. These categories are based on how much of your medical costs you pay and how much the plan pays when you get medical care. They are not based on plan quality. If you qualify for out-of-pocket savings, you must choose a Silver plan to get the savings.

Where can I get free or low-cost care in my community?

If you can't afford any health plan, you can get free or low-cost health and dental care at a nearby community health center.



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Stop Bullying: Speak Up! >

Executive Summary:

It takes a village...schools, parents, programs, and perseverance, to change the culture of bullying.

By Whitney Puckett

Fifteen years ago, bullying brought to mind "Kick me!" signs and schoolboy fist fights. But the Columbine High School massacre on April 20, 1999 changed the nation's dialogue on the matter. In one afternoon, what was once seen as a rite of passage had become the gateway to unspeakable crimes, and with that dramatic shift in tone came an avalanche of school and community responses.

Bullying policies became common in public school codes of conduct, with

stiff penalties ranging from suspension to expulsion attached, and annual presentations such as 'Rachel's Challenge' began popping up across the nation. The U.S. and Canada declared anti-bullying months, and lawmakers began drafting anti-bullying legislation. So extensive was the response by school systems, that it would be difficult now to find a student who has not been exposed to some kind of anti-bullying, cultural-diversity training.

One would think that after almost 15 years of anti-bullying campaigning our children would be strangers to this kind of aggression, but according to Professor Anthony Peguero of Virginia Tech's Sociology Department, that's not the case.

Prof. Peguero's research revealed that about 1 in 3 students have experienced being bullied. While Peguero's percentage may seem excessive, still other researchers have found rates as high as 60%.

Why the discrepancy? Peguero believes that it stems from there not being any singular, clear-cut definition.

"School bullying' is typically defined as intentional and repeated aggression against someone who cannot easily defend themselves. [It] can take various forms such as physical, verbal, and relational (e.g. social exclusion) as well as more recently, cyber-bullying (defined as bullying via mobile phones and the internet). In more recent years, bullying



has expanded to include abuse of one student by others as well as acts of cruelty or meanness.”

Essentially, because bullying’s definition is so extensive and imprecise, it is difficult for administrators and district attorneys to prosecute the offenders.

Peguero also explains that the victims of bullying are just as difficult to define. “Because bullying is associated with power – the characteristics of who are vulnerable to experience bullying is also linked to inequality. However, the context to who is a minority changes in different situations,” Peguero explains.

Bullying usually begins for students during elementary school and peaks in middle school. “This is not to say that aggression doesn’t occur in high schools – rather the type of aggression and violence that occurs within schools transitions into delinquent and criminal acts,” notes Peguero.

Recently, network T.V. and social media outlets have embraced the anti-bullying challenge. Many of these networks do simple public service announcements, such as NBC’s “The More You Know” segments. However, Cartoon Network has upped the bar with its “Stop Bullying: Speak Up” campaign.

Prof. Peguero, among others, acts as an advisor to network executives, cartoonists, writers, and producers for the campaign, which seeks to target school age children with a series of coordinated public service

announcements “...that highlights..the social problem of bullying and violence within U.S. schools,” says Peguero.

Much of Peguero’s contribution to the campaign is to review scripts and give suggestions for adding anti-bullying messages. The most important of these messages is that students who are being bullied or others who are witnesses to it should “Speak Up” and find an adult.

In addition to videos, cartoons, and anti-bullying marketing packets, the “Stop Bullying: Speak Up” website also provides information for students and their parents on how to recognize bullying, talk about it, and address it without fear or embarrassment.

To that end, Peguero recommends that parents become involved with their child’s schooling. “First and foremost, is to establish an open dialogue with his/her child. Research often demonstrates that parents are often unaware of their child’s bullying. Thus, establishing an open and caring dialogue about bullying is fundamental.”

Perhaps with another 15 years of vigilant campaigning, an end to bullying throughout our nation may be attainable through the joint effort of parents, schools, communities, and private industry. Until that day though, Prof. Peguero and the Cartoon Network “Stop Bullying: Speak Up!” and network PSAs must continue the campaign to spread tolerance and kindness. 



Jeanne Chitty

Lynda with Max and Emma.

Four-legged Luxury Loft >

Executive Summary:

Downtown Roanoke's residential revitalization now includes a canine condominium

By Jeanne Chitty

Spacious, well-lit rooms, exercise areas, reasonable rent, easy access to downtown, and great neighbors.

There's a new breed in town – of the four-footed kind, that is. It's called a City Dog, and every day more and more of these urban critters are following their noses to a new boarding accommodation for canines on Salem Avenue in Roanoke. Malteses and malamutes, dachshunds, and Dalmatians, shelties and shepherds, rat terriers and rottweilers, pit bulls and poodles...they all shed their differences and discover their common inner dog when their owners bring them to Lynda Kresnovich, the owner of City Dogs. Since she opened her doors on July 1st, downtown residents and

businesspeople having been getting the inside scoop on her enterprise and bringing their best friends to her warehouse for daily boarding and longer periods such as weekends and vacations. Taking the worry away from pet owners about caring for their four-legged children fills a much-needed niche for city dwellers – and no one has done before what Lynda has in downtown Roanoke.

Earlier this year Lynda was contemplating how to follow her bliss, knowing that she had to devote herself somehow to dogs. Back in the mid-1990s, she and her husband had managed a large kennel in Pittsburgh. Then he got a job in Roanoke, and the couple moved south in 1997. Falling in love with the beauty of the Blue Ridge area, Lynda envisioned developing a canine facility in the country. "As the years passed," says Lynda, "I saw more and more people moving into the city, renovating old buildings, and creating great new living spaces. I kept thinking about their dogs and how these folks would have to find a place to care for them that was convenient and safe."

Lynda began to explore the downtown area for an appropriate space to make her dream into a reality. While cruising along Salem Avenue, she found a For Rent sign



It's open for business.

on half of the Sunnyside Awning building and promptly called the landlord. Several coats of paint later, along with a new AC system, and interior remodeling, and City Dogs was taking matters into its own paws. "We constructed 17 separate runs in the back of our building. 15 of them measure 4' x 6', and two are 6' x 7' for larger dogs or to accommodate two dogs from the same family," Lynda states. "We also created three different play areas that are enclosed by 4' fences. This helps us separate dogs that may need to be separated because they aren't socialized. We require that dogs be spayed or neutered and that their shots are up to date. They are welcome to stay

for a day or as long as their parents like." Lynda's prices are for boarding are very reasonable and can be found on her website at www.CityDogsRoanoke.com. In the near future she will also be offering grooming services.

The reception area is designed in chic contemporary yet comfortable style, where people gather to meet each other and let their dogs interact. It is also an art gallery featuring paintings and sculptures of all types of canines. Come on down and see what all the recreational barking is all about. You'll see why City Dogs are Top Dogs! 🐾



Lynda serving afternoon treats.



Spacious kennel.



A New Twist on Resources >

"Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled."

—Howard Stevenson, Harvard Business School

This quote has been posted in my office for more years than I can remember. Although it's just a definition really, I've always appreciated it, because of its clear distinction between true entrepreneurs and other types of business owners or individuals who start new ventures.

The quote jumped off the wall in a whole new light today when I ran across a report, interestingly enough, from the same family source (Harvard Business Review). The September 2013 edition of HBR magazine includes an article by Julian Birkinshaw and Jordan Cohen entitled "Make Time for the Work that Matters."

The report makes that same old claim we've heard over and over that to be more productive, we need to "eliminate or delegate unimportant tasks and replace them with value added ones." But of course, incorporating that process into your daily routine is not easy; and the article illustrates why that is so. Nevertheless, if you're serious about changing your focus to what matters most, you'll have to identify the tasks you need to drop or outsource. HBR includes a handy little interactive assessment link at www.hbr.org/2013/09/make-time-for-the-work-that-matters/ar/1

Why do so many of us continue to work with so many tasks throughout our workday that may feel like worthy systems, but in the big picture contribute so little to the business's actual success? I don't have the complete answer; but sometimes I believe those tasks are no different from other vices we have that aren't so good or healthy for us.

On Tap from the Pub

Like a poor diet or lack of exercise, finding your clock hitting the noon hour when all you've managed to accomplish so far is going through your emails and checking Facebook, is no less a bad habit.

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:

Time has been called the most valuable resource; better make the most of it.

But speaking of wasting time... let's get to the point. What does that classic definition of entrepreneurship have to do with productive time management?

What if we treated all of those insignificant non-producing tasks as "resources we don't currently control"? The nature of an entrepreneur is to create a venture, and that usually includes the operating process at the time you are running it. We want to develop and run everything. But if we rethink our models, saying to ourselves, "I'm not HR; I'm not IT; I'm not administration," etc., then we will be compelled to look for other ways to get the tasks completed. We won't manage everything ourselves.

Non-producing tasks should be considered resources we don't need to control.

Find a way to get them done. Don't quit being an entrepreneur once you become one. 

Property Rights and Business >

There appear to be two reactions to how people view property rights in Roanoke County: It's either an important issue, or it's a non-issue.

Ed Elswick of the Windsor Hills district, County Board of Supervisors sees the issue as very important. At least important enough to ask for a reaffirmation of the County's policies. A visit at his home on top of Bent Mountain is revealing. First, with a picturesque panoramic view overlooking the Roanoke Valley, one could be tempted to draw parallels between a supervisor who sits up high and oversees the citizens down below. Second, the pristine setting makes it easy to understand why an owner might want extra consideration for policies that would protect his property.

Nothing Ed says supports either perspective.

He talks more about hands-off policies and assurances for all individual citizens than anything else.

"Our job is not to control citizens," Ed says, "it's to serve citizens."

The sentiment makes a good campaign slogan, and indeed Elswick is up for reelection to a second term pending the November 5, 2013 vote. But of all the responsibilities the Board of Supervisors is supposed to manage, Ed continues to beat the drum for individual citizen advocacy. He says "citizens should have the highest rights," and then goes on to cite numerous examples where that concept has not been preserved. He doesn't talk fast, but in less than five minutes he cites three specific cases where the municipality overstepped boundaries to the detriment of the landowner. He even quotes the dollar amounts. And that was just recent occurrences, which make you wonder just how often it happens.

Peppered in his ongoing comments though is a constant refrain.

"[The County of Roanoke] actually does a pretty good job," he says one time. "For the most part, we do ok," he says another time. So maybe Ed Elswick didn't need to bring up the issue or his call for a special resolution at the July meeting. Was he simply grandstanding?

Whether it's a significant issue or not depends on whom you ask.

The County of Roanoke would be in a better position if the whole affair was insignificant. There would be little or nothing to address. But Ed says there is an obligation to "make a positive statement to the citizens that we will protect their



Ed Elswick

Tom Field

Guest Interview

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Ed Elswick says we need to pay more attention to protecting private property.

rights, particularly with recent activities that have been going on at the federal and state level."

And then there's the question of business.

Some see Ed's insistence as "anti-business." He claims the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce does not support his position for political reasons, even though "they cannot come out and specifically say how protecting personal rights would negatively impact business."

Entities like chambers of commerce and economic development departments often have a "distorted opinion of what it really takes to attract business," Ed says.

A retired executive from General Electric, Ed says not once was a decision to locate a business or enterprise ever the result of a tax incentive.

"It's all about access to skilled workers," he states, "and then it moves down the line to things like low property taxes, proximity to the interstate, and the geographic location."

Ed calls his resolution "nothing drastic." A simple reaffirmation and desire to produce a consistent procedure in ensuring private

property rights—that for some reason has stirred up a lot of reaction. He wants the business community to comment on it. He likes informed constituents, recommending papers such as Virginia Viewpoint's "Role of Private Property in a Free Society," and a Cato Institute fellow's positioning statement entitled "Property Rights: The Key to Economic Development."

On paper, Ed's resolution (based on citizen input) reads like a reasonable, rather expected and obvious proclamation. No rabble rousing going on here; nevertheless, Ed leverages the newfound attention by quoting one of his favorite song lyrics: "If you want to get to heaven, you got to raise a little hell."

Hell-raisers shout and hold shotguns. They don't diplomatically ask why a new business "wouldn't prefer to locate in an area where the process is very consistent and transparent...[with] property owners working together to enhance the opportunity for that business to be a success."

That kind of sentiment hardly sounds anti-business. It almost sounds like Ed Elswick is acting more like a citizen than a supervisor. 



You immediately sense you have stepped into another world. — Page 30

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Letters

Farm Fun

Excellent feature in this issue! The agri-tourism angle is one that I think we just do not promote enough in Virginia. From the Eastern Shore and seafood harvested there, to the crops of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah Valley regions, this state produces and harvests so much natural food—roadside “mom and pop” stands to professional vineyards—that we should definitely be touting our agriculture to the nation more than we do.

Thanks for bringing this important economic development and tourism topic found within Virginia to the forefront of your VBF readership.

Barry Moore
Past [Founding] Chairman of The Lynchburg Regional Tourism Board

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

MORE Fun

I just finished reading your August issue. I enjoyed all the articles but the one on Agritourism was my favorite. I checked out the “more” section of your website. I had no idea there were so many farm experiences available in the area! What a great option for parents, or in my case, grandparents, to do something different and fun with children. Your magazine is so informative and fun to read. Keep up the good work!

Anna Ellis
Salem

“ ”
It's a wonder someone didn't commission a parade with full colors and marching band.

— Page 33

Reach Out!

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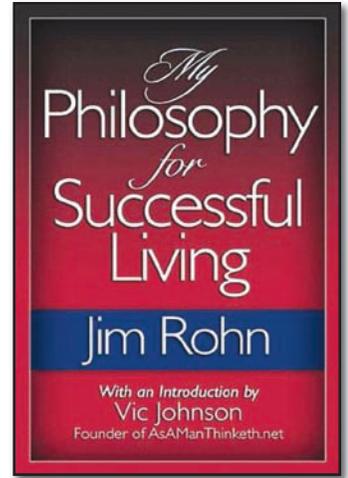
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



Live to Become

Jim Rohn was one of the world's greatest influential thinkers and business leaders. He trained most of the nation's top corporate executives on how to run a business successfully and to motivate people. His philosophy was to add value to your life and to your business, and you will be awarded tremendously in your lifetime. In *My Philosophy for Successful Living* (No Dream Too Big Publishing; 2012) the point that he makes is "the major value in life is not what you get, but the major value in life is what you become." He shows you what principles in life and business are important and those that should be discarded.

Rohn states "the only thing worse than not reading a book in the last 90 days, is not reading a book in the last 90 days, and thinking it does not matter."

I highly recommend that everyone read as many books by Jim Rohn as possible. His principles and philosophy for your life will change the way you think and act, and will add value to your life.

—Ronald Reeker

Ain't Gonna Happen

Upstairs in my studio is a large collection of those large black plastic boxes that serve as file carriers. More than 50. They should be empty, but they're not. What fills them are project files from over the years. They're categorized by account, but in this case, they also include prospects. I need to throw them out (now that we digitize our new paperless office); but I could use them as a poignant lesson

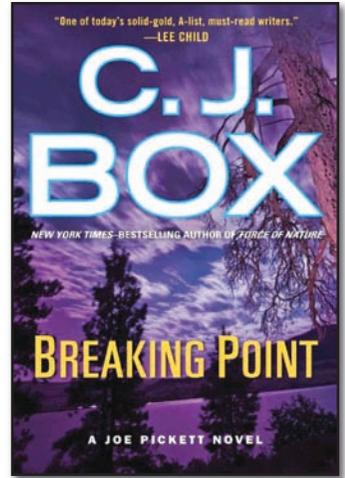
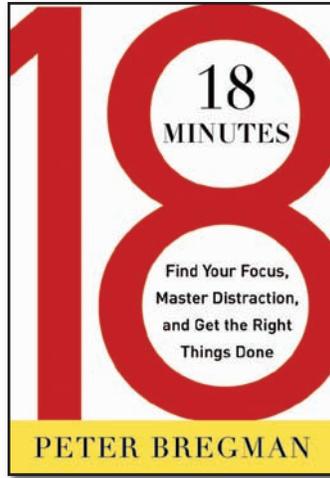
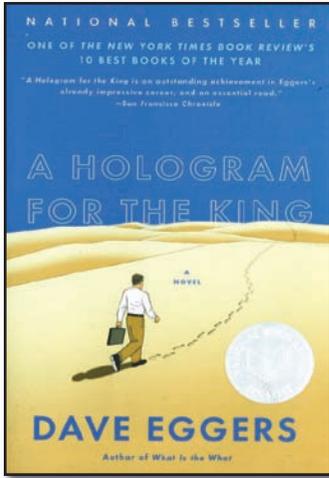
for our interns and young people getting into the business. Why? Each file includes a log sheet. If an auditor were to add up the actual hours worked against the actual hours billed... well, one might think twice about going into business for himself.

A Hologram for the King (Vintage Books; 2012) is exactly like my upstairs studio storage area. Dave Eggers tells the story of a consultant who prepares and waits. And waits. And waits. The salesman's high level firm is presenting its IT solution to Saudi Arabia; but it's the deal of a lifetime as none other than King Abdullah himself is the principal prospect. However, we are strung along for the entire novel, wondering if the deal will consummate. Our protagonist sees his challenge on top of a lifetime bad string of unfulfilled moments, and yet you're not quite sure whether to pull for him or just pity him. The way this novel describes how business happens (or not) in this land of uncertainty and mixed messages is worth the read, but don't expect the enchantment and romance of a thousand and one "Arabian Nights" here. This story's pretty much from the opposite side of the desert. Willy Loman has fallen off a sand dune and he can't get up.

—Tom Field

Take a Minute, 18 Actually

Do you begin each day wondering how you're ever going to tackle all the things that are waiting for your attention? In *18 Minutes: Find Your Focus, Master Distraction, and Get the Right Things Done*, Peter Bregman shares the power of taking 18 Minutes each day to assess yourself and your surroundings. Until you take time to check in with yourself on a



consistent basis, you'll never know where you want to go. Bregman breaks this book into four parts. Part one focuses on the need for us to pause so we can think clearly enough to assess. Part two shows us how to find our focus to determine what matters most to us yearly. In part three he shares with you how to navigate through your individual days as you get the right things done at the right time. And he shares stories about mastering distractions moment by moment in part four.

Bregman shows you how to set aside 18 minutes every day to create a habit of taking 5 minutes each morning to assess what you have to do that day. Then take another 5 minutes before bed to wrap up your day and prepare for the next. But the most critical "check in" points are during the day when each hour you take 1 minute to assess what you've accomplished, what you haven't, and what you need to accomplish before the end of each hour. Those add up to 18 minutes of intentional self-reflection!

—Cathy Dick

Weird in Wyoming

What would you do, or believe, if someone you knew were suddenly the object of a huge manhunt, accused of murdering two federal employees? In *Breaking Point*, they're questions to which Game Warden Joe Pickett has to find answers. Sworn to uphold and enforce the law, but uncertain about the murders and even more confounded by the government's response, Joe walks, or more accurately, stomps a fine line between doing his job

and trying to protect what may well be an innocent man and his family.

When the EPA agents (yes, EPA!) are found buried on a local man, Butch Roberson's building lot, and the federal government descends on Twelve Sleep County, Wyoming, Joe thinks to himself, "Hell had broken open, and hundreds of bureaucrats were gushing out." The over-the-top response makes Joe suspicious of the story the feds are telling. Ordered by his bosses to assist in tracking the suspect through some of the roughest wilderness in the west, Joe complies but has as his real mission discovering the truth and making sure the suspect is arrested, not gunned down.

The feds manage to alienate all the local officials, the governor, and ultimately even the abundant wildlife in the area. Through it all, Joe manages to do his job, look after the men in his search party, and piece together a picture of what really happened and who is the real bad guy (or guys) in this wilderness circus of life and death.

Breaking Point is a fast-paced thriller with great characters, a great story, and white knuckle survival in the wild Wyoming mountain country.

—Cathy Cooper

(**The reviewers:** Ronald Reeker is a local business owner of Casarock Travel who lives in Hardy; Tom Field is publisher of FRONT; Cathy Dick is a productivity coach for One Degree Forward; Cathy Cooper is an executive assistant and project manager for Berryfield.)



Mob Scene >

There was no shortage of colorful characters at **Geek Mob**, held on August 17 at the Winston O. Link Museum in Roanoke. The event, organized by **Roanoke Doesn't Suck**, was part of International Read Comics in Public Day.



Fore! >

The Roanoke Chamber of Commerce held its **Roanoke Regional Cup** golf tournament on August 19. There were 28 teams in the tournament held at the Roanoke Country Club. Blue Ridge Catering, the winning team, included players (from left) **Bill Lawfield**, **William Lovelace**, **Lee T. Lawson** and **Mark Baldwin**. Carilion Clinic was the second place team with members **Chuck Carr**, **Doug Henson**, **Dr. John Piatowski** and **Rob Vaughan**. The third place winners were **Michael Goodman**, **Erik Amey**, **Griffith Hunter** and **Michael Wade** with the Jim Markey Photography team. Proceeds from the tournament help fund Chamber advocacy and educational programs.

FRONT'N ABOUT



Laureen Blakemore

Steppin' Out...in style! >

Downtown Blacksburg, Inc. held its annual **Steppin' Out** festival on August 2 and 3. The event features over 200 artists and crafts people from around the United States selling unique handcrafted items. Downtown Blacksburg merchants also hold their much-awaited final clearance sidewalk sales during Steppin' Out. And those festival foods you love are provided by downtown restaurants.



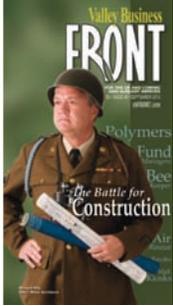
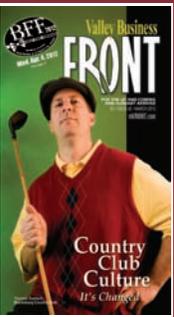
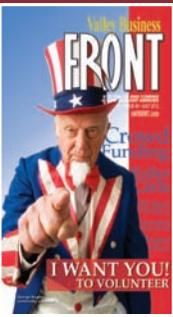
William Mahone



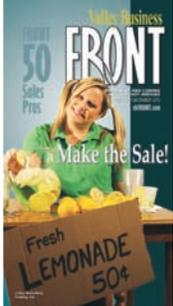
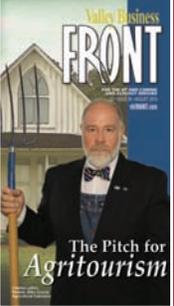
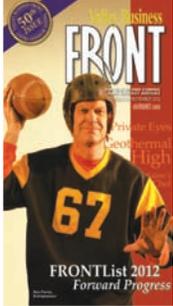
A Second Look >

Goodwill Industries held its fourth **Second Runway** event at the Jefferson Center on August 8. The show features great fashions found in Goodwill stores modeled by local people. The show also highlights the second chance individuals receive through participation in Goodwill job training and employment programs.

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



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The experts can't seem to decide if the nation's economic recovery is stalling or not. Locally, unemployment rates are better than they were a year ago, and the housing market is showing a lot of improvement. You be the judge!

percent, while the Blacksburg MSA dropped by a slightly stronger 72.3 percent.

INITIAL UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Week 30 2012	Week 30 2013
356	116

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

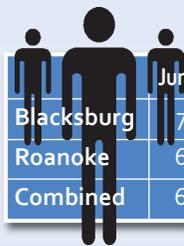
Unemployment/Employment

Unemployment rates in the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas mirrored the state and national trends in June. Rates are down from a year ago, but up from May as graduates entered the workforce. In fact, the local year-to-year improvement (down 4.4 percent) beat Virginia's 3.2 percent drop.

Real Estate

June **home prices** in the region were up from May and from the same month a year ago. In fact, June's average home price of \$211,068 was the highest since August 2010. **Home sales** in the region followed the national trend and dipped slightly over the month, but were up significantly from a year ago. Local home sales rose at a faster rate, up 17.3 percent, than national home sale (15.2 percent). The local average home price is 19.2 percent lower than the national average price of \$261,100.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES



	June 2012	May 2013	June 2013
Blacksburg	7.3%	6.1%	6.7%
Roanoke	6.5%	5.9%	6.3%
Combined	6.8%	5.9%	6.5%

The number of people **employed** in the region in June was up from a year ago, but down from May.

EMPLOYED

June 2012	May 2013	June 2013
222,673	228,831	225,412

Initial unemployment claims for the region (a predictor of future unemployment rates) fell by 67.4 percent during Week 30 of 2013 (July 17-25) from the same week last year, a slightly sharper drop than Virginia's 63.4 percent drop. The Roanoke MSA's initial claims fell by 65.0

HOME PRICES

June 2012	May 2013	June 2013
\$204,357	\$205,263	\$211,068



HOMES SOLD

June 2012	May 2013	June 2013
371	443	435

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

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

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Becky Hepler

Jim Smith: “We beat [Charlotte and Atlanta] for quality of life, hands down.”

The view from, and of, the Peak >

Executive Summary:

Jim Smith’s latest work of art, South Peak, is the fulfillment of his vision for the highly visible site as a great way to say “welcome to Roanoke”.

By Becky Hepler

Jim Smith, chairman of the board of Smith-Packett, has the look of a southern politician with the swept back mane of silver hair and the khaki suit. However the hearty laugh and the charm are genuine, as is the wicked sense of humor and attention to detail that has made his senior living empire a success.

Friend and partner Howard Packett tells the story of the time Jim was making a presentation to the residents about his vision for the Chamberlain, his facility in



View from South Peak

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

the Hampton Roads area, and he asked for questions. Thinking the residents would wonder about the bigger picture, he was surprised when one resident assailed him about the commodes seat height and the problem they made for arthritic knees. "Jim told her he'd have to send her a new toilet because he wouldn't be around to help her stand up, and he had one delivered the very next day," smiles Packett, "complete with a bouquet of flowers and a big bow."

Confirming the story, Smith adds, "I was thinking about being green with low water flow, but I'd never considered how the smaller toilets would be a problem for seniors, so now we use the taller ones."

It's not just the little things that drive Smith, he sees the big picture as well. "I always knew what that hillside would eventually look like," he says of the South Peak site, "just like an artist can look at a canvas and know what will be there when it's finished. Of course, an artist can turn the canvas so no one else can see it until it's finished. With 90,000 cars going by on the highway every day, that wasn't not an option for me."

The view from roadside has gotten significantly better and development continues on the hotel and offices still to be built on the site that once housed a dumping ground for tires and old roofing material. Smith waxes philosophical saying, "Just a little south from here, it turns rural quickly and the kudzu and the corrugated buildings don't really say prosperity. But

now, what a way to welcome people to Roanoke."

The son of a Roanoke City fireman and a Roanoke City Schools employee, Smith's affection for his hometown is deeply ingrained. While he finds the comparison to Charlotte a bit overreaching, "we beat them and Atlanta and several other cities for quality of life, hands down," and certainly comparisons to Asheville are a "...race we can win. But we have to get into the race. Waiting is not a strategy."

Smith has a passion for history (as evidenced by his historical document collection) and so it was no wonder when he had the opportunity to add the Chamberlain to his holdings, he jumped at the chance. "It's been a hotel since 1820," he says. "It's where Edgar Allen Poe wrote the poem, **Annabel Lee**." His other passion is gardening at his cabin in West Virginia. "Here I am a developer, but up there, I'm just a green bean boy."

Even with one foot in the past, Smith is avidly facing the future. "Next year we will add ten new buildings. That means every 30 days, we're employing 100 more people. You have to keep the plates spinning," he says.

He concludes, "One of the thing I am most proud of is that this business will be able to go forward without me. The things we are doing will continue to get done even after I retire." 



Becky Hepler

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Carter Bank & Trust announced the election of **Bill Hubble** as vice president of the board of directors. Hubble was also appointed managing officer of the Blacksburg office.

Brenda Smith has been named president and CEO and **Todd Hammock** has been named executive vice president and senior lender with Franklin Community Bank, NA. Smith was also named president and CEO of MainStreet BankShares, Inc.

The Roanoke office of Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP has announced the promotion of **Patrick Murtaugh** to office managing partner.

National Bank has promoted **Jennifer Kirschenman** to vice president of operations.

Franklin Community Bank, N.A. has hired **Dianne McGuire** as

mortgage loan originator.

The Bank for America Home Loans' Blue Ridge region announced the promotion of **Cindy Verhoven** to retail sales manager.

LEGAL FRONT

Woods Rogers PLC announced **Thomas Cullen** has joined the firm as a partner.

The Roanoke Law Foundation has appointed **Thomas Miller** as chairman and **Francis Casola** and **Joseph Motts** as trustees.

WELLNESS FRONT

Brandon Oaks announced the promotion of **Joseph Hoff** to executive director and named **Lucas Snipes** as administrator of Brandon Oaks Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

Virginia Prosthetics announced that **Bill Earles** has joined the company as a certified orthodist.

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT



Howes

Advance Auto Parts, Inc. has hired **Jason Howes** as vice president, distribution operations.

Peer Segelke has joined as vice president and general counsel and **Joseph Cromer** has become vice president of sales and marketing for Lawrence (Lawrence Transportation Systems; Lawrence Integrated Freight Logistics; Lawrence Data Management; Rusco Window Co.; Lawrence Equipment;

Lawrence AG Equipment; Affordable Container Service; Dixie Trailer & Truck Equipment and United Relocation Group).

EDUCATION FRONT



Holloway

Virginia Tech has announced the following appointments:

The Division of Student Affairs has named **Bill Foy** as director of communications and innovative technologies and **Rachel Holloway** as vice provost for undergraduate affairs.

The Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech has made the following appointments: **Sarah Stein**, **Brooke Beyer** and **E. Scott Johnson** as assistant

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Zimmerman



Ward

professors of accounting and information systems; **Zheng Xiang** and **Kimberly Mathe-Soulek**

as assistant professors of hospitality and tourism management; **Ryan Zimmerman** as associate professor and **Anna-Katherine "A.K." Ward** as assistant professor in the Department of Management.

David Cox, professor of chemical engineering



Chapman

at Virginia Tech, has been selected as head

of the Department of Chemical Engineering.

Gov. Bob McDonnell has appointed **James L. Chapman IV** of Virginia Beach and **Dr. J. Thomas Ryan** of Fredericksburg to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. **Steve Sturgis** of Eastville will also join the board in ex-officio

Have a career announcement?

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- > Virginia Tech President Steger Resigns
- > Lorton Retires from Carilion; Halliwill New CFO
- > Dual Winners in VTK Tech Transfer Challenge
- > Advance Auto Shuffles, Eliminates Executive Chairs
- > Interactive Achievement Gets Cash Infusion
- > Ground Broken for West End Center Project
- > Startup Business Workshop in Roanoke March 29

- > Red Sun Farms Bringing Jobs to Pulaski
- > Locking Down the Cell in Roanoke
- > Virginia Tech Climbing the Rankings Ladder
- > Life-Guard 12 To Get New Home in Lexington
- > Alleghany Gets 55 New Manufacturing Jobs
- > 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

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

Career FRONT

capacity as president of the Virginia Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

CULTURE FRONT

The National D-Day Memorial Foundation announced **Nicole Johnson** has been named development associate.

Kristin Adkins has been promoted to community impact manager and **Sandy Wierzbic** has been hired as development associate by United Way of Roanoke Valley.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure, Virginia Blue Ridge Affiliate hired **Catherine Turner** as executive director.

United Way of Franklin County has hired **Andre Peery** as campaign director.

The Roanoke Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross has named new officers

for 2013-2014: **Tom Turner**, Petroleum Marketers, Inc., chairman; **Todd Morgan**, Martin Brothers Contractors, Inc., first vice chairman; **Jay Inge**, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, treasurer; **Susan Woodie-Williams**, Richfield Retirement, secretary. New board members include: **Ginger Bullington**, Allstate Insurance Co.; **Meg Carter**, community volunteer; **Lakricia Duncan**, Solstas.; **Les Keng**, Suntrust; **Eric Stelter**, Wells Fargo; **Scott Thomasson**, Layman Distributing.



Graeff

The Blue Ridge Land Conservancy, a Roanoke-based nonprofit, has named four new members to its board of trustees.



Hackworth



Jennings



Lesko

They are: **Quinn Graeff** of Roanoke, attorney; **Bill Hackworth** of Roanoke, retired City Attorney for the City of Roanoke; **Anne Jennings** of Roanoke, community volunteer; and **Betty Lesko** of

Moneta, community volunteer

OTHER FRONTS

Zenith Hamilton has been named the Interim Executive Director of the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board.

The Salem Red Sox announced Tuesday that Vice President of Ticketing, **Ryan Shelton**, has been named general manager. In addition, assistant general manager **Allen Lawrence** and Director of Food & Beverage **Tim Anderson** were both promoted to vice presidents of the club.

WDBJ, the local CBS affiliate, has named **Kelly Zuber** as news director and **Dan Dennison** as features reporter.

The Roanoke Regional Airport Commission has announced its new officers: **Cynthia Lawrence**, chairwoman;

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and **William Gust**, vice chairman. **Dr. John Dooley**, **H. Odell Minnix** and **Bittle Porterfield** serve as commissioners.



Craft

The Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau (RVCVB) has named new members of its Board of Directors: **Butch Craft**, Owner of the Roanoker Restaurant Inc., **Tarah**

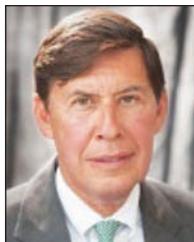


Holland



Lanford

Holland, Tourism Development Manager with the County of



Robbins

Franklin, **Ken Lanford**, President & CEO of Lanford Brothers Company Inc., **Charles Robbins**, retired Regional President of BB&T, **Doug Robison**, President of Wildflour Inc., and **John Williamson**, Chairman, President and CEO of RGC Resources, Inc.

New officers for the

organization are: **Lee Wilhelm**, Senior Director of Campus Development with Richfield Retirement Community, Chair; **Jeff Marks**, President and General Manager of WDBJ Television Inc., Vice Chair; **Gary Walton**, General Manager of The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Secretary; **Carey Harveycutter**, Director of Civic Facilities for the City of Salem, Treasurer; and **Bart Wilner**, President of Entre Computer Center, Past Chair.

Compiled by Cathy Cooper

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FRONT Notes



Macados, Salem location, one of 18.

Macado's Renovating

Richard Macher, owner of the 18 restaurant Macado's chain recently announced plans to invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to update and remodel 2 sites in the RV/NRV area. Work will soon begin on the downtown Roanoke and Radford locations. Both locations will remain open during the construction.

LewisGale Searching

Rex Etheridge, acting head of LewisGale Medical Center will lead the hospital during a national search for a permanent CEO. Etheridge was appointed interim CEO in mid-July following the resignation of Victor Giovanetti, former CEO.

Sun Medical adds fitness equipment

Sun Medical, a Roanoke company that has been providing stair lifts and other home health care safety equipment since 1995 now also carries exercise equipment for residential and commercial use. The change was prompted by the company's desire to offer its customers a way to be healthier and by changes to Medicare.

Peaks of Otter expanding services, and jobs

Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts, new concessionaire for the lodge and restaurant at the Peaks of Otter has hired another twenty employees as it continues to expand services and

dining operations at the property. Interim Manager, Marcus Storey said the lodge's occupancy rates were strong and the restaurant has been "very busy."

Jobs coming to Roanoke

Ardagh Group, an international food packaging company has announced plans to purchase and renovate the former Hanover Direct building in Roanoke County. The company will invest over \$93 million and expects to hire 96 people. The plant marks the single largest manufacturing investment in the history of Roanoke County. Ardagh expects the facility to be operational by the end of 2014.

And more jobs

Following Ardagh's announced move, Canline Systems, a Netherlands based supplier of conveyor systems for the packaging industry, announced they too would open its first US facility. The company will occupy a building on Commonwealth Drive in southwest Roanoke County. Canline expects to start hiring 25 employees by October 1.

Coffee shop closes

Star City Coffee House, which opened on Brambleton Avenue in 2009, has closed. The owners provided no information about what prompted the closing. Star City Coffee Co., a coffee

roasting operation in Salem, will remain in business.

But will the "HOT" sign be on?

Krispy Kreme has signed a lease for a retail space on Franklin Road in Roanoke. The beloved doughnut manufacturer will occupy space previously held by Padow's Deli and Dave's Barbeque in the Townside Festival Shopping Center. The company is still looking for a site to build a new factory to replace the one on Melrose Avenue that was heavily damaged by fire in May, 2013.

Virginia is "on board" with Amtrak

Acting in compliance with a federal mandate

and the transportation legislation enacted earlier this year, Virginia will assume more financial responsibility for Amtrak regional service in the state. The agreement affects only intercity passenger rail service between Washington, DC and Lynchburg, Richmond, Newport News and Norfolk. Roanoke will be included in a few years and Bristol may eventually be added. The partnership with Amtrak will cost the state between \$40 and \$50 million, which will come from state sales tax revenues.

Roanoke's Civil Rights Coverage...on line

Twenty years of WSLS news video, covering the vital years of the civil rights movement (1951-1971) is now

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available online. A 5 year effort by the University of Virginia Library has digitally preserved what is believed to be the only surviving original TV news film clips of that era. The film collection is available to the public through the library's online catalog, Virgo.

market, a Papa John's Pizza franchise, and Blue Ridge Arts and Crafts. The space, which will open later this year will also include a small performance stage to enhance the school's connection to Virginia's Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail.

Ferrum College to open retail shop

Ferrum College has purchased a building on VA 40 and will open a retail operation that will include a deli, a seasonal farmers

Big Lots to offer alcohol

Big Lots stores in Vinton, Hershberger Road in Roanoke, Salem and Christiansburg and 21 other Virginia locations have applied for ABC licenses. The stores



Krispy Kreme, defunct location on Melrose Avenue, Roanoke

FRONT Notes



Thompson's Men's Clothing store

plan to offer well known beers and wines, some unique brands and non-alcoholic mixers.

Thompson's still open for business

Frank Thompson, owner of Thompson's Men's Clothing Store in Salem has announced the store will remain open. He had planned to close the store when the building was sold earlier this year, but the deal fell through. Now the store will continue to do business until another buyer is found. The store has been a mainstay for men's clothing, especially big and tall sizes, for 45 years.

Charter Fishing at Explore Park

Rock On Charters, owned by Ken Trail and Josh Laferty, both of Roanoke, is partnering with The Virginia Recreational Facilities Authority to offer float and wade fishing trips

in the Roanoke River Gorge. Explore Park will provide launch and take out access on the section of the river that flows through the park.

Rack 'em up!

Tim & Barb's Billiards has opened in Boones Mill. The business is the realization of the dream of Tim Chitwood, a long-time tournament level player. Tim's wife, Barbara, staffs the kitchen which offers hot dogs, burgers, and other sandwiches. The couple will likely apply for a license to sell beer in early 2014.

Bids too high for hotel

The hope to break ground in September on the Hampton Inn & Suites planned for above a downtown Roanoke parking garage has been delayed. The construction bids came in over the planned budget for the project. Gray Morgan,

a commercial realtor with South Carolina-based Windsor Aughtry Co. hopes to reconcile the budget issues within 60 days.

Goodwill expands

Kelly Coleman, spokeswoman for Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, announced the opening of a 10,000 square foot store off Franklin Road. The store will occupy the space previously held by Petland and will feature a drive-up donation center in the front. The new facility will employ 15 people and is expected to open in late September.

FASWVA gets \$100,000

The Walmart Foundation announced a \$100,000 grant to Feeding America Southwest Virginia (FASWVA) to assist with their food distribution expansion program. The grant will aid FASWVA in better serving their

405 regional partners that brings food to people throughout Southwestern Virginia.

Power Packed

The Center for Advanced Engineering and Research, located in Bedford County, is working to develop a much smaller nuclear reactor. The mPower reactor will be more efficient than the reactors currently in service. The Center, owned and staffed by Babcock & Wilcox, hopes to seek licensing approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission next year.

Scott sees health care costs rising

According to its 2013 Mid-Market Benefits Survey, Scott Benefit Services reports 42% of employers say health care costs have already increased 3% or more in 2013 due to the Affordable Care Act, despite the fact that

the mandate enforcing penalties has been delayed until 2015. Scott Insurance is headquartered in Lynchburg, with offices in Roanoke and in Tennessee and North Carolina. The survey is the largest of its kind in the U.S. with over 200 mid-market Virginia and North Carolina companies participating and more than 5,000 companies nationally.

Advance advances to 4,000

Roanoke headquartered Advance Auto Parts opened its 4,000th store in Montgomery, NY. As of mid-August, the company operates 4,000 stores in 39 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Bath renovation

Bath Community Hospital is conducting a three year, \$14 million expansion and renovation to include a larger emergency

department, new helipad and cafeteria, and additional space for medical services.

New Restaurant on Bent Mountain

Bent Mountain Bistro, serving wood-fired oven pizza, salads, sandwiches and barbeque opened in early August. The restaurant will obtain many of its ingredients from local growers and purveyors and from a garden located on the property. The brick pizza oven was ordered from Italy. The bistro is located on Bent Mountain Road (US 221).

Business Relocates

Better Bathrooms and Kitchens has decided to move from their showroom on Electric Road to a new location on West Main Street in Salem. The Electric Road location is expected to close at the end of September and the

Salem location is scheduled to open on October 1.

Covington Joins Partnership

The city of Covington has rejoined the Roanoke Regional Partnership. The partnership allows Covington the opportunity to leverage its resources by combining marketing efforts with the other members, Allegheny, Botetourt, Franklin and Roanoke counties and the cities of Salem, Roanoke, and the town of Vinton. Covington hopes to attract attention from companies looking for a southwestern Virginia location, leading to the creation of new jobs and tax revenue.

Breaking the Habit

The Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute has been awarded a \$3.2 million grant to develop new ways to help smokers improve self-control when trying to quit. The grant

was awarded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and will be meted out over a five year period.

Funding the American Dream

Freedom First Federal Credit Union, has won the \$100,000 NEXT Seed Capital Award from Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) to introduce the American Dreamer Loan product, which will provide Roanoke-based immigrants financing they need to apply for citizenship. This is the first loan program of its kind in the area.

Stop the Presses

The Virginian Review newspaper in Covington has cut its publication from six days a week to two.

Compiled by Tom Field and Cathy Cooper

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

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

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Randolph Walker graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a journalism degree in 1983. He has been a daily newspaper reporter in Roanoke and an advertising copywriter for the Edmonds Packett Group. He is now a freelance writer as well as a performing musician and guitar teacher.
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You never know who you'll meet, and I want to make a good impression.

— Page 22

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