

Valley Business

FRONT

FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED

\$3 • ISSUE 64 • JANUARY 2014

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Fit for Business

Jenni Waters,
Arete Pole Fitness

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Are you with Valley yet?

We couldn't resist. We seldom produce a cover story for a specific month because it's the trendy thing to do, given the timing. We leave that practice to other media that churns out material so often, covering the predictable trend is a natural filler and easy expectation to assign.

Fitness centers? January? Really?

We heard one diehard fitness buff exclaim that as committed as she is, she simply avoids her regular gym for pretty much the whole month of January, due to all the new sign-ups and new year *resolutionists*. "It's a madhouse!"

Maybe so. The timing this January, however, is more than serendipitous. The options, the new approaches, and most noticeably, the popping up of new facilities, boutiques, centers, expanding franchises and practitioners... is something we're paying attention to. The men and women running these businesses, headfirst (or other body part) into the very heart of the fitness craze—are some of the most fascinating people you'll meet. There is no doubt they are a passionate bunch.

We think you'll enjoy the showcase. Whether you got your legwarmers on—or sitting on the couch, munching Cheetos.



Tom Field

“”
The asset most frequently
under-utilized by corporate
leaders is talent...

— Page 44

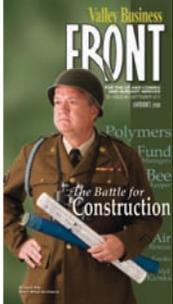
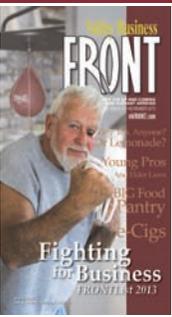
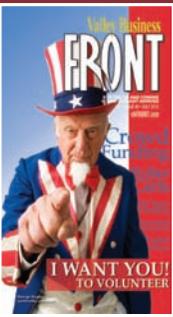
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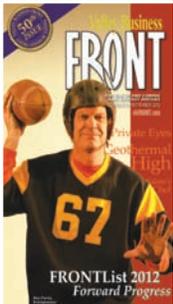
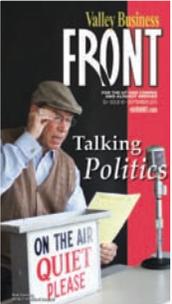
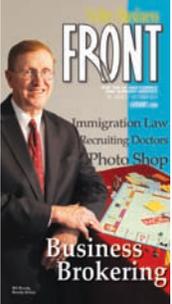
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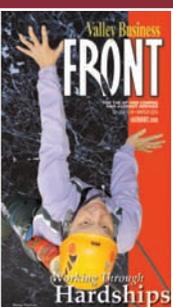


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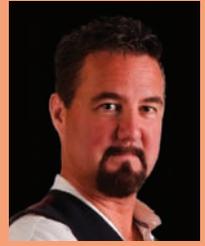
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JANUARY



Cathy Cooper



Tom Field



Whitney Puckett



Anne Sampson



Alison Weaver



Lori White

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



Kathleen Harshberger



Gene Marrano



Michael Miller



Anne Piedmont



Dan Smith



Samantha Steidle



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen



Mike Wilson



This is a welcome relief...
from the ubiquitous whitetails
that are native to the region.

— Page 42

2014 Members

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

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



...the emotional
impact of this one
caught me some-
what off guard.

— Page 47

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FIT FOR



all photos: Mike Wilson

The shape of fitness >

Executive Summary:
Fitness centers are bulking up across the region, in terms of numbers and variety of programs, and it all adds up to big business.

By Alison Weaver

The number of U.S. health clubs is one of the few things growing as fast as Americans' waistlines.

To the cynical, that seems like cruel irony. The less cynical might say it's proof that people are trying to reverse a decades-long trend toward obesity.

From 2005 to 2012, the number of health clubs increased nearly 14 percent, from 26,830 to 30,500, according to the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA).

Health and fitness centers generated \$21.8 billion in revenue in 2012, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the demand for personal trainers and instructors will continue to see above-average growth through 2020.

In the Blue Ridge Region, much of the growth has occurred in smaller, niche-market offerings, and women are heading up many of the enterprises.

Following are stories about some of the fitness entrepreneurs in the area and what motivated them to enter—or exit—the rapidly expanding arena.

BUSINESS

Top fitness trends in 2014

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) polled more than 3,800 fitness professionals worldwide for its annual survey on what are expected to be the leading fitness trends in 2014.

"High Intensity Interval Training made its first appearance on this list this year. Its appearance in the top spot on the list reflects how this form of exercise has taken the fitness community by storm in recent months," said Walter R. Thompson, Ph.D., FACSM, the lead author of the survey.

1. **High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT):** HIIT involves short bursts of activity followed by short periods of rest or recovery. Workouts usually take less than 30 minutes.
2. **Body Weight Training:** Another newcomer to the list, body weight training uses minimal equipment, making it more affordable.
3. **Educated and Experienced Fitness Professionals.** The ACSM recommends choosing professionals certified through programs accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).
4. **Strength Training.** This exercise uses resistance to induce muscle contraction which builds muscle and strength.
5. **Exercise and Weight Loss.** Weight-loss programs are increasingly incorporating regular exercise and caloric restriction for better weight control for their clients.
6. **Personal Training.** An initial assessment is followed by a workout program designed and monitored by a fitness professional.
7. **Fitness Programs for Older Adults.** Age-appropriate fitness programs to keep older adults healthy and active.
8. **Functional Fitness.** Strength training to improve balance and ease of daily living, especially for older adults.
9. **Group Personal Training.** Training two or three people at a time makes economic sense for the trainer and the clients.
10. **Yoga.** There are many types of yoga, but all combine the physical, mental, and spiritual elements of exercise.

Source: "Now Trending: Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2014," November/December issue of ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal. Additional information from Wikipedia.



From adversity comes opportunity

Facility: Pure Barre

Location: Roanoke County

Opened: 2013

Type: Franchise

Niche: Ballet- and Pilates-based workout

The timing of opening her Pure Barre studio “may be the definition of insanity,” admits Traci Dority-Shanklin.

Two years ago, the owner of the new franchise in Roanoke County was living with her husband in Los Angeles, working as a financial advisor. In rapid succession, the couple became adoptive parents to an American infant and a toddler from Haiti, Traci’s mother’s leukemia worsened and her stepfather was diagnosed with cancer.

Traci quickly decided it was time for radical life changes. “I needed to be back in Roanoke to care for my mother and I wanted my children to know their grandparents,” she says. “I also wanted to slow down my crazy travel schedule.”

After relocating with her family to Smith Mountain Lake in August 2012, Traci began researching business opportunities. In addition to her work as a financial advisor, her career highlights include being a public relations specialist, former Miss Virginia-USA and actor. (She was Jenny Slater in “Grosse Pointe Blank” and appeared in shows such as “Baywatch” and “Pacific Blue.”)

Traci had taken Pure Barre classes in California and soon discovered that there were no franchises in the area.

“The success rates for new businesses are abominable,” she acknowledges. “But success rates for franchises are better. I felt it was a good investment that was sustainable and would eventually pay for itself.”

Traci selected a site in Keagy Village, a largely empty commercial development off Electric Road that was crippled by the recession. “It was some of the most beautiful space that I looked at, and it was under new ownership.”

The studio opened in October 2013, only months after her mother lost her battle with leukemia. With all of the changes happening in her life, some people questioned whether the time was right to launch a new business.

Total (U.S.) Health Club Membership by Year >

- 2005 – 41.3 million
- 2006 – 42.7 million
- 2007 – 41.5 million
- 2008 – 45.5 million
- 2009 – 45.3 million
- 2010 – 50.2 million
- 2011 – 51.4 million
- 2012 – 50.2 million

Source: International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association



Elite Health and Fitness Center
640-206-2325

"From an outsider's perspective, the decisions might not seem logical, but they've all been made to benefit my girls," she says.

From the get-go, Traci has been careful to carve out a schedule that suits her and her family. Although she is a hands-on owner and certified instructor, she outsources book-keeping, hired Wells Fargo to handle payroll, brought an assistant from L.A. and has hired additional instructors, one of whom doubles as vice president of marketing.

"My hope is that this will allow me to not travel as much and stay home more. I don't want to do it all; I want to be a mom."

'We can't fix ugly'

Facility: Elite Health and Fitness Center

Location: Roanoke

Opened: 2007

Type: Independent

Niche: Strength training, cardio and boot camps for all levels; open 24/7

Elite Health and Fitness Center's slogan is meant as a humorous motivator: "We can't fix ugly but we can fix fat."

"Everybody wants to lose weight but they don't want to put the time into it," says owner Duane Ellis. "There's no easy pill to take. You have to commit to it, just like you commit to any job. Do your strength training; do your cardio; eat right."

Duane clearly knows his stuff. He's the 2012 NPC (National Physique Committee) Virginia/D.C. champion.

Despite his daunting musculature and awards, Duane says his gym is not aimed solely at fellow bodybuilders. "Some [members] are competitive but most aren't. Our youngest is 22 and our oldest is 72—her 96-year-old mom comes with her to do the treadmill. She's an inspiration to all of us."

Growing up in Roanoke, Duane was a high school athlete who became smitten with fitness and weight-training. He became a certified personal trainer, and when his mother died and left him some money, he decided to channel his grief into a mission that would help others.

"People have the impression that we're a hardcore gym,

but most of our members are women interested in losing weight and toning up," he says. "The reason people like this gym is because of the support and because it's 24/7." Members who sign a contract can use a key pad to enter the facility at any time of the day or night. Exterior and interior cameras monitor the premises. "No one can just walk in off the street, and I can view things 24 hours a day from my home," Duane explains.

"The fitness industry is kind of faddish. Right now people are really into CrossFit, but a lot of people get hurt—shoulder tears, knee injuries and back injuries. If you're focusing on how quickly you can perform an exercise, form tends to suffer.

"It's not about spending hours and hours. Consistency is what's important," he says. "I usually recommend a circuit-type training, three times a week for one hour."

Duane isn't one to accept excuses. "If you're feeling tired or hungover, that sometimes leads to the best workouts. You start moving around and those endorphins kick in—and POW—you're feeling great."

Ahead of the curve

Facility: Curves

Location: Moneta

Purchased: 2012 (existing location)

Type: Franchise

Niche: Cardio and strength training especially targeted at women

When Kathy Viette wanted to open her own fitness studio, she knew that buying a franchise was the route she'd take.

"The benefits of buying a franchise are huge," she says,



Five hotties

Here are some of the fastest growing fitness franchises in the U.S., per Kiplinger.

Franchise: TITLE Boxing Club

Based: Kansas City, Mo.

Franchise fee: \$35,000

Royalty: 7 percent of memberships sold

Net worth required: \$200,000

Niche: Cardio and boxing workout for adults, especially young women concerned about self-defense and fitness; franchisees also sell equipment and apparel

Closest locations: Manassas, Va., and Charlotte, NC.

Franchise: Koko Fit Club

Based: Rockland, Mass.

Franchise fee: \$30,000

Royalty: \$395 per month

Net worth required: \$300,000

Niche: Members follow 30-minute workouts designed by an automated "smart trainer"

Closest locations: Six in Northern Virginia

Franchise: Stroller Strides/Fit4Mom

Based: San Marcos, Calif.

Franchise fee: \$4,950 (owner/operator); \$25,000 (business development model)

Royalty: \$170 per month

Net worth required: n/a

Niche: Prenatal fitness, post-pregnancy shape-up, mothers of any age

Closest locations: 10 in Virginia, primarily in Northern Virginia, Richmond and Tidewater areas

Franchise: Snap Fitness

Based: Chanhassen, Minn.

Franchise fee: \$15,000

Royalty: \$449 per month

Net worth required: \$250,000

Niche: Open 24 hours a day; health and wellness programs for individuals and corporations

Closest location: Vinton

Franchise: Fitness Revolution

Based: Elizabethtown, Ky.

Franchise fee: \$7,500

Royalty: 6 percent

Net worth required: n/a

Niche: Private, semi-private and group fitness programs; no bricks-and-mortar location required (franchisees can use school gyms, recreation centers, etc.).

Also markets Athletic Revolution for youths ages 6 to 18.

Closest locations: Northern Virginia, Charlotte, N.C.

Sources: Kiplinger; corporate web sites



Curves

Curves

ticking off the pluses. "Marketing support, training, all of the national advertising and, No. 1, they provide a known brand."

Kathy had worked as an aerobic coordinator at Vinton's Lancerlot Sports Complex for 11 years. "I tremendously enjoyed the fitness industry and I knew I wanted to have my own place."

She began working at a Curves franchise in Daleville while looking for a franchise opportunity. "In my personal experience, it's never smart to start a new franchise. If you buy an existing franchise location, you gain all of the existing customers. You don't have to find a location or purchase expensive equipment."

Curves' program was appealing to her for many reasons. "At other gyms, clients are on their own. At Curves, we are personal coaches," she says. "Also, Curves' equipment is hydraulic and better-suited for women."

Kathy also felt the Curves franchise was evolving with the times and had longevity. "The program has expanded to offering a diet program of meals and snack items, and the [parent] company recently purchased the Jenny Craig brand." (Nestle will retain the brand in some countries.)

Her facility's location near Smith Mountain Lake attracts quite a few clients who spend spring and summer in Virginia and winter in warmer climes. "They can use their membership anywhere in the nation. That's a big draw for my snowbirds."

With an insider's perspective from working at different fitness centers, Kathy knew she would take an active role in the business. "You still have owners out there who are hands-off. When I bought this, I intended to run it."

Curves, which opened in 1992, bills itself as the largest fitness franchise in the world. In 2005, the company boasted 8,000 U.S. locations. However, the number had plummeted to 4,000 by 2011. Tom Garmon, a fitness industry broker and consultant out of Mississippi, attributed the decline largely to less-than-rigorous vetting of new franchisees who tended to be absentee owners.

According to Kathy, her biggest frustration is that many people perceive Curves as being light-weight exercise for older women. "We have all ages, and it's not a wimpy workout."

Kathy's hands-on approach appears to be working. Her studio won Laker Magazine's Gold Award as best place to work out at Smith Mountain Lake. "There's nothing like it. I think I have the best job in the world."

A Decade of Change >

In **1980**, no state had an obesity rate of **15%** or more.

In **1991**, no state had an obesity rate of **20%** or more.

In **2000**, no state had an obesity rate of **25%** or more.

In **2013**, **41** states had obesity rates of at least **25 percent**.

Source: 2013 report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Trust for America's Health



Addicted to dance

Facility: Arete Pole Fitness

Location: Salem

Opened: 2012

Type: Independent

Niche: Total body workout through pole dancing

Feeling overweight and out of shape after the birth of her child, Jenni Waters became addicted...to pole dancing.

"I hated running, hated gyms and I couldn't afford baby sitters for private workouts," she says.

As a former waitress in gentlemen's clubs in Charlotte, N.C., Jenni was familiar with pole dancing and the tight, lithe bodies of the dancers.

"I was a big girl. I'm almost 6 feet tall and I weighed nearly 200 pounds. I got a pole in August of 2011 and began practicing at home where no one could see me," she says. "I fell in love with it so fast. Soon I started doing it three hours every other day. It really lit a fire in me."

Jenni started driving three to four hours to take classes at workshops and became increasingly frustrated with the lack of classes in the immediate area. "I felt isolated and wanted to be around other dancers."

Jenni has never been one to shy away from a challenge. Growing up in Oklahoma, she was a running back on her high school football team. "I was fast and light on my feet. The guys were great football players, but they were big corn-fed boys. They weren't agile."

Eight months after she first attempted pole dancing, Jenni entered a Pole Dance America competition and won the creativity award. "I've never been this flexible. And I'm the smallest I've ever been, a size 5."

Eager to introduce others to pole dancing, Jenni solicited advice from online forums and a network of mentors. She opened Arete Pole Fitness in August 2012 in downtown Roanoke.

"We had this big grand-opening and really were building momentum," Jenni recalls. "Then we started having problems with the landlord. We needed more parking, no stairs, a larger space."

The business stalled until November when she reopened in a better-suited space in Salem.

A year later, Arete has developed a diverse following. "We don't have a 'typical' client. We have 22-year-old college students and ladies in their mid-to-late 50s. We've had some male students, too," Jenni says.

"We don't focus on the sexy side of pole dancing. At the first class, people are all nervous and there are a lot of giggles. People come in thinking they won't be able to do anything and by the end of the first class, they've learned at least four or five moves."

Jenni continues to develop personally as well. She qualified for the national Pole Dance America championship and will compete in Atlanta in March. "Two years ago I never dreamed I'd be doing something like this," she says. "Pole dancing has been a life-changing experience."

Doing it their way

Facility: Cardio Uncaged

Location: Blacksburg

Opened: 2013

Type: Independent

Niche: Group fitness classes of all types

Krystal Profitt and Shannon Wright were tired of trying to scramble from their jobs and fight commuter traffic to take fitness classes.

So they took matters into their own hands.

"Our daytime schedules are crazy," Krystal says. Both women work at Modea, a fast-paced digital advertising agency in Blacksburg. "If we wanted to take a Zumba class, we had to go to Christiansburg, which can take 20 to 25 minutes with the after-5 traffic."



Former franchisee weighs in

Facility: Stroller Strides (now defunct)

Location: Roanoke Valley

Open: 2009-2012

Type: Franchise

Niche: Prenatal and post-natal fitness for mothers

Johanna Ferguson ran a Stroller Strides fitness franchise for three years and has some advice for would-be entrepreneurs. "Study the demographics closely and know your market."

Johanna and her husband have been in the fitness business for years as instructors, promoters and personal trainers. She holds a master's degree in Exercise Science and various certifications.

"I was really interested in the program. It seemed like a cool idea," she recalls.

Stroller Strides targets women who are pregnant, those who have recently given birth and ones with young children. As the name implies, mothers are encouraged to bring their babies, and strollers are incorporated into the routine.

The franchise doesn't require a bricks-and-mortar location so overhead is low. Many classes meet at parks during good weather and utilize malls, schools or community centers during colder months.

"It was a relatively inexpensive buy-in," Johanna says. "Something like \$3,500 plus a monthly fee."

She purchased the franchise at the beginning of 2009 when she had a 2-year-old child and was expecting another. "We offered classes at Tanglewood and Valley View malls, and through Roanoke City Parks and Recreation," she says.

"Stroller Strides gives lots of support in terms of training, marketing and a website. It was valuable for people to be able to register online for classes."

One factor Johanna hadn't fully considered was the small target-market. "The numbers weren't quite there as far as running it as a full-time business," she says. "In larger markets, such as Richmond of Virginia Beach, you've got a much broader membership base."

As her three-year contract was drawing to a close, Johanna advertised the franchise for sale but didn't get any offers. She had begun teaching full-time at Jefferson College of Health Sciences and her children were past stroller-age.

"It was a great experience; I stay in contact with many of the women. The classes provide a great workout and offer a support network for new and expectant mothers," Johanna says. "Would I do it again? Probably not in such a small market."





Shannon recalls thinking, "Man, I wish we had something like this in Blacksburg. How great would it be to have our own place to work out?"

At first the pair looked at buying a franchise. "But most of what you're paying for is marketing, and that's what we do for a living," Krystal says. "Most [franchises] require you to use a subdomain of their Web site, and we wanted to do our own thing."

The ability to "do their own thing" became the mantra of their business plan and led to the name of their studio, Cardio Uncaged. "In a traditional gym, you're trapped by equipment and people," Shannon explains. "We wanted an open space where people could take yoga, Zumba or Turbo Kick. We didn't want to be constrained by having to offer just one style of classes."

At Cardio Uncaged, "You can pay per class or pay for a punch card. No muss, no fuss. You're not locked into a contract," Krystal says.

The studio had a soft opening in the summer of 2013. "Summer is usually less busy, and we wanted time to work out bugs and adjust the schedule," Shannon says. "We've been surprised at the amount of foot traffic we get. We weren't expecting that. People are very excited that they can come and take a class and not commit."

Being flexible has been key to the studio's success. "We've experimented with different classes and different times. We're launching a ballet barre-based workout, and we've started doing private events," Krystal says.

At the private events, groups such as clubs or sororities pick the time and the day and create their own customized schedule of classes. "They can do all Zumba, or they can experiment with a different type of class each week," Shannon explains.

Neither partner plans to make the studio a full-time endeavor. According to Krystal, "This was a way for us to work out with other people. We just want to keep doing our own thing." 

Drop Outs >

Despite New Year's resolutions, statistics show that 44 percent of people who join a fitness club drop out within the first 6 months. An additional 27 percent report low usage (four to seven visits).

Source: Fitness Industry Association





Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
A particular color may be the thing this season but if it isn't flattering to you, read on.

Color Makes a Difference >

Color. It can make us feel energized or depressed. It can enhance our best features or make us look sallow and sickly. The color of our clothing makes all the difference in whether we look and feel our best in an outfit.

How do we know what colors to choose and how much of it to wear in an outfit? Some companies offer advice and systems designed to guide us toward the "right" colors for us. Or we can use our instincts and reactions to colors we try on to determine which colors flatter us most.

In general, if you hold a color up to your face and you look tired and pale, rule out that color. Avoid any colors that drain energy and color from your appearance. On the other hand, if you hold a color to your face and look healthy, rested and attractive, then add that color to your wardrobe.

Blondes with warm skin tones look best in warm spring and summer tones. Brunettes with light, cool skin tones look best in contrasting colors, such as deep jewel tones or dark tones. Redheads with pale skin look best in warm, burnished colors. African-Americans look attractive in bright colors with warm tones that complement their warm skin tones.

It's best to find several neutral colors to form the basis of your wardrobe and then add your best colors to complement the neutrals. If one of the season's color trends is a color you love, but it isn't your best, don't despair. It can be used as a small accent color in a necktie, pocket square, scarf, jewelry or a handbag.

Color can help us disguise figure flaws. Using bright colors and pastels to call attention to your best features, while simultaneously using dark colors to downplay your worst features, creates balance in your figure.

Another way to use color effectively is to go monochromatic, wearing varying shades of one color. For example, wear a pearl gray satin blouse under a light gray suit, with medium gray pumps and purse, and silver jewelry. Likewise, menswear in monochromatic tones, such as a taupe suit, light taupe shirt and tie in darker shades of taupe conveys a powerful and elegant image. The long column of monochromatic color intensifies the impression of height and slimness.

Use color wisely and you'll definitely project a healthy, attractive, and successful image! 

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

The Art of Conversation >

Recently I conducted a dining etiquette seminar for graduating college students to prepare them for the impending interview lunch or dinner. During such a seminar, I encourage questions throughout the meal, assuring them that there are no “dumb” or “silly” questions.

When I said that ease of conversation or the ability to make small talk is essential during an interview meal – indeed in all business interactions - several students said that they were uncomfortable with this, and asked for help. Let’s face it, making good conversation can be hard work, especially if some people don’t understand that everyone has to contribute to, and participate in, the process.

There are some who worry that we are losing our ability to have lively, meaningful conversation. This may be connected with the widespread use of texting, tweeting and other social media to communicate. Some tips to help our conversational skills:

- Understand that becoming a good conversationalist means doing your part in the conversation.
- Ask questions, but not personal ones. Asking questions shows your interest in the other person, their opinions or experiences.
- Ask follow-up questions to keep the conversation going.
- Hint: most people, even if they are shy, will talk about their hobbies, their children and their pets.
- Avoid questions that will elicit a yes/no answer, which stops conversation.
- Avoid topics that have the potential to polarize – and yes, I do mean politics and religion!
- Avoid talking about your health, how you slept, your diet– it’s boring.
- Avoid talking about money. That’s considered vulgar in some circles.
- Listen actively.
- Use body language, facial expressions, eye contact, and back-channeling to tell the other person that you are interested (or not) in what they are saying.
- Back- channeling is what we do through nodding, smiling and listening noises such as mmm-hmm. This lets others see that we are engaged and interested.
- Avoid monopolizing a conversation. That turns a dialogue into a monologue.
- Generate a list of topics to use with people who can’t or won’t converse. Sports, travel, music – there are a myriad of topics.
- With international guests ask intelligent questions about their country, or make observations that show your knowledge of their culture. It’s flattering to the visitor, and there’s never a lag in the conversation.

Remember there’s a wonderful, fascinating world out there. And the key to unlocking the mysteries of it might just take the form of the person with whom you are conversing! 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
Small talk not your strong suit? Your future may depend on it, so practice, practice, practice.



Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

Executive Summary:

You don't have to have deep pockets or a revolutionary product to start your own business.

What kind of entrepreneur are you? >

Have you ever thought about starting your own business, only to drop the idea because it seemed far-fetched? It could be you aren't asking yourself the right questions. You probably already have an idea of the skills you would bring to development of this new product or a service.

You should also think about what kind of entrepreneur you want to be. Are you ready to find out?

The six types

Entrepreneurs come in all shapes, sizes, stripes, plaids, etc. There are at least six categories. You may find yourself in one (or two) or them.

- **High-growth entrepreneur.** These are the people we often think of first when we hear the word "entrepreneur." They're in business to grow fast and change the world, often through innovative technologies. Bill Gates and Steve Jobs epitomize this category.
- **Small business owner.** Maybe it's your dream to own a coffee shop, a printing business, or a shoe store.
- **Lifestyle entrepreneur.** Are you the kind of person who doesn't like the 9 to 5 corporate "grind"? Do you like to have a flexible schedule, working on your terms? Try to think of services you can provide that can be done on any day, at any hour you choose.
- **Social entrepreneur.** Is your passion doing something to help solve social and environmental problems? A lot of people in the millennial generation aspire to this. The Cabell Brand Foundation and the Shepard Poverty program are two great examples of this movement.
- **Part-time hobbyist.** Who says you have to start a business that supports your every need? You can be an entrepreneur on the side and have a lot of fun. Joe Stanley, a local marketing professional, makes jewelry out of things like used Starbucks cards. He sells them online and on the City Market!
- **Unemployed and restless.** Let's face it, being unemployed stinks. But if you've got enough energy left after submitting all those job applications, consider putting your hard-won skills and talent to work for you. Figure out what you can freelance, then go out there and get clients. It doesn't have to make you a lot of money. It keeps you engaged, and it looks

great on your resume. It's always easier to get a job when you have a job and being the CEO is a great new perspective to think about.

A pep talk

Entrepreneurs make the world a better place. They make things people want and need. In turn, they get the satisfaction of knowing they've done good work and received income for it.

Not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur, and that's fine! But, if you think you might like to try it, consider which "type" you might fit into. Then think carefully and creatively about what you have to offer. You want to come up with what marketing pros these days call a "minimum viable product."

What is the smallest, most compact, and easy-to-deliver version of your product? It ought to be something you can launch immediately. But, wait. There's another important step.

It's critical to "get out of the building" and talk with your potential customers. Ask them: Do you want this product? When? What would you pay for it?

You aren't asking for a sale at this point. You are gathering information. But many of those you talk to will remember you later when you ask for their business, and they will take a chance on you. And when they do?

Congratulations. You're an entrepreneur. 🎉

For more information on the Lean Start-up process, visit: <https://www.udacity.com/course/ep245>



Have you ever thought about starting your own business, only to drop the idea because it seemed far-fetched? It could be you aren't asking yourself the right questions.

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Tom Field

Christine Smith

Firmly planted on shifting ground >

Executive Summary:

Christine Smith says financial planning is possible, even during tough transitions that are sure to come—or are already here.

By Tom Field

When the first thing you hear from financial advisors is the importance of consistency, saving and investing on a regimented if not automatic basis, the individual who lives with a fluctuating income may feel at a complete loss. And indeed, many financial advisors seem to be less inclined to work with people who aren't going to contribute in a systematic fashion that follows the plan the advisor has in mind.

But this is an economy with plenty of income inconsistencies. Whether you're managing a lot of resources or very few, you're likely to have trouble with financial plans that are set in stone or dependent on limits and caps within expected ranges if your revenue stream is interrupted. The challenge of structuring a plan with a fluctuating income faces the successful entrepreneur, who builds up and borrows against cash reserves, as well as the contractor, whose business may be up one year, down the next, depending on the local economic

climate. Employees in transition (job loss, new job, job change) have the same challenge.

Is this individual (an increasing demographic) out of luck?

"A transition period is a good time to go see an advisor," says Christine Smith.

Christine operates Smith & Associates, her own company under the Ameriprise Financial Services franchise, with offices in Blacksburg and Daleville. Her and her partner's clients (her partner, Brian, is also her husband) include a wide spectrum, from young couples to professionals to small business owners and organizations. Her firm's services include financial planning and employee benefit programs. Inevitably, clients also include those who are undergoing transitions that greatly impact their personal financial strategies. Christine doesn't shy away from individuals in that station.

"We're setting things up so it's not as scary," she says.

"There are really two types [of people who deal with fluctuating income]. There is the employee in transition mode, and the small business owner.

For the employee [who has lost his job or is in between jobs or whose income is changing in a significant way], we begin with the three to six-month cash reserve; and then the options begin. Most of the time, for example, we may

recommend rolling over a previous plan; but the market is totally different than when I came on in 1998. We look at reprioritizing goals, such as how to make cuts at various intervals. You have to have a plan, and what often happens is people will look at one thing... but everything intertwines. My duty is to work a good financial plan.

"The cash reserve and insurance coverage must be there before any investing. And then the plan is ever-changing. Having a third person helping... that's what I enjoy; and when I see them accomplish the goal, I get excited."

Whether it's an employee or business owner living with fluctuating income, Christine says "caring" is the attribute that really matters when providing her service.

"The answers to their questions are simple to me," she says, "but sometimes I forget how much they benefit [from the expertise]."

Christine likes the idea of a trio team: a CPA, an attorney, and a financial advisor. To further accentuate the human side of this consultancy, she believes it makes a difference to go as far as matching up personalities. She admits she takes into consideration how clients and service providers may interact when making her referrals.

But even as she approaches her own services in a nurturing fashion, when it comes to business, she remains staunchly practical. Within a few minutes you notice her perspective is deeply influenced by her own, direct experience. Christine says she and her husband set a stringent "trial" of one year, to determine if he should join the practice back in 2006. She needed another advisor, but she and Brian set up a plan with solid indicators that would tell them whether the decision was correct or not. As experienced as they both were in their own professions and business operations, they didn't jump into the partnership as an automatic assurance. In essence, they put themselves on probation. That's how serious the Smiths consider their financial stake.

"Your business affects your personal," Christine begins, even as she leaps right to the practical.

"So many people running businesses don't

In Brief

Name:	Christine A. Smith
Company:	Smith & Associates / Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc
Location:	Offices in Blacksburg 540-443-9143; and Daleville 540-230-5658
Background:	Penn State graduate; started financial planning business via Ameriprise franchise in 1998; presents "Money Talks" radio show; founded first local BNI chapter and American Business Women's Association chapter in New River Valley; officer in Rotary; works on projects for awareness of domestic violence
Family:	Married to Brian Smith, CFP and partner who joined Christine's practice in 2006 (also a Penn State graduate, served as officer and naval aviator in USMC, pharmaceutical rep); Raising two children and a nephew (daughter about to graduate in aerospace, Virginia Tech; son in fine arts at Virginia Commonwealth University, nephew in business and football team equipment manager at VT)
Outtake:	"When I see [clients] accomplish the goal, I get excited"

break down a sale that comes in... how much goes to rent and so on... how much it really costs to run a business.

"We encourage people to follow their passion. But it if means working that nine-to-five job while you're building it—that's what you do. Some business people will continue on... struggling. But at some point you just have to ask: 'is it a hobby?'"

"I believe for owners, the best strategy is to build your team first, so you can then do what you do best."

Christine also believes anyone can benefit by having a financial advisor. She speaks of

"helping" a lot in her conversation; and says although there is plenty of advice and presentation opportunities in our market and beyond, she wonders, "is anybody really talking *and* helping? Because it all comes back around," she says.

Working together pays off. It even helps her own practice.

"I don't like to look at sales numbers," Christine states, as one example. It's not her priority or her first consideration in running the practice.

"But Brian, he's goal oriented," she says, describing her husband's charts and graphs, along with his characteristics and skills, such as his military background and coaching the Radford High School soccer team.

The team approach works.

According to this professional consultant, wife, mother, and juggler of a jillion activities.

That's comforting when you need solid footing on a landscape that's always changing. 

Applicable Terms for Fluctuating Revenue >

feast or famine

unpredictable income with wide variations

spreading versus chunking

two budgeting approaches; one equally allocated over a defined term, the other replenished at specific times related to unique cash flow demands

lifestyle creep

the tendency to spend beyond an established budget when times are good

envelope system

a primitive but possibly effective approach to budgeting where expense classifications are set aside and funded in advance as a tangible control mechanism

cash flow system

a generic term for the timing of accounts receivable/accounts payable transactions; startups and businesses with fluctuating revenue may employ cash flow management other than straight "pay-as-you-go" systems; these come in a lot of flavors: inventory financing, factoring, receivables funding, and even accrual accounting (which is not really a cash flow system, but can be utilized to manage cash flow)

precautionary saving

similar to a cash reserve or emergency fund, the practice of maintaining an "untouched" savings account consistently, despite income irregularities

baseline budgeting

the recording and establishment of minimum levels for budget line items with the expectation that they will be funded at higher levels in normal operations

hobby

what might be a harsh "wake up call": it's the reality the struggling small business owner/operator must face when income is not meeting demand; Christine says when you're not making ends meet, you can't just keep continuing on; someone has to ask: "is this really a hobby?"; or maybe you work full time elsewhere while you're building the business.

—Tom Field
(multiple sources)

HR Connect BY BUSINESS SOLUTIONS The Pay or Play Decision

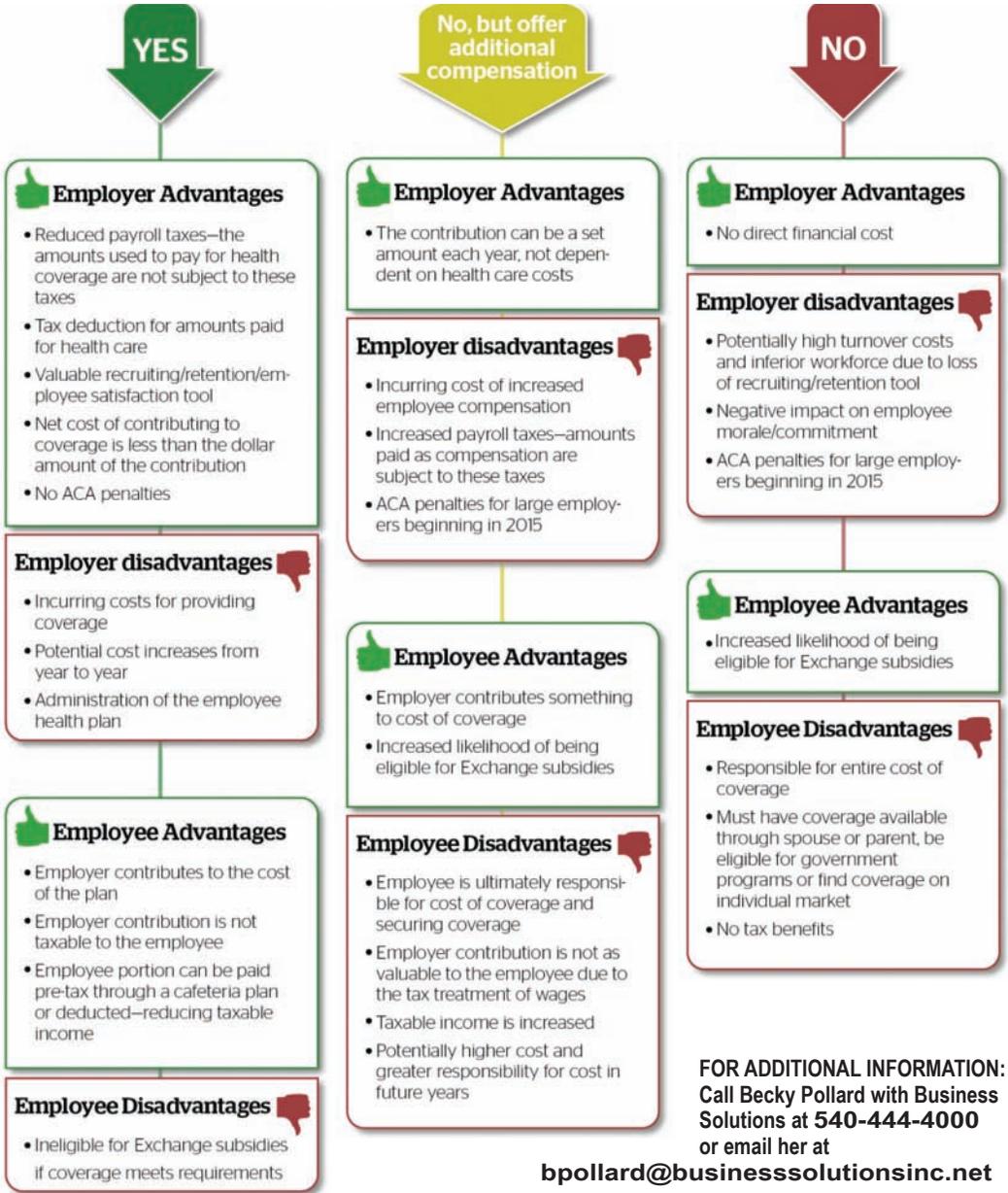
Will you continue to offer health coverage to employees?

As 2015 and the employer shared responsibility penalties approach, employers must decide whether they will offer employer-sponsored

health coverage that complies with the Affordable Care Act or drop coverage and lose a valuable attraction and retention tool. The flowchart

below looks at the advantages and disadvantages of three of the options available to employers: continuing to offer coverage; eliminating

coverage, but increasing compensation; or eliminating coverage without offering any increase in compensation.



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Downtown Roanoke's The Candy Store owner Lawson Jaeger "didn't have to change anything."

Preserving Historical Integrity >

Executive Summary:

The Roanoke ARB helps guide businesses on exterior design issues.

By Gene Marrano

The mission of the Architectural Review Board is to preserve, protect and enhance the character of significant historic, architectural or cultural properties located

in historic districts by ensuring the design compatibility and appropriateness of new construction and alterations therein. (Architectural Review Board Mission Statement from Roanoke City government website)

Established by City Council ordinance in 1979, the Architectural Review Board – a group of seven appointed volunteer citizens – is tasked with assuring that residents or businesses located within several downtown Roanoke districts adhere to regulations for exterior design features.

Any exterior renovations, new



Gene Marrano

obvious changes that must be made.

Jillian Papa, a city agent with Planning, Building and Development, notes that only “very small portions,” of downtown Roanoke are covered by the H1 status, including the City Market area. In some cases it overlays a National Historic District register – where properties are eligible for state and federal tax credits if they meet certain guidelines while being renovated.

Center in the Square and private developers have taken advantage of that program in downtown Roanoke. In those cases an ARB review does not apply, according to Papa, who encourages anyone in the downtown H1 district to approach the city first with any changes they want to make.

Papa calls the guidelines “best practices within urban design ...not detracting from the overall character.” Roanoke hosted a statewide preservation conference several months ago, putting concepts like the H1 and H2 districts in the spotlight. “We got a ton of positive feedback...with regards to preservation.”

Renovations to windows, doors, facades, signage, exterior tiling, etc. must past muster with the ARB; Papa says the city can steer applicants in the right direction before they draw up final plans. “[Requirements] are covered in our guidelines – very specifically.”

For simple, straightforward changes like revising the sign face from a previous business tenant, the city can handle that administratively, without sending the applicant on to the ARB. New features – an awning that had never been there, a logo, etc. would require a review by the board. Applicants turned down by the ARB can appeal to City Council but Papa says that “doesn’t happen very often.”

Lawson Jaeger opened The Candy Store on Campbell Avenue in downtown Roanoke several months ago. “I handed the ball off to the guys that fabricated my awning,”

construction or demolition in the H1 Historic District (downtown commercial zones) and H2 Neighborhood Preservation District (which includes Old Southwest) must pass muster first with the ARB.

The Architectural Review Board also recommends historic landmark status and historic district protection for properties that might have significant historic, cultural or architectural value. Finally, in order to help applicants get it right – the ARB focuses on exterior changes only – the panel holds workshops for applicants and local architects. A subcommittee reviews design plans with applicants before the monthly ARB meetings, looking for any



Gene Marrano



Gene Marrano

Awnings require review by the ARB in historic districts.

notes Jaeger, "so for me it was rather painless. I didn't have to change anything – my original design was accepted." He noted that a neighboring tenant had some back-and-forth issues with the ARB – but Jaeger had smooth sailing.

Alison Blanton, an architect with Hill Studio who just left the ARB after a long tenure, says Roanoke City "has done a good job," of letting prospective business owners know if their property is within the H1 district. Blanton

also says guidelines were rewritten recently to make them clearer and more concise. "I think [commercial applicants] have a pretty good handle on it." Because businesses need building permits and a review of zoning status before moving ahead, they will often be guided to the ARB if necessary.

"It's actually a painless process," promises Jillian Papa of meeting historic district design guidelines. It helps when you know what is expected up front. 



Anne Sampson

Retired oncologist Dr. Jack R. Hutcheson: “It’s more a question of distribution than shortage.”

The doctor is in...maybe >

Executive Summary:

*Too many patients or too few doctors?
It’s all in how you look at it.*

By Anne Sampson

Amid public discussions about skyrocketing healthcare costs and legions of the uninsured, there’ve been increasingly scary headlines announcing the looming shortage of physicians. Some estimates predict a shortfall of over 90,000 trained doctors in the next 10 years.

But is there really a growing shortage?
And what does that have to do with you

as a Roanoke Valley resident anyway? Well, it’s complicated.

In a recent conversation with Dr. Gary Gross, a dermatologist and 30+ year veteran of LewisGale Physicians, he pointed to a government cap on the funding of residency training as contributing to a doctor shortfall. In a simplified form, here’s how that works:

Let’s say Karen is a medical student who has finished 4 years of undergraduate work and 4 years of medical school. She’s ready to move on to 4 years in a Graduate Medical Education (GME) training position or “residency” at a teaching hospital. She has paid for her education so far through loans and grants. But her residency will be paid for in several different ways.

- Medicare and Medicaid pay \$9.5 billion and \$2 billion, respectively, each year, toward GME;

- State Medicaid monies and federal matches contributed another \$3.78 billion in 2009;
- Private insurers, who reimburse teaching hospitals at a higher rate than other hospitals, help support GME.

When Karen emerges from her training as an M.D., each year of her residency will have cost about \$100,000. In 2010, there were 115,000 residents in training in the US.

So that's expensive, right?

In 1996, as part of the Balanced Budget Act, Medicare froze its contribution to GME. There are exceptions, and adjustments were made in 1999, but essentially Medicare is funding residency training at 1996 levels, which in turn limits the number of residency positions available, and the number of trained physicians who enter practice each year.

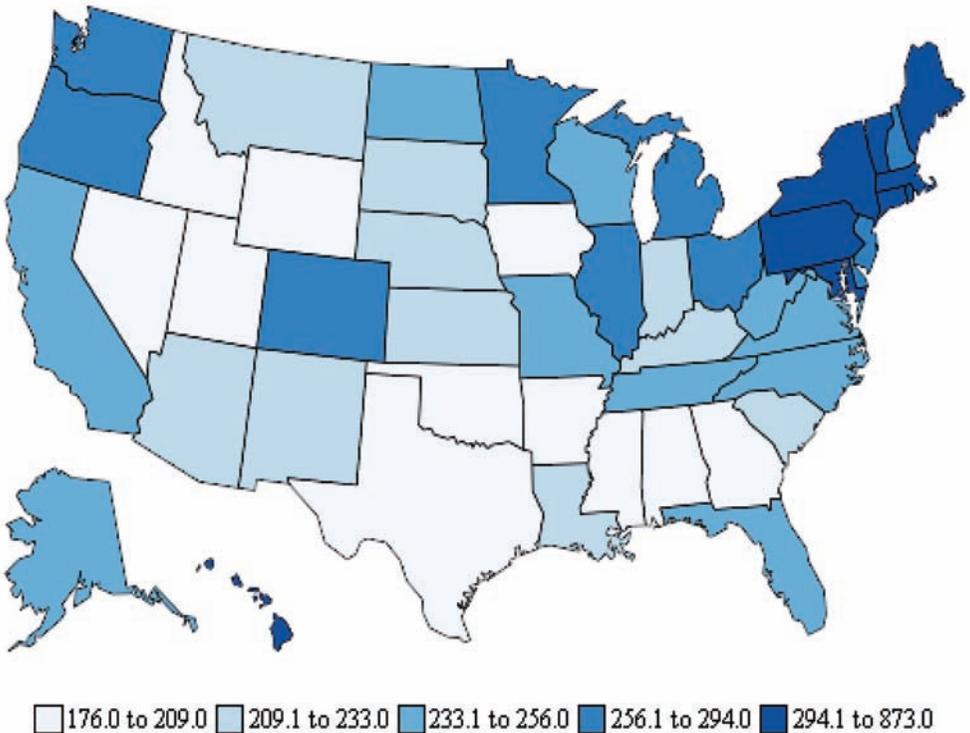
The Association of American Medical Colleges is a strong advocate for lifting the cap. "...Congress must lift the freeze on support for medical training now, as part of health-care reform," says AAMC President, Darrell G. Kirch in an article for *The Wall Street Journal* (How To Fix the Doctor Shortage, Jan. 4, 2010), calling this measure "an essential investment if people are to have timely access to a physician's care."

But is that the whole story?

Retired Blue Ridge Cancer Care oncologist, Dr. Jack R. Hutcherson feels that there is a "perceived" rather than actual need for more physicians.

"I think it's more a question of distribution than shortage," he says, pointing out that doctors are typically trained in large metropolitan areas with access to the latest equipment, tests and procedures. Then they're encouraged to practice in under-served rural areas with fewer

Total Active Physicians per 100,000 Population, 2010



resources and for less money. The AAMC has mapped physician density by state, showing the densely metropolitan Northeast as having the highest physician-to-resident ratio.

Depending on whom you ask, other factors may contribute to the pinch, real or perceived. If the White House reaches its goal, the Affordable Care Act will give 7 million new patients access to healthcare. And the dreaded Baby Boomer Bubble is making its way with increasing speed through the system, requiring more medical interventions. Dr. Gross sees many of them in his dermatology practice, he says. "That generation got more sun exposure."

So does all this mean that Roanoke Valley residents will have more trouble being seen in coming years? According to Dr. Gross, the shortage is not as acute here. The valley is

blessed with two major hospital systems, with all their ancillary practices and services. VTC Medical School has enrolled 42 men and women in the class of 2017. Some of them will do their residencies here, and many will stay or return here to practice. New urgent care practices are seeing patients, and local pharmacies have opened clinics, echoing the national trend of pharmacy-based urgent care. Physician's Assistants, Nurses and Nurse Practitioners continue to lobby for increased autonomy and broader scopes of treatment.

Changes in the way healthcare is delivered may mean we must take increased responsibility for our own wellness, and change the ways in which we access the system. There may be fewer doctors in our collective future, but there could also be a more streamlined care delivery system with more options for appropriate care. It's a brave new world. 



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Tech Scoop

Counting your
Bitcoins >**Executive Summary:**

*When is currency not currency?
When you can't spend it.*

By Michael Miller

When I was a kid I always wondered why people, especially cartoon characters, bit a coin when somebody gave it to them in payment. It was obvious that it was some sort of test to see if the coin was any good, but I couldn't understand how biting into it would give you a clue. Then I learned that in the middle ages (or some other irrelevant past age) kings discovered they could enlarge their treasuries by melting down their gold coins and alloying them with another metal, effectively spreading their gold supply out over more coins.

Eventually people caught onto this, and since a coin was really only worth what its gold content supported, they would bite the coin to see if they could dent it with their teeth. Pure gold was softer than the alloy, so if they could make a dent, they knew the coin was good, and if not, then it was worth less. Not worthless, just worth less.

Today, the value of currency is derived not by the actual content of precious metal, but by the faith we assign it. The reason the US dollar is still the world currency standard is basically because people around the world have more faith that the US can and will repay its debts than any other country.

A few years ago, the booming internet economy that crosses all borders and currencies induced some clever folks to dream up a 'virtual currency' with which one might practice commerce electronically. The idea was that this new currency, called a BitCoin, would be independent of government control and would freely float

**Michael Miller**

in value based on what consumers decided it was worth. You would buy a Bitcoin with real money and then use it to purchase internationally over the internet. The value was set by what people were willing to pay for it, not what some government economic wonk decided.

But BitCoin never really caught on until recently, when it was discovered that lots of internet racketeering was going on with BitCoin as the currency. The recent news stories about the Silk Road internet underground where people were dealing illegal drugs and paying with BitCoins caused the value of the currency to shoot up, where it is now approximately \$1100 per coin.

BitCoin seems to suffer from the same influences as 'real' currencies. It has now become a speculation target, and has created some millionaires, if virtual ones. One man in the UK had invested in BitCoins several years ago, and received his encrypted key to his vault, which was stored on his computer. Last summer, before the value shot up, this man junked his computer, having forgotten about the key stored on the hard drive. That hard drive now contains the key to \$7.5 million worth of BitCoins. But it is also sitting somewhere at the bottom of a landfill in Wales.

Along with my 401K retirement plan. 

Quick change artist >

Executive Summary:

*It's not just location, location, location.
It's also wow, ooh, love it!*

By Cathy Cooper

Some days getting out of the house and to your office is harder than others. Imagine having to bring everything you need to do your job, including the furniture, with you every day. Sounds exhausting, doesn't it? But that's what Wanda Richards, founder and owner of Shows Great Home Staging and Web Solutions, does most days.

Wanda began her career in real estate in 1980, as she says, "...just as interest rates hit double digits." She stuck with it and became an award winning realtor. In 2000, she wanted to take her business on line. "I couldn't find a web designer who understood the special needs of a real estate web site, so I enrolled in web design classes at Virginia Western and started Create4u Web Design." Today, that company is one of the leading designers of custom real estate and small business web sites. In 2003, Create4u began offering virtual home tours, real estate photography and e-flyers. But, you'd have to know Wanda to know she wouldn't stop there.

"When I went out to photograph homes, it was obvious that home sellers needed

help preparing homes for the market." So, in 2007 Wanda formed Shows Great Home Staging and Web Solutions. As the real estate market began to decline her staging business grew faster than Wanda had ever imagined. "I'm proud that Shows Great Home Staging and Web Solutions now represents over 350 of the top real estate professionals in Southwest and Central Virginia as home stager, web marketing consultant, and virtual tour provider."

The staging business can be tricky. It's not just about painting a few walls. If the home owners are still living in the house, Wanda has to be sensitive to their feelings about the home. It may be obvious to her that the house needs updating, but the owners may think it perfect just as it is. An unoccupied house removes the owner's feelings issue, but that means she not only has to paint, but also bring in furniture, rugs, lamps, and other decorative touches to make the home show in the best possible way. Then, when the house sells, usually quickly, she has to go back and take all that stuff out of the house. Exhausting, right?

But for Wanda Richards, her crew, and the contractors she employs, it's all in a day's (or few days) work. "I love what I do and a bonus for me is being out taking pictures. I really enjoy photographing the area where I grew up and made so many good memories."

With the help of Shows Great Home Staging and Web Solutions, more and more people are getting the opportunity to make Virginia memories of their own. 

SALVAGE DAWGS

FROM THE SCRAPHEAP TO STARDOM - MIKE WHITESIDE & ROBERT KULP

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How did Roanoke's Black Dog Salvage become a nationwide reality television phenomenon? Don't miss Black Dog Salvage owners Robert Kulp and Mike Whiteside, stars of HGTV's Salvage Dawgs, discuss the company's wild ride and plans for the future.

Photo by Trailblazer Studios, producers of Salvage Dawgs

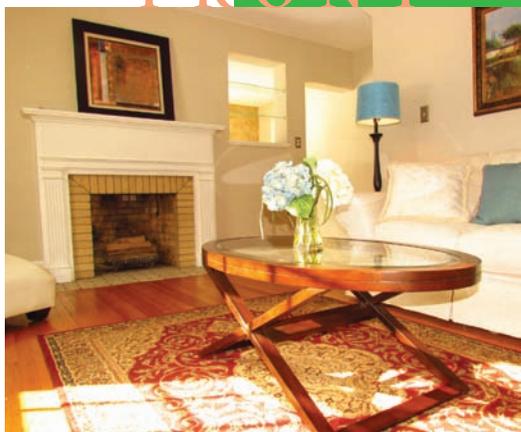


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DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Local homes before (left) and after (right) staging



Memories in 3D >

Executive Summary:

Sometimes pictures just can't capture a memory in sufficient detail.

By Lori White

When one walks into Sculptured Taxidermy in Amherst, VA, what stands out are the animals. Dozens of them, in various wild and natural poses.

Despite persistent negative stigma attached to the vocation, Kip Hughes, owner of Sculptured Taxidermy finds taxidermy jobs growing steadily. Although some view taxidermy as an adverse extension of hunting, Hughes, like others in the taxidermy industry, see it differently. It is a craft, an art

form, and a means of preserving and showing appreciation for nature.

This epiphany first occurred to Hughes as a young man growing up in the country. "We didn't have much," he explains. "No video games or television. We played in the woods. We hunted, and fished." At the age of 13, he had his first fish mounted. He was "fascinated at the idea that you could take this fish you had caught and have something that could last your entire life."

That was it for Hughes. He began in his teens by apprenticing with a master taxidermist, learning the trade and slowly acquiring the necessary knowledge, tools, and equipment. It took Hughes a period of around ten years, working two jobs and building a client base, to finally feel confident that he could make a full-time vocation out of taxidermy. It was then, in 1992, that Sculptured Taxidermy was born. The company is co-owned by



all photos: Lori White



Hughes and his wife, Cindy. They have two valued employees, Buddy Braxton and Luke Fastabend.

Sculptured Taxidermy is notably different from many other area taxidermists in that a large portion of the work brought to its tables is exotic, or at least, uncommon. Hughes is one of the few taxidermists trained in sculpturing wildlife from Africa, New Zealand, Canada, and Alaska. This is a welcome relief, he confesses, from the ubiquitous whitetails that are native to the region. Hughes also sculpts and produces the forms that taxidermists and other companies order for their own business needs through his companion company, Hughes Forms.

Whether as a personal trophy or a décor or theme enhancement, the work of Sculptured Taxidermy is art with its inspiration in the natural world. 



Paula Wilder

The Whole Package >

Executive Summary:
The WilderWeber Leadership Group is strengthening businesses from the inside and out.

By Whitney Puckett

When considering how to strengthen their businesses, many top-level executives turn to corporate trainers or business consultants.

In the Roanoke and New River Valleys, one such company is the WilderWeber Leadership Group, a Blacksburg based corporate training and consulting firm owned and operated by Paula Wilder and Carol Huntley-Weber.

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The working relationship between the two began when Wilder was consulting for United Pet Group, the company where Weber headed the Global Marketing department as Senior Divisional VP. In 2009, after collaborating for several years, the two women started their training and consulting business.

“When thinking about change, many leaders focus most of their energy on either external forces (marketing) or on internal forces (organization development). But both are essential for positioning the organization to address market changes. We have a unique combination of these perspectives,” says Wilder.

Indeed, their collective resume is heavy with more than forty years of experience in twenty-seven different fields. As to their

individual qualifications, both are impressive. In addition to being a Registered Organization Development Consultant and Certified Professional Facilitator, Paula Wilder has three degrees, including a PhD in Policy, Planning, and Decision-Making from Boston University.

Likewise, Carol Huntley-Weber has more than thirty years of corporate experience, in addition to her completed coursework towards her MA in Organizational Communication from the University of Nebraska.

As a business, WilderWeber offers five key services to meet their clients’ needs. The process begins with an analysis of the client’s positive core and corporate identity. According to Wilder, “On occasion, there are blind spots around core strengths,”



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prosperous new year

and "there is a huge opportunity to strengthen people's clarity around corporate identity across products, services and employee behavior."

The asset most frequently under-utilized by corporate leaders is talent, a "...blindness to the potential of emerging talent – people are under-utilized, employed in the wrong role or not given the level of responsibility that they are ready to assume," reports Wilder.

Once the evaluation process is complete, this information is synthesized into a strategic action plan and executed accordingly.

This, of course, is the general process. However, all WilderWeber projects are customized to the needs of individual clients. For example, "Recent projects have included brand architecture projects, mapping change management processes onto new market realities, coaching emerging leaders, strategic planning, changing identity to address new market needs, senior leader communications, creating positive cultures, and brand and product development," stated Wilder. This kind of client-service tailoring has attracted many local businesses.

"Most recently, we have worked in the pet industry, manufacturing, technical services, financial services, higher education, entrepreneurial, non-profit, association, engineering, banking and retail services," says Wilder.

And their clients are conveying rave reviews. Alan Blake, CEO of Yorktown Technologies, reports, "We really appreciated the opportunity to work with WilderWeber Leadership Group... Their thoughtful strategy insights with regard to strategic branding decisions, product merchandising, and developing our distribution channel was a tremendous help!"

As the market continues to evolve, WilderWeber plans to continue meeting the needs of modern corporate clients. "Leaders face real challenges when trying to take the long view, faced with expenses, increasing competition and decreasing sales. We are extremely sensitive to this reality and work with leaders to accommodate their cash flow demands."

Despite these turbulent economic times, Wilder believes that, "The short-term expense leads to longer-term success. Even before the recession, companies wanted to ensure that employee performance met and exceeded financial expectations. The recession made this even more important," asserts Wilder. "Poor sales, processes, and people practices all hurt the bottom line."

And that may make an investment in WilderWeber Leadership Group a practical endeavor for any business owner looking to strengthen their company from the inside *and* out. 

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Dan Smith

Keith Ferrell: "It's not about the quantity but the care and commitment you take with the work."

Bestseller >

Executive Summary:

Keith Ferrell has finally reached the top of the game for an author, but it hasn't changed his basic philosophy. He's still fighting for integrity, good pay and science.

By Dan Smith

Keith Ferrell once wore out three keyboards in a year writing far more than a million words. A popular novel will run in the 100,000-word range.

He has written "well over 40" books, some of the work credited, some not. At one time he was the editor of *OMNI* magazine, probably the best science magazine ever.

He says, "Under my own name I've written

a dozen or so books, fiction and nonfiction. ... I've had a couple of pseudonyms for novels... The pseudonyms and the series remain a secret, but altogether they add another 8 or 10 books to the tally. As a credited co-author I've done three books, of which *History Decoded* is by far the most prominent and substantial." That one's a *New York Times* Top 10 bestseller, co-written with TV's Brad Meltzer.

Keith's 60 and lives with his wife of nearly 40 years in Glade Hill, Franklin County, on a 35-acre farm that he calls "the joy of my life. I like to think of my gardens and other exercises as a wildlife feeding initiative—all organic and natural; no pesticides or chemical fertilizers used. ... I am getting ready ... to take a new approach to some of the land here, trying some new varieties and approaches to working with the land."

He's been writing since he was a kid in Raleigh publishing a book review in the

local paper, "but had been collecting rejection slips for some time before that." He worked in a bookstore, wrote and directed educational videos and was a busy freelance writer. *OMNI* came calling and he seemed set. Until it ceased publication in 1996. He was back to books and freelancing for magazines.

Having an honest-to-goodness, unqualified bestseller on the most prestigious list "was a real kick. I suspected that [*History*] *Decoded* would do well, but it has surpassed our expectations, and nicely so. I have had so many of my ambitions and dreams realized already that the emotional impact of this one caught me somewhat off guard."

Working with Meltzer, says Keith, was a treat: "Because the book was based upon a History Channel television series that Brad hosted, there was no need for a formal outline—we knew that we would be turning several of the episodes into chapters for the book ... I ended up writing more chapters than we could use—in this volume, anyway.

"... There was some material to work with—but there is a large distance between how much research needs to be done for a television program, and how much for a piece that will be on the page. I watched the programs, of course, but also did additional research where necessary, then did a draft, reviewed it with the

terrific editor at (publisher) Workman, then reviewed it again with Brad to make sure that the pitch and tone of the prose matched his voice where that was vital."

Keith won't rest on a bestseller for even a minute. "I'm into what I hope will be the last few months work on a new serious novel, the first under my own name in too long, as well as what I hope are the last couple of years on a huge novel that has occupied me on and off for more than a decade." He also has non-fiction projects underway, one on why Americans are willing to believe the outrageous (but not the scientific) and another, "the biggest project of my life ... an overall history of science."

He's had time to develop projects, he says, "because of the now near-total collapse of the reasonably compensated magazine, encyclopedia, and online market for journalism and essays, which is where I made the bulk of my living over the past 15 years." He used to be paid up to \$3 a word for projects that pay 25 cents a word now, if they pay at all.

And the million-word years? "You do that by sitting down and writing every day. Of course you have to write a fair amount every day but not an excessive amount—3,000 words a day (12 double-spaced pages) gives you a million words in a year.

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"But if you are serious about writing—and I am, even in my most playful or disposable work—it's not about the quantity but the care and commitment you take with the work, the attention you bring to every word in every sentence on every page. No less for a ghostwritten work than for *World Book* or *OMNI*."

The times are difficult for writers, he says. "For the working, serious, disciplined writer, the ability to earn a reasonable, dependable income has become almost insurmountably challenging. That is, to be paid the equivalent of a living wage for an article that, with research and everything else that goes into a piece before the writing actually starts, may take days or even weeks to complete, has become a real rarity.

"I have in recent weeks been offered, for example, a Starbucks gift card in exchange for a piece that would take me two or three days to pull together. Frankly, though, far more troubling even than that ... is the rapidly disappearing wall between editorial and advertising, with business departments increasingly being put in charge of editorial content. I won't write for free—nor, I think, should any professional seeking to maintain a reputation, but I also won't write sponsored—however "obliquely"—work that poses as having editorial integrity. That's cost me some relationships I could ill afford to lose, but that's the way it is."

There's a lot of integrity in all that and Keith Ferrell can define that word, too, in a world where definitions change all too often. 



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History Lessons >

I'm sifting through volumes of books and bound magazine compilations and annuals and guides and outright tomes comparable in scope to Tolstoy's *War & Peace*. I've been exposed to most of this stuff before. I'm in the sacred compound of the local library, a special room reserved and secured and perhaps a bit entombed for all things pertinent to our local history. The Virginia Reading Room. It's all cluttered, dusty, daunting, and more than a bit overwhelming. Like accidentally opening the wrong closet at your great great aunt's house. The one with the all the cats.

There's the stack of every back issue of local magazines, which naturally draws my eye. There are the historical books on Roanoke and Salem, Vinton, Blacksburg, surrounding counties, area colleges, and various perspectives on Appalachia, the Blue Ridge, and Alleghany. (Do you know the distinctions?) There are compositions on art and culture and music. Studies on settlements and wars and social transitions. A few travelogues on recreation and the outdoors. And of course, the coffee table type products to satisfy even the lightest of readers. Most of what I see, however, is encyclopedic.

The lesson is clear: we live in a rich, colorful place. If nothing else, this monumental room proves our home here is a spot on the globe and marker on the trail where our lives step through decade upon decade, where memories are worthwhile.

When something is memorable, that means it matters.

On Tap from the Pub

But in the midst of all these words and pictures, something tugs at me. A bit of melancholy with a tinge of fear. The two most dreaded words, when placed together, representing the worst sentiment in all of our English language: So what?

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:

Don't care much about history? Maybe it empowers in a way you wouldn't expect.

In a few days, my oldest child heads to Boston to begin her great vocational pursuit. A few months from here my middle child will be traipsing around Ireland on a month-long excursion. Even my youngest child, still in high school, has decorated her bedroom with loud colors and animal patterns and icons of an exotic land that might as well be another planet when compared to our rolling hills, ridges and valleys, creeks and streams, peppered with the occasional small town.

Do you think Boston might have a reading room? Would Ireland have any history? Does the continent of Africa harbor any stories?

The answers are clear. They rather bang and clang against the inside of my head as if to etch in stone Rockwellian scenes of suitcases and rear bumpers and taillights and cars pulling away and souls leaving or moving or merely passing through.

continued on Page 52

Headlines We'd Like To See in 2014

from the staff and friends at Valley Business FRONT

[though the following examples do not necessarily reflect everyone's opinion]

With Airport Name Change
eTax Initiated:
Sales Tax Reduced to 3%
Flights Increase & Rates Drop

**I-81 Traffic Fatalities
Drastically Reduced**
**Roanoke City Market
Building Fills To Capacity**

AEP doesn't raise rate
US 460 / Rt 11 Construction Completed
in Glenvar–West Roanoke County

FRONT stays in front
[magazine still top read for region]
**First Passenger Books
Advance Train Ticket**
**Employment
Record High
In Southwest
Virginia**

Region Gains Another
Fortune 500 Company
Health Insurance slips in position as number one concern

**Vacant Office
Buildings
In Short
Supply**
**BPOL tax changed:
Gross receipts measure ruled unfair**
Politician Earns Respect

Consumer Confidence Up

Field / On Tap

from Page 50

I look at the shelves again. What if our books are boring? What is our story is insignificant? What if we're not all that... exceptional?

The light here in our great great aunt's closet doesn't really change; but I notice the book spines again. The titles... well, they all come with names. Summers, Pedigo, Kegley, Dotson, Bruce, Harris, Piedmont, Middleton, Long, Weaver, Couper. They go on - and on and on.

We have to be exceptional to produce all of these recordings.

I think looking at local history is becoming a useless exercise to more and more of us—because it's all too familiar. On top of that, we have our today and tomorrow to deal with. Particularly for the young person, of all the things we have to know and learn, who has time for lessons on the past?

Forget history lessons! Who needs them?

But if we're convinced history doesn't empower, maybe it can lessen.

Our local history lessens the fear. Lessens the chance. Lessens the possibility that the story we build in this little place and time right here doesn't really matter.

History lessens the notion that life is random, happenstance, and meaningless.

What you do, where you do it, what builds up before you... it all comes together to create a story. For a dusty book shelf or one that's imprinted inside you.

In Boston. In Ireland. In Africa.

And in a plot of rolling hills and valleys simply known as Southwest Virginia. 

So much more.

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

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

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

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

Letters

Airport ID

[Regarding the mid-December announcement of the new naming of the Roanoke Regional Airport, there is] “no hyphen: [it is] Roanoke Blacksburg Regional Airport.”

Blacksburg Staff
from Facebook

Correction

The Pampered Chef [December FRONT cover story featuring representative Jennifer Eubanks] is founded by Doris Christopher and Marla Gottschalk is the CEO. An individual was incorrectly identified on a sidebar.

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

“”

It is also sitting somewhere at the bottom of a landfill in Wales.

— Page 39

“”

It was obvious that home sellers needed help preparing homes for the market.

— Page 40

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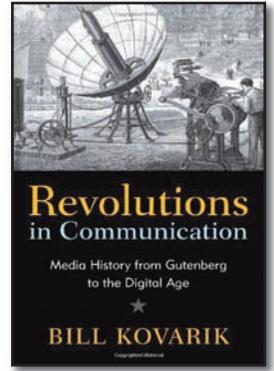
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



Home run

Bill Kovarik, a Radford University Professor of Communications, fairly lights up the page in his new *Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age* (Bloomsbury). Bill, who will teach at the Roanoke Regional Writers Conference Jan. 24-25 at Hollins, is nothing if not enthusiastic, fully informed and creative in approach. He has proved that consistently in his book-length treatments of the writing trades.

Revolutions is as much an entertaining encyclopedia as anything else, a book full of wonder for anybody who writes or otherwise communicates (posters, advertising, video, photography, essays, novels and on and on) and has an interest in how we got from there to here. It is what I often refer to as a "bathroom book" because it can be read—open the page anywhere and read—in a short sittings.

Bill is an intellectual who is anything but stuffy. He's often like a kid who hit the winning home run talking about the game. And it's fun being in his audience.

—Dan Smith

Better left on shelf

Oh how I wish this book hadn't fallen flat. I can only imagine the original outline; it had everything going for it: books, bookstores, history, mystery, and secret societies. Unfortunately, Robin Sloan's *Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore* (Picador; 2013) suffered the worst fate of letting its reader slip out of grasp. The beginning showed promise, then there was the chapters stuck in the middle where I almost just walked away. But I remained steadfast, if nothing more than to await the big reveal; the "great mystery" the entire

novel was built upon. Finally got there: underwhelming and implausible. (Can't explain the implausible part here without spoiling. Let's just say it was too elementary, given the resources provided.)

Bookstore has its moments. The few relationships actually drawn were the best part, if our author wouldn't have been derailed by his weakened plot. I just can't bring myself to recommend, only to have most of you coming back to throw hardcover books at me in disappointment.

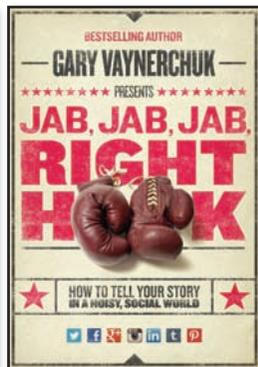
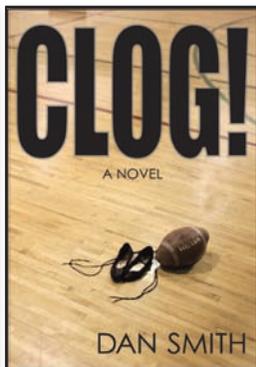
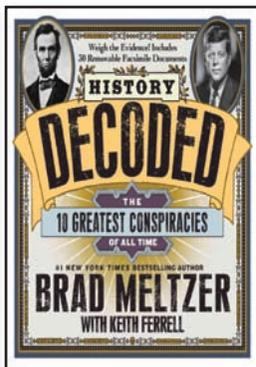
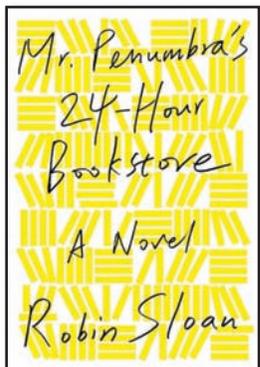
Okay, here's a positive: One night, when turning off my nightstand lamp, I was pleasantly surprised by the book's cover. Here I had thought it was an ugly cover design; it turns out to have its own little secret surprise. That happy little moment only proved the oft quoted mantra we learned long ago as juveniles. Say it with me: you can't judge a book by its cover.

—Tom Field

Finally, a best-seller

After writing nearly 20 books, Keith Ferrell of Franklin County has finally made the New York Times Top 10 bestseller list, moving into that august body in early November of 2013 with *History Decoded: The 10 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time*, which he co-wrote with Brad Meltzer (History Workman, \$24.95). The book, a fascinating pastiche of 10 conspiracies, broken down with official-looking documents, is based on Meltzer's History Network show "Brad Meltzer's Decoded."

Ferrell, who has contributed to FRONT in the past as a freelancer and who will teach at the 2013 Roanoke Regional Writers Conference at Hollins (Jan. 24-25), is the former editor of



Omni Magazine. He has done a good bit of ghost and co-writing in the past (he ghosted a posthumous Harold Robins book), but this is his first best-seller. Ferrell, a superb writer, is primarily responsible for the solid prose in *Decoded*, though Meltzer is best known as a novelist.

Decoded has the distinct feel of the novel and it is rife with controversy and spine-tingling action. If you like history—and if you don’t—this one will keep you occupied for a bit.

—Dan Smith

Quick step

Dan Smith creates magic in his fifth book, *Clog!* (CreateSpace; 2013).

Smith, a longtime Roanoke resident and native of Asheville, N.C., captures the unique culture of Appalachia during the early 1960s, spinning a tale that is humorous, nostalgic and utterly gripping. He manages to combine a coming-of-age story with subplots about football, competitive clogging (yes, clogging), life and love in the sometimes hard-scrabble existence of a small town in the mountains of North Carolina.

The story picks up with rising senior Eb McCourry after the death of his alcoholic father and follows him through eight life-shaping months. Smith combines matter-of-fact realism about disparities between the haves and the have-nots, physical abuse and sexual predators with lighter elements such as the thrill of winning a football game or stealing a kiss.

The prose reads quickly and is often poignant but never mawkish. In the foreword, Smith insists that all characters and events are

fictional, but the vivid level of detail makes me wonder how much is autobiographical.

—Alison Weaver

Knockout

If author Gary Vaynerchuk is a new name on your radar, get ready for a big punch in the marketing gut. In *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World* (HarperCollins; 2013) Vaynerchuk proves once again that he is a no-nonsense, take action and cause connections guy. His previous two best-sellers, *Crush It!* and *The Thank You Economy* detailed how business marketing has changed with the internet and social sharing channels. Gary is a giver, to the extreme, which is one of the major points he makes in his new book.

Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook hits a harder mark, detailing what is truly good practice and what is a path to public humiliation with social media marketing. The 185 pages show success and failure, detailing how some of the biggest and smallest companies in today's marketplace are using social media channels to attract consumers, develop relationships, and get to the right hook, the sale. Expect to close the book with a fresh level of marketing confidence, as well as a new understanding of how social sharing channels are affecting the business world.

—Bonnie Cranmer

(The reviewers: Dan Smith is a writer and founding editor of FRONT; Tom Field is a marketing consultant and publisher of FRONT; Alison Weaver is a freelance writer; Bonnie Cranmer is a marketing director and social media enthusiast.)



And they're off >

Salem VA Credit Union held a "New Member Grocery Grab" contest on Dec. 12 at Salem's Ridgewood Farms Kroger to promote membership and benefit the Feeding America of Southwest Virginia charity. **Michael Harris** of Catawba (one of three contestants, pictured in back) collected more than \$1,000 of groceries in 60 seconds (which he got to keep). The two runner ups received \$100 gift cards, and their basket collections were donated to the charity.



Post this, not that >

Stefanie Brown of Roanoke's Optical Cable Corp. presents social media strategies for businesses at a "Digital Media 101" session on Dec. 19 as part of **AAF Roanoke** (ad club) Brown Bag Series. The monthly presentations meet at 202 Market, with registrations at aafroanoke.org.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Full pink stack >

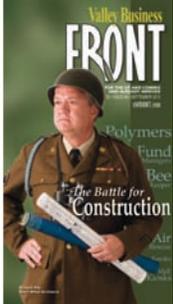
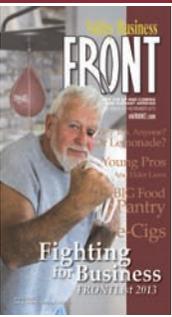
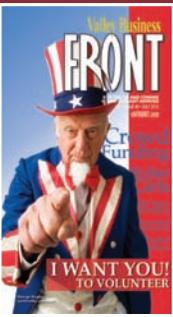
Roanoke-based restaurant operator **Famous Anthony's** presented a \$1,035 check to **Carilion Clinic Breast Care Center** for the "Pink Pancake" fundraiser. The event was held in October, resulting in more than 5,500 pink pancakes sold at nine Famous Anthony locations.



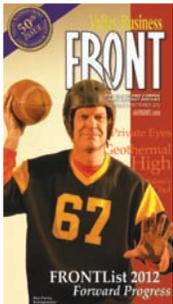
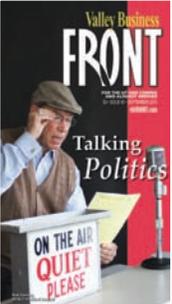
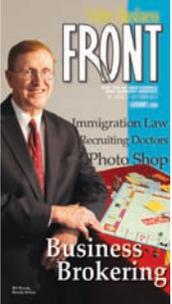
Wearing History >

Mardee Jewelry set up at the Gingerbread Festival at Longwood Park in Salem, offering their unique jewelry and accessories. The local women, Marlo Ferguson and Deanna Ferguson manufacture jewelry that appeals to men as well as women, featuring historic liquor labels, cigar bands, and pieces of vintage jewelry re-worked into modern designs.

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

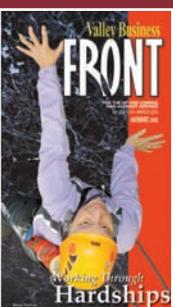


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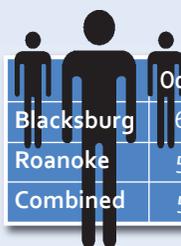


By the Numbers

The Roanoke and New River Valleys played “follow the leader” in October. Unemployment rates on the local, state and national level showed very little change from the previous month and year. Housing costs and sales also followed the national trend, with slight drops from September, but improvement from a year ago. A steady or improving trend may indicate that the recovery is truly taking hold in the region.

Unemployment/Employment

Unemployment rates in the Roanoke and Blacksburg Metropolitan Statistical Areas remained largely unchanged over the month and the year. The Roanoke MSA saw a slight drop from October 2012, while Blacksburg dropped. Both MSAs and the overall region experienced a slight rise from September. Virginia’s unemployment rate rose from 5.3 percent in September to 5.5 percent. The national unemployment rate held steady at 7.0 percent.



	Oct. 2012	Sept. 2013	Oct. 2013
Blacksburg	6.0%	5.7%	5.8%
Roanoke	5.5%	5.5%	5.6%
Combined	5.7%	5.6%	5.7%

The number of people **employed** in the region in rose slightly (0.3 percent) in October from the previous month and was essentially steady (up 0.1 percent) from a year ago.

Oct. 2012	Sept. 2013	Oct. 2013
223,108	225,650	227,249

Initial unemployment claims continue

to drop in the region and the state – serving as a possible predictor of future unemployment rates. For Week 49 (November 29-December 5) initial claims fell by 73.8 percent, better than Virginia’s drop of 69.8 percent. The Roanoke MSA, with a decline of 78.7 percent, registered the second sharpest drop in the state out all MSAs. Winchester’s initial unemployment claims fell by 86.5 percent. Blacksburg fell by 63.6 percent.

Week 49 2012	Week 49 2013
337	88

Source: Virginia Employment Commission

Real Estate

Home prices in the region were down from September, but up 7.3 percent from a year ago. Nationally, home prices rose 10.2 percent, from \$224,500 to \$247,300 over the year. Both locally and nationally, home prices are off the highs from the summer. **Home sales** in the region were up 5.9 percent from a year ago, nearly identical to the national rise of 6.0 percent. Local sales also rose (4.7 percent) from September, a departure from the 3.2 percent drop nationally.



Oct. 2012	Sept. 2013	Oct. 2013
\$177,128	\$198,034	\$190,084

Oct. 2012	Sept. 2013	Oct. 2013
356	360	377

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

—By Anne Piedmont,
Piedmont Research Associates

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Campbell



Barker



Claytor



McIntosh

Susan Campbell has joined Corvesta as vice president of technology, **Jim Barker** has been promoted to vice president of accounting/controller; **Kathy Claytor** has been promoted to vice president of human resources, and **Chad McIntosh** has been promoted to general counsel and compliance officer at Corvesta Inc, the parent holding

company for oral health-related companies, OneMind Health, Revolv, and Corvesta Life Insurance Company.



Ingram

Andy Ingram has joined the Capital Investment Companies Roanoke office as a wealth advisor.

Jay Johnson has joined First Bank as vice president and business development officer.



Lester



Spangler



Bennett

Valley Bank has



Martin

promoted **Misty Lester** to senior vice president; **Leigh Spangler** to assistant vice president; **Christy Bennett** to assistant vice president; and **Julie Martin** to bank officer.

LEGAL FRONT



Rottenborn

J. Benjamin Rottenborn has been promoted to principal with Woods Rogers PLC.

The Roanoke Valley Paralegal Association has announced 2014 officers: **Kathie Coulson**, president; **Matt Westmoreland**, vice president; **Beth Reed**, secretary; **Susan Albert**, treasurer; and board members: **Tara Barnett**, **Monica Guilliams**, **Whitney Jennings**, **Layne Lee**, **Jenny Martin**; and National Association of Legal Assistants representative

Eva Gray and Virginia Alliance of Paralegal Association representative **Lisa Woodson**.

WELLNESS FRONT



Davis



Goldwasser

Mitchell Davis of Interim Healthcare and **Joni Goldwasser** of Salem Veterans Administration have been appointed by Governor Bob McDonnell to the Commonwealth Council on Aging.

James Nunn, MS, CHP, DABR, a senior medical physicist and radiation safety officer at LewisGale Hospital Pulaski has been appointed by Governor Bob McDonnell to the Virginia Radiation Advisory Board.

Ben Sigmon has joined Virginia Prosthetics Roanoke as a certified orthotist.

Dr. Amanda Johnson has joined the dental



Sigmon



Johnson

practice of Dr. William Roller, Jr.

Have a career announcement?

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

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Owens

Lesley S. Owens, PhD has joined Inorganic Ventures as an analytical chemist in the company's newly formed R&D department.

Vonya Alleyne has been named market

vice president for Cox Communications for Roanoke Operations

Jonathan Whitt has been named director of the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Network to manage the Blueprint effort, a stimulus program partnering business,

So much more.

vbFRONT.com

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

morefront.blogspot.com

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

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

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

Career FRONT

higher education and the regional technology council.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

The Roanoke Valley Apartment Association has announced **Joanna Munsey Merritt** (Pebble Creek / HHHunt) as member of the year; **Susan Hubbard** (Pebble Creek/HHHunt) as property manager of the year; **Dana Bales** (Glade Creek /MSC) as assistant manager of the year; **Brian McDaniel** (Westwind/HHHunt) as leasing consultant of the year; **George Talmage** (Hickory Woods/MSC) as maintenance technician of the year; **Evelyn Hale** (Glade Creek/MSC) as custodial technician of the year; **Kristi Crutchfield** (Superior Exterminating) as associate member of the year; and **Kelly Hardy** (Glade Creek/MSC) as rookie of the year.



Deck



Jennings

Architectural firm SFCS has added **Kevin Deck**, AIA as Senior Associate; **Doug Overfelt** as BIM/CAD manager; **Blue Blanchard**, **Adrian Carter**, and **Danielle Lacy** as architectural interns; **Evan Garst** as office services assistant; **Gary Martin**, LEED AP as construction administrator; and **Kaitlin McConnell** as interior design intern. **Curtis R. Jennings, III** has received his certification as a

licensed architect in Virginia (AIA).

Real estate agents **Matthew Ferguson**, **Stephanie Holcomb**, **Scott Lawhorn**, and **Doug Trexell** have joined Long and Foster.

RETAIL FRONT



Weinnig

Gretchen Weinnig has been named store manager at Fink's Jewelers flagship store in Roanoke.

Michael Creedon has joined Advance Auto Parts / Autopart International (AI) as president. Advance also announced the promotion of JT Thompson to vice president, applications development,

Hampton Inn & Suites-Roanoke Airport has named **Lisa Dellinger** as director of sales.

Michael Mays has joined Hidden Valley Country Club as executive chef.

Brent Russell has been appointed senior vice president of operations at Harmony Senior Services.

EDUCATION FRONT

Dr. Chad Morris, assistant professor of anthropology at Roanoke College, has been selected as the recipient of this year's inaugural Hiter H. Harris, Jr. Rising Star Award from the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC).

Luke Johnson has been named director of Hollins University's Tinker Mountain Writers' Workshop/Online.

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

Also get more stories and pictures at morefront.blogspot.com

Tim Sands, vice president and provost of Purdue University has been named the new president of Virginia Tech; who will replace retiring president Charles Steger in May. Sands will become the university's 16th president on June 1.



Mazzolini



Brody

Virginia Tech College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences announced the following appointments: **Elizabeth Mazzolini**, assistant professor in the Department of English; **Jennifer**

Brody, assistant professor in the School of Education; and **Maria del Carmen Caña Jiménez**, assistant professor in the department of foreign languages and literatures.



Ollendick

Thomas Ollendick, professor of psychology at Virginia Tech, has been presented the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Career Award by the Association for Behavior and Cognitive Therapies.

CULTURE FRONT

Amanda J. Nelson has been appointed to direct the graduate program in arts leadership in the School of Performing



Nelson



South

Arts at Virginia Tech.

Feeding America Southwest Virginia has announced **Carissa South**, corporate relations officer; **Teri Borst**, vice president of programs; and **Walker Nelms**, marketing and communications coordinator.

Barry L. Henderson has been named president and general manager of Roanoke's Center in the Square. He has also been elected chair of the

2014 board of directors for the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce.

OTHER FRONTS



Dunnivant

Jerry Dunnivant has been promoted to Vice President, Strategic Marketing at Access Advertising & Public Relations.

Heath Oldham has joined WSLs 10 as marketing director.

Daphne Jamison has been appointed by Gov. Bob McDonnell to serve on the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Compiled by Tom Field and Cathy Cooper.

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FRONT Notes



Tom Field

Fleet Feet

Fancy feat

Fleet Feet Sports Roanoke has been recognized by Competitor magazine and Running Insight trade magazine as one of The 50 Best Running Stores in America for 2013.

Moss grows in Blacksburg

Following the announcement of the naming of popular Waynesboro artist P. Buckley Moss to the Virginia Tech Center for the Arts, an art gallery of same artist will open at North End and is scheduled to open in spring 2014.

Cheap Cox phone via FCC

Cox Communications digital telephone subscribers in Virginia may be eligible for a

discount basic service called "Lifeline" offered to qualified low income consumers, provided in part by the Universal Service Fund of the Federal Communications Commission. Subscribers must have an income at or below 135 percent of the federal poverty guidelines or participate in an approved government assistance program.

Smaller on purpose

FloydFest for 2014 is intentionally cutting its attendance capacity by 1,300 multi-day tickets. In an announcement from producer Across-the-Way Productions, the move is "geared to embrace and sustain FloydFest's status as a boutique music festival that sells out each year well in advance of gates opening." The announcement also cites "aesthetics, environmentalism, and

most importantly, patron safety and comfort" as catalysts for the change. The festival for 2014 is July 23—27; and yes, it's called "FloydFest 13" because it's the 13th season—even though the calendar year is 2014 (just to clarify).

Precious pup

PetSmart is in the process of renovating the space next door to Kohl's at the Hunting Hills Shopping Center on 220. The store will be PetSmart's second location in Roanoke and plans to open in late spring/early summer 2013.

Clog released

Roanoke writer Dan Smith's fifth book and first novel, *CLOG!* has been published and is available at amazon.com (in paper and Kindle

editions) for \$15 and \$2.99. Smith is the founding editor of FRONT who left in early 2013 in order to finish *CLOG!* and write other books.

The book centers on a nationally-prominent high school square dance team at a tiny school in the mountains of Western North Carolina in 1963.

Run to win

The Blue Ridge Marathon was recognized in the category of "economic development through promotion of Virginia wine, film, and tourism" by First Lady Maureen McDonnell, who honored the Roanoke Regional Partnership with the First Lady's Opportunity Hall of Fame award. The race was created by the Partnership to showcase the region's commitment to making

outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship a core component of the Roanoke Region lifestyle.

Jeff's grammy

"Something," a song performed by "the First Daughter of Soul" Lalah Hathaway along with jazz collaborative Snarky Puppy at Roanoke's Jefferson Center received a Grammy nomination for Best R&B Performance. Jefferson Center's executive director Cyrus Pace says he believes this may be "the first ever Grammy nomination to emerge from a live performance recorded in Roanoke."

Luxurious rides

Berglund Automotive has expanded its Roanoke and Lynchburg market with its purchase of the Crossroads dealership on US 220 South and Lakeside Drive in Lynchburg. The locations will carry new and pre-owned vehicles including BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Infinity, Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover, and Lincoln.

Also art museum

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine is gaining attention in another arena with its now seventh series as an art show host. Nearly 200 pieces by about 40 regional artists are on display at the facility (through spring 2014), featuring paintings, photography, three-

dimensional, and poetry. The show is sponsored by the school's Creativity in Health Education Program, which strives to expand the social, cultural, and humanistic awareness of its students, and involve community members in the school. Since the school has restricted access, viewing is by appointment only at 540-526-2571.

Lock and load

Safeside Tactical has opened in expanded space in Stewartsville. The store is a class 3

Have an announcement about your business?

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 A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

gun dealer, meaning they can manufacture weapons as well as sell historical and stock firearms. The store is owned by Mitchell Taylor and his brother.

Green chip

Community Housing Partners (CHP) recently

has become a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Affordable Preservation (OAHF)-recognized Green Property Management Trainer. With this certification, CHP will be able to train other multi-family property managers across the



Jefferson Center

FRONT Notes

country in best green practices as outlined in a unique distance-learning curriculum created by CHP and two other national partners that focuses on environmentally-responsible property management education and training.

Sporty Salem

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has awarded the City of Salem additional championships, spanning into 2018. Now, a total of 13 championships include Men's D-III Football (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017); Men's D-III Basketball (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018); Women's D-III Softball (2015, 2016); Women's D-II Softball (2017, 2018); and Women's D-II Lacrosse (2015).

On Henry

An Industrial Revitalization Fund state grant of \$600,000 has been allocated for the redevelopment of the former Henry Hotel in Martinsville.

Sugar buzzzz

The Candy Store has opened on Campbell Avenue in downtown Roanoke. Offering over 1,200 different kinds of candy, the store is owned by brothers and Roanoke natives Lawson and Robert Jaeger.

Research raised

The National Science Foundation's ranking of institutional research spending reports Virginia Tech at number 40; up one point from the

previous year; and the state's only research university listed in the top 50. Tech's expenditures were reported at \$454,417,000.

Who's flying this plane?

Virginia Tech will be the recipient of a \$2.6 million over a three year period to fund research into unmanned aircraft systems. The program is a joint effort of Virginia Tech, Rutgers University and the University of Maryland under the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership banner.

An alternative to big bookstores

Longtime manager of the now defunct Rams Head Book Shop, Christine Hastings has opened a

non-profit book store on Mountain Avenue. The store, Canterbury Books and Gifts, is in a building adjoining St. John's Episcopal Church. Though the store is owned by the church they offer not only Christian books but best sellers and other popular titles and will order any book a customer requests.

Si, Si, Señor!

Rancho Viejo, a Mexican food restaurant, will open soon in the City Market area of Roanoke. The operation is currently awaiting health department approval and its ABC license. The downtown location will be the newest for the owners who already have restaurants in Roanoke, Vinton, Daleville, Salem and Moneta, as well as



Salem hosts NCAA

Tom Field



Edible Arts

several other locations in Virginia.

Art good enough to eat

Edible Arts, a specialty bakery, has opened in the 4000 block of Franklin Road in Roanoke. Owner and baker, Calvert LaFollette, says the bakery will offer French-style pastries and other decorated baked goods and breads. In addition, four choices of sandwiches are available in boxed lunches.

Brick and mortar no more

The 11 Giles Bookstore in Dublin closed their brick and mortar location on December 31 to focus on sales from their website.

The store has occupied the space at 11 Giles Street in Dublin since 2002, but the building owner is selling the building. In returning to on-line sales only, the business is returning to its 1999 roots.

Signed consigned

Consigning Women, a consignment shop on Electric Road in Roanoke, is opening a second location on Peters Creek Road.

Econ boost

The Western Virginia Regional Industrial Facility Authority, officially established on Dec. 11, has been created to facilitate

cooperation between the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt and Franklin, the cities of Roanoke and Salem, and the town of Vinton for economic development projects and new industrial sites.

R&B genre popular

Roanoke Blacksburg Regional Airport is the new name of the Roanoke Regional Airport, effective Jan. 1. The airport commission adopted the new identity, following a string of regional cooperative missions tying the Roanoke Region and New River Valley, which include Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) and Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Network (RBIN). No

word yet on whether the airport code designator will change (ROA).

Cleaning up

Crown Carpet Cleaning of Blacksburg has expanded service into the Roanoke area. Ed Eliot, owner, says the company will not open more storefronts but continue operations out of the current location. He does expect to add employees to service the Roanoke, Vinton, Salem, and Daleville markets. The expansion reflects the company's strong performance in the New River Valley.

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, also available by link at vbFRONT.com.**

CONTRIBUTORS

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Gene Marrano is a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, is one of the most prolific journalists in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several

publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Studio Virginia," WVTF Public Radio). [gmarrano@cox.net]

Michael Miller has worked with intellectual properties and technology innovation. His consulting company is Kire Technology. With more than 25 years as an inventor and technology consultant, working with Fortune 500 companies and startups, he screens businesses for the World's Best Technology Showcase and mentors tech startups through Development Capital Networks and the National Science Foundation. [mbmiller2@gmail.com]

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Whitney Puckett is a high school English teacher with Roanoke County Schools. A mother to two of the funniest, sweetest children that ever lived

and color guard for her school's marching band, she also enjoys cooking, blogging, and blogging about cooking. [whitneypuckett@gmail.com]

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“ “
 We encourage people to follow
 their passion.

— Page 28

“ “
 Medicare is funding [medical]
 residency training at 1996 levels...

— Page 35

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