

Valley Business

# FRONT

THE SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR  
CHAMPION IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE  
FREE • ISSUE 77 • FEBRUARY 2015

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## Sport Bike Shops

Chip Huff,  
Frontline Eurosports



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# WELCOME to the FRONT

Medical services and mufflers. Stun guns and sport bikes. Frocks and business advice.

What do all these things have in common? I'm not even going to try to tie them all together in some clever way.

They're all stories in today's FRONT magazine. Yet another presentation of the great diversity we have here with our businesses in the Roanoke Region, New River Valley, and Southwest Virginia.

Grab onto whatever you like. Or – like most of our readers – grab on to it all.

It all happens out there on the Frontlines.

In full living color.

Welcome to February.



**Tom Field**

“”

If you send a box of chocolates,  
make sure it is big enough for your  
valentine to share with co-workers

— Page 19



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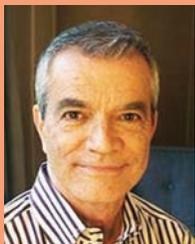
Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 16 diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the 18 month rotational term that will turn over every year and a half.

This board has been given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. "Members essentially have a red telephone at their hand," says publisher Tom Field. "The can inform us best on what is important, what is new, what impacts the greater community. Of course, our red phone reaches right back to them as well, for assignments and insight on our coverage. Although the members are encouraged to keep FRONT updated on their own industries and the key players, they aren't limited to their area of specialty, as all commercial enterprises ultimately collaborate to impact our quality of life here in this part of Virginia." An additional contribution by the Editorial Advisory Board involves direct input on the various FRONTLists we present throughout the year.

# CONTRIBUTORS



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Tom Field



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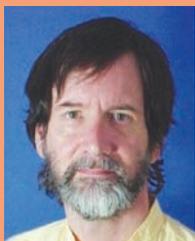
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Randolph Walker

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 38.

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**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.

“ In our legal system, a businessperson can only get as much 'justice' as he or she is able to pay for

— Page 24

“ I think that all physicians in some ways are teachers — Page 52

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# FEEED YOUR NEED FOR SPEED



## Sport Bikes >

### Executive Summary:

*Spring will be here soon—the time when young men’s thoughts turn to going really fast on motorcycles; here’s where you get them.*

By Randolph Walker

Soon after the invention of the “safety bicycle” (the modern bike-frame configuration) in the late 1800s, men started putting engines on them. In 1906, pioneering designer Glenn Curtiss hung a V8 engine on a bike frame and went 136 mph.

The craving for speed seems to be inherent in the male of the species, especially young males. But nowadays one need not be a Glenn Curtiss, young, or male to go fast. Anybody who can pass the motorcycle license exam and has the money can get his hands on a high performance motorcycle.

But not everyone should. And even those who have the reflexes should start with a slower, lower-end bike and receive appropriate training. And, bike dealers say, appropriate riding gear is essential. Don’t let them catch you riding around on a 200 hp bike in a T-shirt, flip flops and shorts. And don’t let them catch you going 100 mph on I-581. Save it for the track.

Here’s a look at sport bikes—the Corvettes of the two-wheel world—and some of the guys who love them enough (and other types of motorcycles, too) to make a career out of them.

## ***THE WEIGHT VS. POWER ARMS RACE***

A sport bike is basically a racing motorcycle. It has a windshield and fairing (partial shell to reduce drag) for aerodynamics, a bent-over riding position for aerodynamics and better control, high-performance suspension and brakes, power up to 200 hp, and a lightweight frame. Many newer sport bikes have enhanced safety features like anti-lock braking systems (ABS) and traction control.

# COVER STORY

While men have been racing custom-designed motorcycles for over 100 years, the first mass-market sport bikes, such as the Honda VF500 Interceptor, did not appear until the mid '80s. In the next few years, "it was like an arms race amongst the Japanese motorcycle brands," says Eric Dogan of Roanoke Cycle Sports on Williamson Road.

The race continues, with European manufacturers getting in and everyone aiming to outgun the competition. "Engine technology is getting to the point where it's almost maxing out," says Dogan. "If you've got a one liter engine, you can't get but so much horsepower out of that. So they make 'em as light as possible. That's probably going to be the next great jump in sport bike performance. You're seeing a lot of aftermarket carbon fiber wheels, carbon fiber frames for bikes. I imagine in a few years you're going to start seeing that on production bikes. Weight [or lack of it] equates to power."

Dogan, whose business is mostly service, plus used bike sales, says sales of pure sport bikes have been diluted somewhat by the proliferation of different motorcycle styles and variations. He points to a Kawasaki Ninja. "This motorcycle here, even though it's got a full fairing and that kind of aggressive look, that's kind of an in-between bike. That's in between a sport touring bike and a sport bike. It's got higher handlebars, an adjustable windshield, more relaxed seating position. It's a bike for an older guy like me

**Eric Dogan of Roanoke  
Cycle Sports**



all photos: Randy Walker



A yellow Suzuki  
GSX1300R Hayabusa  
and a red Kawasaki  
ZX-14R. The Kawasaki's  
MSRP is \$15,299



[he's 44] who used to ride that stuff [a pure sport bike] and would love to be able to ride that stuff but just can't take it anymore, so you move to something like this."

And yet, there are some guys who are old, to the point of stooping over, who ride like they're 20. "I've got a customer in his late 70s who's got a Suzuki Hayabusa, which is a nearly 200 mph sport bike. And when he gets off the bike out there, he pulls the helmet off and you realize why he's hunched over a little bit. Regardless of age, riders and potential riders need to use good judgment," Dogan says.

"I'm all for individuals being able to buy what they want to buy. But with high horsepower sport bikes, people just need to use a little common sense. If your 20-year-old son wants a sport bike, you're not doing him a good service by going out and buying him a 200 horsepower, 450 pound motorcycle. You start him off on something that's smaller, that's sporty looking and you work your way up. If you had a 16-year-old kid getting a driver's license, you wouldn't flip him the keys to a Ferrari or Corvette."

## ***NOW STARRING AT STAR CITY POWERSPORTS***

If you like motorcycles, Star City Powersports on Peters Creek Road is a candy store, with rows of gleaming new bikes of every style. In the sport bike category, Star City carries the major Japanese lines—Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki, and Suzuki—as well as KTM, an Austrian make.

Sport bikes account for 20 to 30 percent of street-legal bike sales, says Matt Bates, sales manager. Sport bikes got really big in the '90s. "That's when all the manufacturers

**Yamaha FJ-09 sport touring bike at Star City, \$10,490. A sport touring bike is "a bigger bike made for comfortable long distance riding. The chassis is a lot softer," says Kris Simko of Star City.**

**Sammy Palmer of the Star City staff astride a blue Suzuki GSR1000**





Helmets at Star City,  
\$109.95

kind of jumped on board to do these full-fairing sport bikes. Every year they get more gadgets—anti-lock brakes, traction control systems.” The latest trend is track-only sport bikes that cannot be made street legal. Related categories are the sport-touring motorcycle (more comfortable on a long ride) and the naked sport bike, stripped of windshield and fairing.

Engines range from 300 to 1400 cc. “The smaller ones are great for round-track use, the larger big bore sport bikes would be more for the straight-line speed.” You want to go fast in a straight line? Take your sport bike to Motor Mile Dragway near Radford.

And wherever you ride, don’t forget protection. “The most important thing is a very good helmet,” Bates says. “A lot of people don’t understand helmets actually expire after so many years. If you drop one on the ground you can compromise the helmet.” Helmets start at around \$100. “When you get up to the \$300, \$400 range, you really add comfort. It’s not as heavy on your head.” Bates also recommends boots, riding pants, a jacket and gloves.

## ***BMW'S, TRIUMPHS ON THE FRONT LINE***

Some people may think of sport bikes as an exclusively Japanese phenomenon, but they’re not. Walk into Frontline Eurosports, on Route 419 in Salem, and check out the BMW and Triumph sport bikes.

Frontline’s best selling sport bike is the BMW S1000RR, a 450-pound motorcycle generating 199 hp. Depending on options, it costs from \$16,000 to \$20,000. It is capable of over 200 mph, although all motorcycles in the United States have a governor restricting them to 186 mph.

“These motorcycles are geared to be put on the track,” says Nate Jennings, sales leader and head of Frontline’s

# COVER STORY



Matt Bates, sales manager at Star City, has "a garage full of motorcycles."

The speedometer goes to 150 on this BMW sport touring bike at Frontline Eurosports.





racing team. "What they manufacture is what they can race. They are deemed street bikes, but they are designed for the race industry."

Like race cars, sport bikes continually evolve.

"There are so many electronics that bleed down from the car side to these bikes now," says Chip Huff, general manager. Traction control "uses your wheel speed sensors for your ABS and it measures any kind of wheel spin. If your rear wheel begins to slip it has a throttle stepper motor that adjusts how much power is delivered to the ground. In BMW's case they also have lean angles. If you're riding on the track and you're in [an] extreme lean angle, and you go to grab a handful of throttle, it's only going to allow so much power based on the traction it has. It manages what traction you have better than you can. It's taking roughly a thousand measurements a second."

While the BMW and the red Triumphs catch the eye, Frontline is more than just a showroom.

"Our business is probably 20 percent sport bikes and a lot of that is due to activities we offer to allow these guys to take advantage of their machines and not just use it as a street motorcycle," says Jennings. "We promote safe training opportunities, put you in a safe working environment like Virginia International Raceway and take you to ride with professional riders, putting you in an environment where you have the appropriate safety equipment, the appropriately set up motorcycle, the correct mindset and atmosphere to develop skills to make you a safer rider, not only translating to track and racing, but correlating that to the street."

Jennings disputes the notion that sport bikes are only usable on a track. Some customers have no desire to ride on the track,

**Nate Jennings is the sales leader and head of the racing team at Frontline Eurosports**

**A Triumph Speed Triple 1050 at Frontline.**





**A 2015 BMW K1300S at Frontline. If you want 1293cc and 175 horsepower, you can get it for \$20,345.**

**Nate Jennings shows the “permanent grin” that appears on the face when you’re going over 100 mph on a motorcycle.**



or can't afford it, and still enjoy their sport bikes. "Use the safety aspects we teach you for the street and come join us on our Sunday ride. We'll take you out, train with you on the street. You can still be a safe rider even if you don't have the funds to go to a high end training facility."

Hugh Huff, Chip Huff's father and owner of Frontline, echoes the emphasis on safety.

"Quite frankly there are too many kids buying sport bikes who have no business on them," Hugh says. "There's too many inexperienced riders buying sport bikes. Nowadays sport bikes are very powerful and very lightweight and they're very dangerous if not handled properly. We won't sell [high performance bikes] to inexperienced riders."

So... start with a lower-powered bike, get some training, wear the appropriate equipment, take your bike to the track, and maybe one day you will experience the "permagrin."

Nate Jennings is a man who seems to have found his perfect job. He's cool, analytical and adult when discussing the very serious topic of safety, yet he can break into childlike laughter when asked to describe the experience of riding a high speed motorcycle.

"There's no way to state how it feels except this inner—what we call—the permagrin," he says. "When you're floating down the track and you have nothing but open fields to the left and right of you with no consequences of cars and dogs, you can concentrate and get into your zone, you get a permagrin on your face that you don't even know is there until you come back to the pits and take your helmet off and Chip's like, 'What are smiling about?' Dude, I just hit 160 miles an hour! There's actually instances where I'm in a race and I actually I didn't know it until I got back and watched the video, but I can hear myself giggling and laughing and screaming." 📺

# COVER STORY

Chip Huff on  
a BMW HP4  
super sport  
bike





## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**  
*There is more to men's neckties than the colors and patterns you see.*

## Name that necktie >

Neckties seemed threatened with extinction over the last 10 years due to casual dress in the workplace. However, if you look around, they are still thriving and seemingly enjoying a resurgence in popularity.

Department and specialty stores carry them by the dozens and the variety of patterns and colors has never been better. Millennials even embrace the necktie when it suits their needs.

In light of this renewed interest, it's a good time for a refresher course on the different types of tie fabric patterns, their names, and their appropriateness for business dress.

- **Solid** – a great first tie to purchase. Versatile to wear with any jacket in your wardrobe and always useful with business suits. Choose a rich deep color in a lustrous fabric to add interest.
- **Foulard** – a repeating, symmetrical, grid-like pattern. Appears very businesslike when the tie pattern is elegant and colors are monochromatic, with one subtle contrasting color.
- **Paisley** – curving pattern on solid background. Useful for business if the colors are muted and elegant, using understated background color and a harmonious paisley pattern.
- **Plaid** – criss-crossing lines, sometimes on the diagonal. Use subtle colors for business to avoid seeming too casual.
- **Dotted** – keep the dot size small and the color contrast subtle to be business-appropriate.
- **Club** – using a repeating pattern of a crest or insignia. Originally meant to reflect membership in a social club or sports club. Acceptable for business.
- **University** – diagonally striped ties in one's university colors. The stripes slant downward from left to right (when facing the tie). Useful for networking when job-hunting or connecting with other alumni.
- **Regimental** – Similar to university ties except these slant downward from right to left. A British tradition, they indicate membership in a military branch, but are found, also, in colors of US military branches. Worn only if you're a member of a military branch in the proper setting.
- **Knit** – Adds texture and vintage feel to an outfit. Regains popularity every few years. Useful staple for business in neutrals like gray, navy and burgundy.
- **Novelty** – Ties in prints reflecting personal interest, such as fish, footballs, soccer balls, etc. Best reserved for personal time and avoided in a business setting.

That's quite a list – and you thought menswear offered men very few choices in their wardrobe! 

Send comments or questions to [Kathy@peacockimage.com](mailto:Kathy@peacockimage.com)

## St. Valentine's Day etiquette >

It is generally agreed that the tradition of St. Valentine's Day goes back to the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, a fertility festival. Pope Gelasius, around the fifth century, decreed February 14 to be St. Valentine's Day, and the 14th century the poet Chaucer linked love and St. Valentine's Day.

The tradition grew each century, and by the 18th century exchanging gifts and beautiful handmade cards were popular in England. These cards were made of lace and ribbons, with cherubs, cupids and hearts abounding. The tradition spread to America, and in the mid 1850's Esther Howland of Worcester, Massachusetts started to mass produce cards. In the ensuing decades the holiday evolved into what is now a huge commercial venture. Hundreds of millions of cards, along with flowers and chocolate will be sent or given this St. Valentine's Day.

Let's talk about Valentine's Day in the professional setting. If you are planning to send your greetings to the office, consider the following:

- Will the object of your affections (male or female) feel comfortable getting a huge bouquet of flowers at work?
- Some workplaces have rules in place about accepting gifts from clients or professional associates. Check to ensure that it's all right to send a gift.
- Don't send a smoking hot e-card ! Some companies monitor emails, and you could end up embarrassing your heart's delight.
- Nix the personal gifts for the office: jewelry, perfume, and lingerie are best given in a private setting.
- Don't try to impress your boss with a gift. It could be construed as toadying.
- If you plan to give a co-worker a Valentine's card, make sure it's appropriate, friendly or funny.
- If you send a funny card to a colleague, make sure he or she enjoys and understands your sense of humor.

So enjoy Valentine's Day and keep it light and professional in an office setting. If you send a box of chocolates, make sure it is big enough for your valentine to share with co-workers. If you send flowers or balloons, do include a card!

Finally, and for those who work in an office: remember when you were in grade school there was always someone who never received a Valentine's card? Be kind, look around and see the person who always seems to be on the outside of things. Send that person a friendly card. You might say "thank you for all you do!" You could make that person's day a little brighter! 



## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

**Executive Summary:**  
*Celebrating Valentine's in a personal—or business environment: there's a difference.*



## Defense mechanism >

### Executive Summary:

*Damsel in Defense offers personal safety products; a growing market opportunity given recent headlines on assaults and abductions.*

By Anne Sampson

Morgan Blankenship was looking for fulfilling, flexible work which would allow her to spend time with her young son. On the way, she found a mission.

Morgan is an independent representative for Damsel in Defense, a direct marketing company selling personal safety products designed to appeal to women. Items like stun guns and pepper spray are offered in fashion colors with attractive holsters, and travel safety kits come in cute totes with names like "Junk in the Trunk." But pretty colors are not all the company offers to women interested in personal safety.

"Our mission is to equip, educate and empower," says Morgan, who became an independent rep in September. Although direct marketing is often associated with home parties, Damsel in Defense prefers

to offer "Empower Hours." Each Empower Hour is different, so attendees come again and again.

"We offer statistics on violent crime," says Morgan. "We watch videos on self-defense techniques and learn how to use the products. We play awareness games. For example, I have two people stand back-to-back and try to answer questions about each other. It shows people how unaware we can be of what's going on around us."

Morgan just left a full-time job as a debt collector for Atlantic Credit and Finance, a job she held for seven years, to work with two direct marketing companies, Damsels in Defense and Premiere Jewelry.

"(Atlantic has) been terrific to me; it's a great company to work for," she says. "But I hated my job. I wanted to be able to focus my time and energy differently, and spend time with my son. Atlantic gave me the tools to do what I'm doing now. I learned a lot about setting and achieving goals."

Morgan has experienced domestic violence herself, and she watched as a close friend spiraled downward as a result of sexual and domestic abuse. That friend has since turned her life around and gotten involved with Damsel in Defense.

"People start opening up (at Empower Hours) and sharing stories about themselves or someone they know. Violence affects everyone. People need to be aware and able to protect themselves. (The attacker) is looking for someone who isn't paying attention."

Morgan partners with local self-defense instructors, who offer discounts to Damsel in Defense clients. She also gives talks for Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) on avoiding and managing dangerous situations and distributes community resource information at events.

The Damsel product line ranges from personal safety to travel and emergency, such as stun guns, refillable pepper sprays which mark the attacker with a UV dye for later identification, child trackers, travel alarms and safes and multipurpose emergency tools. A keyring-sized gadget called a 'kubaton can be used to break out a car window or disable an attacker. Made of titanium in an array of pretty colors, it can be applied to any pressure point on the body, says Morgan, "the back of the knee, the elbow, tendons, the small bones of the

hand, the chin or throat" to encourage an assailant to let go, even if the victim's hands are held behind her.

Many of her clients are men who buy products for wives, girlfriends and daughters. "One man bought pepper spray, a stun gun and a kubaton for his daughter for Christmas, and had to come back and get the same things for his girlfriend."

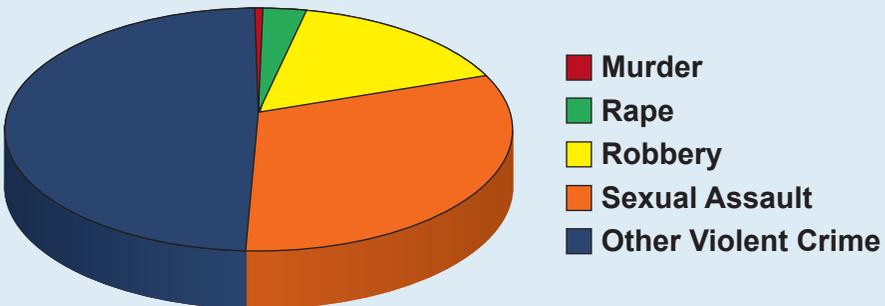
Denial may be the biggest obstacle Morgan must overcome in her clients.

"I'm amazed at how many women say, 'I'm too ugly to be abducted,' or, 'I'm never going to need that,'" she says. "Then you have to ask what their perception of safety is."

Morgan's next goal is to work with college students, and a colleague is interested in providing counseling for sexual assault victims which protects the privacy of the victim. And, as always, education will be the core of their work.

"Whether you buy products or not," she says, "you will be leaving with something." 

## Violent Crime in the U.S. in 1 Hour



According to the website, [www.damselinddefense.net](http://www.damselinddefense.net), the company was founded in 2011 by Mindy Lin and Bethany Hughes of Meridan, Idaho. They now have over 4000 independent representatives. At the beginning of an Empower Hour, Morgan Blankenship offers these statistics on crime in the U.S.:

**A murder every 34.4 minutes; a rape every 6.2 minutes; a robbery every 1.5 minutes; an assault every 41.5 seconds; and other violent crimes every 26 seconds.**

At the end of the hour, whoever can do the math first gets a prize. It adds up to one murder, nine rapes, 45 robberies, 86 sexual assaults and 138 violent crimes in an hour.



## Small Business

By Samantha Steidle

### Executive Summary:

*The chamber of commerce is supposed to serve its membership; you can capitalize on that mission to advance your business.*

## Joining the Chamber >

You may have seen symbols on the front doors of your favorite local businesses indicating they have memberships with the Chamber of Commerce. You may have been invited to join "the chamber" yourself.

Why would you want to join a "chamber," anyway? As it turns out, there are a lot of good reasons.

Local businesses have long sought the visibility of being part of a respected professional organization, affiliated with the national interest group. You get your company listed in a directory with other members, and that listing is often published or linked to your website. It can provide many direct business referrals each month, depending on the size of the membership.

Customers and prospects are more likely to buy from you if they see you're part of the Chamber of Commerce, according to a 2012 study by The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based consulting firm.

## Go where the action is

A major benefit of joining the chamber is to get referrals and to make connections. New members who are employees of small businesses or startups often begin by seeking free assistance at services such as small business development centers.

The value of a chamber membership depends on what you put into it. Training opportunities are abundant, including classes on business plans, operations and marketing. But it is at the many chamber events that you will meet the people who may make a difference for you and your business.

Here's a partial list of some of the kinds of events the chambers in our area hold on a regular basis. To explore all the events, go to their websites or subscribe to their email announcements.

- Regularly Held Local Events: Business breakfasts, happy hours, "Business after Hours," speed networking
- Small Business Awards. Some chambers have separate events for this; others include such recognitions at their annual meetings
- Annual Meeting. Every chamber in our region has an annual meeting; some are a more "festive" environment, while others are more "business"

# PERSPECTIVES

- Business Expo. Many of our chambers have business showcase opportunities; much like a trade show or mini-convention
- Panels and Summits. Our chambers often produce events that address topics of interest to business leaders, municipal and government officials, entrepreneurs, and anyone engaged in the local community

Imagine yourself going to even a fraction of the events held by the chambers serving your local market place, and making new friends and contacts related to your business. Work the plan, and it will benefit you – hopefully with enough business to keep your company well in the black. You may even find the company changing, adapting, and growing more quickly than it would have had you not taken the step to get involved in your local chamber.

What's a chamber membership good for? It's good for you and your business. 



Customers and prospects are more likely to buy from you if they see you're part of the Chamber of Commerce, according to a 2012 study by The Schapiro Group, an Atlanta-based consulting firm.

## 2015 Forum on Critical Thinking, Innovation & Leadership

### U.S. HOUSING FINANCING REFORM

*Can we manage and control taxpayer risk while assuring continued innovation in the market?*

Tuesday, March 17 | The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center  
Registration: 8:00 a.m. | Program: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Through the Forum, Ferrum College raises the level of public discourse about trending issues that require the country's best critical thinking skills, practical innovations, and business and civic leadership. The fifth annual Forum will examine the causes of market weakness and possible solutions to restoring the vitality of the U.S. housing finance system while reducing taxpayers' risk to potential future losses. Panelists will include Edward DeMarco, senior fellow in residence at the Milken Institute Center for Financial Markets at Vanderbilt University, Gretchen Morgenson, Pulitzer Prize-winning assistant business and financial editor and columnist at the New York Times, and Michael Stegman, Counselor to the Secretary of the Treasury for Housing Finance Policy.



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## The two most important things in your contract >

After five minutes of talking to the guy it was clear that he was in the right, but that he was screwed anyway.

He'd signed a contract with a New York company and paid them \$4,000 to develop a web site for his Roanoke small business. A year later, they had only done about a third of the work they were supposed to, and even that they'd done poorly.

"Can I sue them?" he asked.

"Well sure, but look at this paragraph here," I said, pointing at the contract. The first pages of the contract had all sorts of details about the web-site-that-never-was: the code the New Yorkers were supposed to write, the copy they were supposed to write, the color scheme they were supposed to use. None of it mattered. The only important paragraph was on page four, and it read:

**Section 13 — Disputes.** All disputes related to this agreement will be subject to exclusive jurisdiction and venue in the courts of New York, New York.

"You see," I said, "they've breached the contract for sure, but to get your money back you have to go all the way to Yankeeland. You'd have to hire a lawyer there, and you'd have to travel there to testify. It could easily cost you \$5000, or \$10,000, or more. It just doesn't make sense to do that for a \$4000 contract."

"OK, right, that's expensive," he said. "But wait — if I win, then they have to pay my attorneys' fees, don't they?"

"Unfortunately, no," I said. "In a contract dispute, the winner only gets his or her attorneys' fees paid if the contract says so. There's nothing in this contract about attorneys' fees."

"So what can I do?" he said.

"Nothing, really, unless you're willing to lose even more money," I said.

"Well then, dammit, I'm still going to go to New York to sue them!" he said. "It's the *principle* of the thing! I just don't like being ripped off! I want justice!"

However, as it turned out, in the end the guy decided that "justice" was too expensive. He had us write a nastygram to the web development firm, and when they still didn't refund his money, he gave up. So it goes.

In our legal system, a businessperson can only get as much

## Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

### Executive Summary:

*A very important component in your contract could exist in a single paragraph; beware.*

“justice” as he or she is able to pay for. In my experience, a lot of businesspeople don’t realize this. They may spend a lot of time negotiating a contract, but then just assume that if the other side breaches the contract, the contract somehow will magically enforce itself.

For this reason, I often say that the two most important things in any contract are in the “Disputes” paragraph. I like for the paragraph to read like this:

**Section 13 — Disputes.** All disputes related to this agreement will be subject to exclusive jurisdiction and venue in the state or federal courts in and for the City of Roanoke, Virginia. [Or, insert your own local jurisdiction here!] The prevailing party in any legal action will be entitled to an award of the costs of the action, including reasonable attorneys’ fees.

A paragraph like this will make sure that (1) any lawsuits are handled in your own backyard, and (2) when you win the lawsuit, you can get back your attorneys’ fees in addition to whatever other money you were owed. Indeed, when the other side realizes that his breach is going to require him to pay your attorneys’ fees in addition to whatever damages he’s caused you, he may just decide to settle right then and there.

This paragraph is of course “boilerplate,” which a lot of people seem to think is unimportant. But if your contract’s boilerplate is bad for you, then none of the other provisions in the contract may do you any good.

That’s why I always read the boilerplate. So should you. Otherwise you may find that the contract you negotiated so carefully is actually just a worthless piece of paper. 

*Note: facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality.*



In our legal system, a businessperson can only get as much “justice” as he or she is able to pay for. In my experience, a lot of businesspeople don’t realize this. They may spend a lot of time negotiating a contract, but then just assume that if the other side breaches the contract, the contract somehow will magically enforce itself.

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Cara Cooper

**Todd Gills and his son-in-law Timmy Fernatt work to repair a car at their shop, Minute Muffler, in Roanoke. Minute Muffler is one of the oldest locally owned shops in the Roanoke Valley**

## Exhausting, but worth it >

### Executive Summary:

*Approaching four decades in the family business, Roanoke's Minute Muffler Shop still scrambles under cars to stay on top.*

### By Cara Cooper

Late in the year in 1976, Todd Gills, Sr. was working at Midas car repair shop in Roanoke when he decided he wanted to be his own boss for once. That is when he and his wife Belle decided to open Minute Muffler Shop. Minute Muffler Shop opened in Roanoke on January 23, 1977, and after 38 years of business they are one of the oldest locally owned car shops in the Roanoke Valley, and a staple in the downtown area.

The original location for Minute Muffler was further up Williamson Road near Hotel Roanoke. The Gills stayed in the first, smaller location for a little over two years before finding the need to expand. They bought the plot of land where the business currently

resides on 3rd street across from the Norfolk Southern building near downtown, and built the shop where the family is still working today.

Now, "Big" Todd and Belle work with their son "Little" Todd, son-in-law Timmy Fernatt, and new beagle puppy, Leena. The shop does everything from putting on mufflers, pipes, and brakes to doing tune-ups and alignments.

"We do just about everything except build motors," Belle said.

Belle said that working with her family has become second nature to her. After 38 years "you get used to it," she said with a laugh. There are plans to keep the shop within the family too, with the younger Todd, who is currently the shop manager, set to take over sometime in the future.

While the father and son duo take care of the shop, Belle takes care of the office, doing bills, helping customers, and "taking care of the boys," she said.

When Minute Muffler first opened, they were one of only two muffler shops in the area. That other shop has since closed. Starting a small business after working for a large, national chain made the Gills realize

how hard it is to compete sometimes.

"You have to fight for every penny you get," Belle said. But the Gills believe that being a family owned business helps them to provide better hand-on-hand service that the larger chains can't, which is what Belle attributes to their sustained success for so many years.

"We're out to serve the people and help them," she said. "Cause the other ones don't care if you come or go. But we do care for our customers and take care of them which makes a big difference."

What started as a way for Belle and Todd Gills to step away from the world of big business and give them the opportunity to be their own bosses has now become a staple of the Roanoke Valley. 38 years later the Gills continue to work hard to provide the best care they can for their customers.



**Minute Muffler Car Shop is celebrating their 38th year of business in the Roanoke Valley, making it one of the oldest locally owned shops in the area**

"We do our best to satisfy the customer and treat them right," Belle said. "And they respect us and we respect them and what they do." 



Each year, professional advisors like Lee Osborne with Woods Rogers PLC, talk with their clients about their charitable interests and how they might make a real difference in the community.

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## See you at the forum >

Social networks have a reputation for existing on a worldwide scale. On platforms like Twitter and Instagram, it is as easy to connect with someone in Japan as it is to connect to someone in Lynchburg. Facebook is a way to keep in touch with friends, but those friends likely live all over the country.

Because the Internet is contemporaneous yet separate from the physical world, there is the common misconception that all social networking platforms can only serve online communities, or that they create a virtual duplicate of the communities of which we are all a part. Lately I have been introduced to two modern “forums,” both housed on the Internet, which directly serve the existing, physical local community, but both of which have a global platform.

One of these websites is called We Evolve Us ([www.weevolveus.com](http://www.weevolveus.com)) and is launching in Roanoke as I type. Its mission is to be a tool to empower individuals and create actual change. Though it looks and feels like a social network, this type of forum is meant to utilize existing resources and human capital in the user’s community to create actionable ideas and replicatable change. In their own words, “We’re building a space to connect and inform people about all of the amazing things being done in every local community and abroad...This is social networking with a purpose, where ideas evolve and have a direct impact on the lives of those involved” (<http://weevolveus.com/about>).

Another site launching in Roanoke, Agora ([www.theagora.co](http://www.theagora.co)), is an online town hall for civic engagement. Similiar to We Evolve Us, Agora exists on the premise that users will engage with other local users to make strengthen local democracy. As an added feature, Agora uses location-sensing algorithms to make sure that those interacting are who they say they are and live where they say they live.

What these modern forums for action and communication provide are ways for users to utilize the Internet in a way that has direct impact on their real, local community, not just inside of a virtual bubble. These types of startups have the capacity to change the way Roanokers talk to one another. Political, economic and cultural boundaries that exist in our physical Roanoke do not have the same impact inside of these new local online forums. Real conversations and connections can happen in an instant and can create real change for the better. 

## Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

### Executive Summary:

*Modern forums for action and communication are helpful in getting the young professional out of his or her own bubble.*

## In a seated position >

Many people think of physical stress on their bodies as heavy lifting, repeated strenuous activities at work or exercise. Those are definitely a portion of the physical stress on our bodies but the biggest physical stress on our bodies is our posture. Poor posture throughout the day can have adverse effects on the structure of our spine and health at many levels. It can lead to chronic pain, spinal misalignments, headaches and much more. The most prominent postural problem in America in this generation is seated posture. With the advent of computers, laptops and cell phones and increased sitting our poor posture during these activities has led to an epidemic of health problems related to this. Long hours of work or studying in poor seated posture is prevalent starting at a very young age for all Americans. It has led to major spinal misalignments in the neck for many individuals which lead to forward head posture. It has also led to weakness and imbalance in the core muscles of the body.

Research shows that sitting in a slouched posture can lead to organic problems. Neuroscientists at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom reported in 2007 that neck muscle cells signal the brain when sensing movement in the neck, possibly ensuring adequate blood supply as the body changes posture. The system, however, breaks down when cells incur damage from poor posture, resulting in blood pressure either higher or lower than optimum. "We fight against gravity the whole time," said Robert McCoy, a doctor of osteopathic medicine and lecturer on anatomy at the British School of Osteopathy. "It takes about 10 minutes of sitting or standing before the muscles in the spine and abdomen that hold us up start to get tired, and we lean forward." "It's possible that poor posture, which compresses the neck muscles, may be involved in high blood pressure, too, but more researcher is needed," McCoy said. There is also evidence in this research that prolonged slouching can affect digestive and urinary function as well.



## Wellness

By Chris Lauria

**Executive Summary:**  
*Sitting for long periods of time can wreak havoc on your body; here are some tips.*

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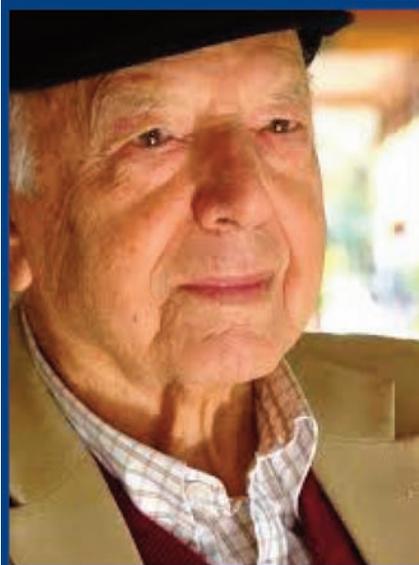
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Here are some guidelines to follow to help achieve good seated posture at work or at school

- 1) Avoid slouching or leaning forward, especially when tired from sitting in the office chair for long periods
- 2) For long term sitting, such as in an office chair, be sure the chair is ergonomically designed to properly support the back. In most cases using the back of a chair does not promote good posture.
- 3) Sit without using the back of your chair no matter how good it is in order to activate the core muscles of your back and neck. This is a great exercise for most



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# Ask him



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people. You will find this to be difficult if you have not done this but you will get stronger the more you do it.

- 4) Knees should be even with the hips, or slightly higher when sitting in the office chair
- 5) Make sure you are sitting balanced not leaning on one side of your buttocks. Remove your wallet from your back pocket it is like sitting on a wedge.
- 6) Keep both feet flat on the floor. If there's a problem with feet reaching the floor use a footrest.
- 7) Do not cross your legs. It creates imbalances in your pelvis and lower back.

8) Sit in the office chair with shoulders straight and head directly over your shoulders. Make sure your computer screen is in the right position to do this. It should be high enough for you to look straight ahead.

- 9) Don't sit in one place for too long, even in ergonomic office chairs that have good back support. Get up and walk around and stretch as needed. Standing work stations offer a great alternative to this. They allow you to sit in a higher chair then stand up for periods of time.

It is critical to get children into habits as early as possible. They spend far more time at computers and video gaming and sitting at school. Reminding them of these habits repeatedly will help prevent many problems in the future. 

## You Deserve Better Banking

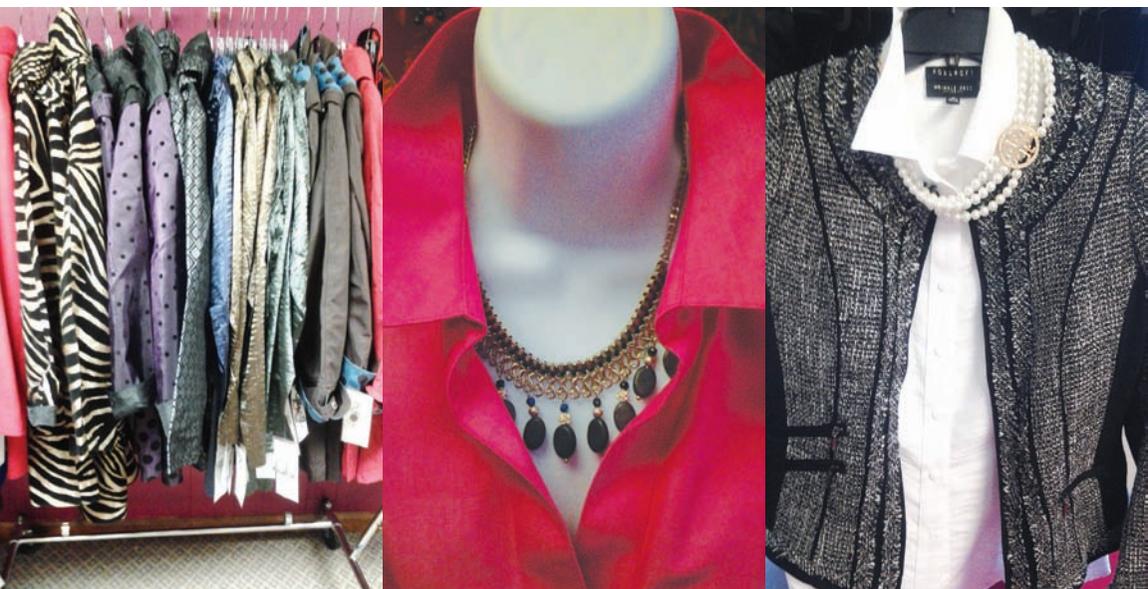
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## Stylish sense >

### Executive Summary:

*Ponnie's in Shawsville combines a sense of style, well-matched fashion, and personal service to attract loyal customers at the boutique.*

### By Rachael Garrity

Move over Manhattan, Southwest Virginia has a personal shopper. Well, not exactly. It's better, even, than that. The Valley, Shawsville to be exact, is home to a boutique owned by a woman who knows her clients well, and chooses clothes and accessories specifically for them as part of her regular buying trips. What those in metro areas pay a good bit of money for, Ponnie Shawver's customers get as part of their regular store visits. Cut the hype and bring on the service.

Nestled on a quiet residential street that might well give a feng shui expert pause, Ponnie's shop celebrated its tenth anniversary last October. "Since my husband and I already owned the building (they live above the boutique), I didn't really spend a lot of time thinking about where customers were going to come from," Ponnie remembers. "This was what I had to work with unless I wanted to make a huge investment somewhere else."

Having spent a number of years in the health care field, she decided she needed a change after her father died. She had grown up in Shawsville, and like her six siblings, opted to stay in the area. Charmingly honest, she admits, "The first few years were really hard. In fact, it began to feel almost impossible, until 2008 when things began to take off."

What? Wasn't 2008 the date the economy took a nose dive? So where did the success come from?

Ponnie says the answer is threefold. In her words:

"Number one, God.

"Second, I have received unbelievable, regular, undiminished support from family and my regular customers. There are some who come every month, without fail. They bring their friends. You can tell they want this store to work.

"And finally, I have had very good results from fashion shows. For the last eight years, I've produced a show in August at Hidden Valley Country Club for Greenvale School in Roanoke. More recently, I've also been putting them on at the Waldron Center right here in Shawsville for Mountain Valley Charitable Fund. I don't use professional models, but instead enlist women from the sponsoring organizations. It's fun for everyone."



What, then, makes her merchandise unique? Ponnies spends a great deal of time on fashion research, and makes a conscious effort to be sure she offers a diversity of styles – vintage, classic, contemporary, the full range. In addition, she tries to introduce new lines on a regular basis to be sure that return customers find a fresh choice.

Asked what advice she would offer to someone seeking to begin a women's clothing retail operation, she notes that preparation is key. "Some people obviously think I do this as a sort of hobby. It's true I love it, and I think that shows, but it is by no means that informal. It is a source of revenue for us. No one should go in blindly. Plenty of research ahead of time; a sufficient amount of capital; and perhaps as important

as anything else if you're in a small town, a business community that is willing to work with you and help you grow your operation. The one here has been amazing."

She is no stranger, either, to social media. Not surprisingly, she updates her Facebook page – Ponnies Boutique and Gifts – regularly, because as she points out, she sees it more as a way to keep current customers informed about new merchandise than as a way to capture new customers. A look at the page reveals that some of those customers are contributors themselves. Clearly, this is a store where personal service is tantamount. As one excited first-time visitor exclaimed recently, "This is like the store I've been shopping at for years on steroids!" 

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## Protecting your future >

Across Southwest Virginia and across America, owning a small business can be challenging. But, according to the fourth quarter 2014 Wells Fargo/Gallup Small Business Index, small business owners are feeling a renewed sense of confidence as they head into 2015.

In November, we surveyed small business owners across the U.S. and the findings were clear: Business owners are the most optimistic for the year ahead since the start of the Great Recession. The Small Business Index score rose to positive 58 (+58) in November, up nine points from positive 49 (+49) in July and up 34 points from a year ago.

The climbing Small Business Index score is not just good news for small business owners; it's also good news for local communities and economies across America. In the survey, business owners said they anticipate a better operating environment and higher revenues in 2015. They also said they plan to increase the amount of money allocated for capital spending and increase the number of jobs at their company too. We know that in order for our economy to thrive, small businesses need to succeed, which makes this trend in improved confidence and positive future outlook all the more encouraging.

Another promising trend the survey revealed is that small business owners have fewer worries than in recent years. Attracting new customers and new business remains a top challenge for small business owners, but overall, concerns around key issues that could impact their business are less pronounced than a year ago.

Here are some of the areas that saw the most improvement in November:

**Paying Employees** - For small businesses, balancing cash flow and managing expenses such as payroll can be challenging. In the recent survey, less than a quarter (22 percent) of small business owners reported being very worried or moderately worried about not being able to pay their employees. Compared to 32 percent in 2011, this is a strong downward trend that we hope will continue.

**Paying Bills** - When asked about paying bills, only 5 percent of small business owners surveyed said they are very worried about making their minimum credit card payments, compared to 12 percent in 2011. We also asked those surveyed about the ability to pay their household bills, and 8 percent report being very worried about not being able to make those payments, compared to 17 percent in 2011.

**Retirement** - Planning for retirement is another challenge that small business owners face. In the survey, small business owners were asked about their concerns around saving

## Business Banking

By Susan Brown

**Executive Summary:**  
*Even as small business optimism rises, here are steps you can take to protect your investment.*

# P E R S P E C T I V E S

for retirement, and 41 percent said they are not too worried or not worried at all about putting enough money away for retirement. That's an improvement, up from 29 percent in 2011.

The Small Business Index also found that unlike a year ago, more business owners think their operating environment in 2015 will be better (35 percent) than think it will be worse (15 percent). This is a dramatic improvement over last year, when 23 percent of business owners predicted a better year ahead and 25 percent thought it would be worse.

Over the years, we've seen time and time again that small business owners are a resilient and optimistic bunch. Building and running a small business has its challenges, yet as the improvement in the economy continues, business owners may find these challenges easier to overcome.

Whether you are thinking about expanding your business or opening a new location, or buying your building, I encourage you to sit down with a banker you trust, or build a relationship with one who can help with your unique financial needs and business goals.

There is no better way to invest your time in your future. 



In November, we surveyed small business owners across the U.S. and the findings were clear: Business owners are the most optimistic for the year ahead since the start of the Great Recession.



That friend has since turned her life around

— Page 20

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More business owners think their operating environment in 2015 will be better — Page 36

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## Railroad spikes and dresser drawers >

What do the People's Republic of China and U.S. state of Georgia have in common?

They both take our jobs.

If you're asking me, I would be scratching my head a bit. Thinking—like a game show contestant... peanuts maybe? China is one of the world's largest producers. And Georgia: well, there's that whole Jimmy Carter peanut farming thing. (Even though Virginia has the far better crop.)

But listening to the local news or reading a few headlines this week, you would think the answer to that question is an absolute no-brainer. No one was thinking about that popular salty party snack.

It was a most interesting week in late January. A tale of two cities if you will. One with a Communist-controlled factory in China. The other, a state capital and home to the ninth largest metropolitan market—and still growing.

Oh, wait. There's a third city. Poor, little ol' Roanoke.

On the first Tuesday (Jan. 20), I hear the now most familiar tale of Vaughan-Bassett Furniture. A story brought to light by the charisma of the enigmatic "Factory Man" himself, and the notoriety of the book by Beth Macy.

Many people say the mass exodus of 63,000 U.S. factories in one decade was the result of "our jobs going to China."

But China didn't *take* our jobs.

Even John Bassett, III knows that. Listen carefully, and you hear something beyond the fairness and unfairness of it all. One country simply did not protect its own interest.

That's not *taking* our jobs.

On the following Tuesday (Jan. 27), we all hear the news of another exodus. This time it's the Norfolk Southern Corporation's announcement of 500 positions leaving Roanoke. Go to Atlanta (or Norfolk) the office employees are told, or lose your job.

One politician essentially blames "The Administration" and its disregard for the coal industry. Another politician says the company itself is "insulting" after all Roanoke did for the railroad.

But Atlanta didn't *take* our jobs.

continued on Page 42

## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

### Executive Summary:

*The export of jobs is more likely due to the giving—not taking of employment sectors.*

## Cabell Brand tribute >

Cabell Brand made a lot of us better people than we could ever have even imagined being had we not known him. He was a demanding perfectionist, a warm and loving friend, a loyal partner in the battles against the excesses of the far right, a nationally-notable entrepreneur, a superb husband, father and grandfather, and a man who could see the best in all of us. And who would push us to reach for it.

Cabell died Tuesday, January 13, at 91, shortly after helping celebrate his friend and TAP successor Ted Edlich's pending retirement. Cabell founded TAP in 1965, one of the most successful anti-poverty programs to emerge at the time of the social program excesses of the Johnson Administration and one run like one of his businesses. The number of poor people who were given an even chance by TAP can't be calculated.

Frankly, I was surprised he lived as long as he did following the death of his much adored wife, Shirley, last year. Shirley was the light in Cabell's eyes. She had fought long and hard against a debilitating disease and there were times when I felt Cabell simply would not let her die. They're together now, one hopes.

Cabell was always called a "liberal lion" and I'm not sure that gives the proper impression of him. Sure, he was a fighter and he was undeniably a liberal (there is no liberal like a Southern liberal and Cabell was born in Salem and educated at VMI; that's conservative and it shows his penchant toward the contrary). He was far more thoughtful than any lion I ever knew, more practical and judicious than most of the liberals I know.

He was a man about whom the phrase "he's driving me crazy" was probably perfected. Cabell was extraordinarily demanding, even for the smallest and most insignificant tasks. He wanted things done his way and he would prod until he got that. I think all of us who knew him well got truly exhausted with him, angry with him, frustrated with him at times. We also got more done than we ever imagined we could.

This sweet, generous and kind man was a mentor of mine, a man who—for reasons known only to him—liked my writing and my stances on issues. He expressed his approval on a number of occasions and I kept most of his letters. Cabell wrote letters, a notable and delightful signature of his age. I always felt like I had received approval from somebody of presidential stature when Cabell wrote or called.

When Tom Field—a thoughtful libertarian—and I founded FRONT magazine in 2008, Cabell was there saying, "If there's anything you need ..." and meaning it. Our first issue had

continued on Page 42



## Guest Commentary

By Dan Smith

**Executive Summary:**  
*Cabell Brand was a patron of FRONT, and an upstanding citizen and contributor.*

## Field / On Tap

from Page 40

Even the NS employees themselves know that. Look carefully, and you see something beyond the fairness and unfairness of it all. One company is simply protecting its own interest.

That's not *taking* our jobs.

There are definitely forces working against us when it comes to developing a viable, sustainable workforce, while protecting and advancing a robust economy. Our own government seems to be doing everything in its power to destroy whatever competitive advantages we could have.

If it's not going to help (and name a government-controlled agency that is ran in an efficient and productive manner), then at least get out of the way.

There's punishment enough if American enterprise doesn't do the right thing.

It's called *giving* our jobs away. 🇺🇸

## Guest Commentary

from Page 41

Cabell on the cover. A considerable portion of the inside of the magazine was dedicated to a profile of him and an excerpt of his new book *If Not Me, Then Who?* It was a book that outlined Cabell's liberal philosophy, co-written with my friend Tommy Denton.

I won't get into Cabell's lengthy and impressive resume, except to say that when he landed at the airport of a small, developing country—there to help, most often—the chief potentate frequently there to meet him. At one time, his shoe factory in Bangaldesh was one of the few private businesses in the entire country. His house was a virtual museum warehouse of mementos from those excursions. He knew presidents, senators, congressmen, janitors, accountants, lawyers and journalists and held them all in esteem. He was a lovely man, one we would all do well to emulate.

His death leaves us with one less incorruptible, generous, honest and good man, the kind I could point to and say to my grandson, "Oz, I want you to be like him when you grow up." 🇺🇸

“ ”

The craving for speed seems to be inherent in the male of the species

— Page 8

# Reach Out!

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## Letters

### In memorium

Dear Mr. Field:

It is with a heavy heart that I need to inform you that Hank McHale, the author of "Business Operations", page 23 of the January issue of FRONT magazine, has passed away suddenly in December. I wanted you, personally, to know that Hank was very excited to be writing for your magazine and was working on a February article.

Hank is (was) my husband and he was not in ill health. He passed suddenly and his death was a surprise to all of us and we are heartbroken in so many ways.

We received copies of the January issue of FRONT magazine; and that is a good thing because I can have one for myself, and for each of Hank's two children, Mike McHale, felony court judge in Cook County, Chicago, and Michelle McHale, a child counselor in St. Joseph, Michigan. They will be happy to see Hank's face in FRONT and to read his article.

Thank you for giving Hank the opportunity to write for FRONT. He certainly was up to the challenge and his passing was a great surprise and heartbreaking loss for all of us (family and friends).

Good luck with your management of FRONT. I read with interest your "On Tap from the Pub" and agree with your point of view. Hank was that—very NICE—and as his wife and

partner, I respected him for being "nice" and for his brilliant mind, sensitivity, creativity, hard work ethic and his never complaining about what needed to be done. In some ways, he was so much nicer than me, but he didn't tell me that. He always told me I was the nice one.

Besides being a successful business person, Hank loved to race sailboats on the Great Lakes, he loved to hike with me, he loved his dog, Buster, and he was so much fun. I never thought I would find a man who loved and admired me as much as Hank did. When we were dating, he told me "someday you will be one hell of a woman," and he said that often (with great admiration while smiling) throughout our marriage. I believed him and wondered when that would be. I wonder if now is the time for me to be "one hell of a woman"? It will be tough, but he taught me a lot about how to be strong.

Thank you again for your time and considerate (and nice) treatment of Hank, my pride and joy for almost 33 years.

Sincerely,

**Mimi McHale**  
*Moneta*

**Publisher's Note:** Hank McHale was first introduced to FRONT readers as author of *Actual Experiences of a CEO: How to Make Continuous Improvement in Manufacturing Succeed for Your Company*. We will miss his contribution to business operations insight and counsel.

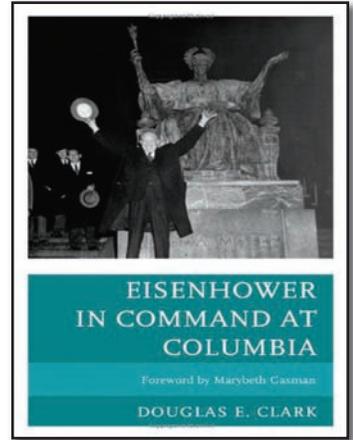
Send letters to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com) or any FRONT contact of your choosing (page 6). Submissions may be edited. You can see, read, print any current or back issue online at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com)



And you thought menswear offered men very few choices — Page 18

## 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 short reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com)



### *Commanding in context*

*Eisenhower in Command at Columbia* (Lexington Books; 2013) shows how even successful leaders operating in complex ways, using multiple strategies to suit different emerging situations, can make missteps that create unfortunate circumstances. Douglas Clark shows how successful leaders are attuned to their contexts, operating within the culture and norms, and attentive to key constituencies.

The book provides a cautionary tale for leaders to carefully understand institutional context, a problem that plagued Eisenhower's presidency at Columbia. Leaders with humility, integrity, belief in the public good, and the ability to listen can often prevail even when they come to organizations and settings where they have little knowledge or understanding, but the chances are much lower. Eisenhower's tenure at Columbia reveals that even the most capable leaders need to be aware of context. We should heed the lessons from history offered in this book, and apply them to our understanding of higher education leadership going forward.

—Adrianna Kezar

### *Drawing on history*

I can't imagine a history major or history lover not having Larry Gonnick's *The Cartoon History of the Universe* (Doubleday; 1990–2009). The series, a collection of thick large format comic books (black and white illustrations) covers history from the Big Bang to modern times, the last installment

up to 2008. The books are a simply amazing trip through the annals of history in a fun and irreverent way you don't get from encyclopedias (err... make that Wikipedia). Historians are bound to quibble over what moments in history our illustrator spends pages on versus others he brushes over... but I find the whole presentation utterly marvelous.

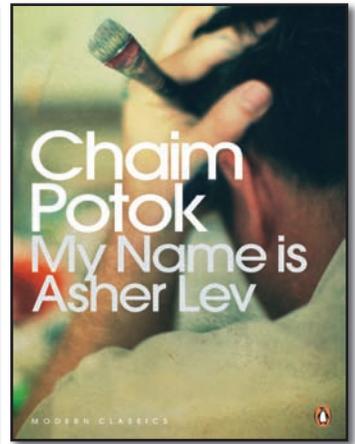
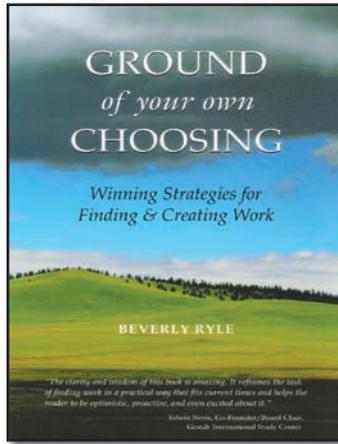
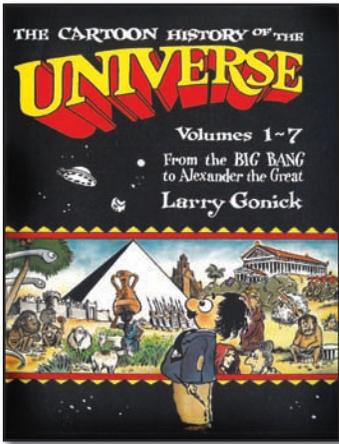
What I would really like to know is how people read these books. They are so captivating, you just can't engage them the same way you read a novel or a chapter book or any other format. Do you place your bookmark before the Bronze Age and pick it up from there the next day? Do you keep flipping through until you complete the Roman Empire before its fall? Or do you just pick up any volume, flip the pages and stick your finger in anywhere—to see what you get? In any case, history illustrated this way is delightful. I wish someone would commission a reproduction of all of Gonnick's story on a long chamber hallway wall, perhaps at the Smithsonian Museum of History.

—Tom Field

### *Work search*

Finding work is difficult in the best of times, but with gloomy economic news, layoffs and outsourcing, it feels even more daunting. In her book, *Ground of Your Own Choosing: Winning Strategies for Finding & Creating Work* (Shank Painter; 2008), Beverly Ryle teaches people to deal with the changing realities of the workplace.

She explains that the reason it is difficult



to find work go far beyond the current downturn: we are living in an era of fundamental changes in the nature of work itself, in which jobs as we have known them are disappearing.

Most American workers were free agents—farmers and artisans before the industrial economy began in the 19th century. As the Industrial Age advanced, it became harder for free agents to compete, and eventually the job, rather than free agency, became the norm. Now, the tide of history has turned again. In our electronically connected service economy work opportunities are less often packaged as jobs and a job is simply a long-term contract.

“Within the professional lifetime of a single generation,” the author writes, “we have seen transformations in the kind of work we do, how we work, where we work, how long we work at one place, and even why we work. Yet despite changes in virtually everything having to do with work, we still go about trying to find and sustain it in the same old ways.”

Beverly wakes readers up to the futility of the traditional job-search and offers work-search alternatives which are more appropriate for the times we live in.

—Nicola Burnell

## *The War of Art*

If you are part of a strong, long-standing and entrenched cultural identity (either by religious belief, heritage, societal membership) and you are engaged in something that breaks from the

expectation of your group—are you going to be recognized for your originality and contribution, or rejected as a betrayer of your kind and kin? That's the central premise of *Chaim Potok's My Name is Asher Lev* (Ballentine; 1972).

What makes this story poignant, is that the question is asked about a young boy. How easy is it for anyone to call out “heretic” of a young soul, when it's rather apparent he's only doing “what comes natural”? Perhaps responding to your self-centered passions is not favored if your actions violate the expectations, but just how do you slap down a twelve year old boy—an artistic prodigy at that—who was raised with perfection by the most absolute practitioners of the very faith? Put all this in a setting and context of the Hasidic Jew, and you've got yourself one of the best internal conflicts for building a memorable story. Can one be true to himself and not betray his faith at the same time? Is that even possible if your very identity seems so different than the lot in life you have been assigned to? A fascinating conundrum. And one that I don't think would be nearly as powerful had our subject been any older or tied to any less rigorous lineage.

—Tom Field

(**The reviewers:** Adrianna Kezar is a professor at the University of Southern California who studies higher education change, leadership, and governance; Nicola Burnell is a publisher and editor at Cape Women Online; Tom Field is a marketing professional, writer, creative director, and publisher of FRONT.)



Courtesy of Roanoke County

## Justice served >

Leaders from Roanoke County and Roanoke City were on hand in January to dedicate the new **Roanoke County Criminal Justice Academy**. The building is an addition to the Roanoke City Police Academy on Barnes Avenue, but the addition will be owned by Roanoke County.



Courtesy of Carilion Clinic

## Cartledge transport >

Carilion Clinic renamed its patient transport center **The George B. Cartledge Jr. Center for Transportation** on Jan. 19; a dedication in honor of the board member's 40 years of service with Carilion Health System, including its previous entities and current properties, Roanoke Hospital Association, Roanoke Memorial Hospitals, Community Hospital, and the new Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute.



## Sold out >

AAF Roanoke's 2015 **Media Auction** was held Jan. 22 at Schaal's Metamorphosis in Roanoke, resulting in over \$45,000 in fundraising. The event offers advertising and media packages for live auction bidding; inviting local business advertising purchasers, and attended and operated by members of the ad club. Attendees included the group above, Tony Segovia, Tara Lilly, Kelly Elliott, Samantha Torre, Kristyn Franciso.



## Factory facts >

"Why should our people lose their jobs if someone is cheating?" asks John Bassett, III at a "Conversations" event sponsored by HomeTown Bank at Hotel Roanoke on Jan. 20. Interviewed on stage by Bart Wilner, Bassett talked about the Beth Macy book *Factory Man* and why Vaughan-Bassett furniture company in Galax (currently employing 700) wasn't one of the 63,000 factory closings during the 2001—2012 production exodus to China. Above, Bassett (center) talks with HomeTown Bank president Susan Still.

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

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



Brown

**Susan Brown** has been named market president and business banking manager for Wells Fargo Southwest Virginia market.

**Jay Johnson** has joined as senior business relationship manager at Union First Market Bank.

## LEGAL FRONT

**Erin Ashwell** and **Elizabeth Burgin Waller** have been named Principal attorneys at Woods Rogers.



Knobbe

**Travis Knobbe** has been elected partner at Spilman Thomas & Battle.

**Les Bowers, Benjamin Byrd, Christen Church, Peter Irot, and Justin Lugar** have been promoted to partners at Gentry Locke Rakes

& Moore; and **Andrew Bowman** and **Evans Edwards** have joined the firm.

**Joshua Goad** has been promoted to member of firm at Johnson, Ayers & Matthews.

**Christine Lockhart Poarch** has been inducted into the Virginia Law Foundation Fellow Class of 2015.

## WELLNESS FRONT

**Dr. Jennifer Vaughn** has joined as medical oncologist at Blue Ridge Cancer Care.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

**John Hanna** and **Mason McLeod** have joined as Realtors at Lichtenstein Rowan Realtors.



Harris

**Donna Marie Harris** has been installed as president-elect of Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors for 2015.

**Michael Sampson** has joined as vice president of sales at ABS Technology Architects.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

**J.D. Myers, II** has been named interim senior vice president and region manager at Cox Communications Virginia Operations.



Finley

**Tammy Finley** has been promoted to executive vice president, human resources and general counsel at Advance Auto Parts.



Martin

**Frank Martin** has joined Access Advertising & Public Relations as senior research consultant.

**Debbie Moss** has joined as aftercare coordinator at Oakey's Funeral Service & Crematory.

## EDUCATION FRONT

**Bethany Bodo** joined the Office of Assessment and Evaluation; **Fred Lee** received the 2015



Bodo



Lee



Bauman



Stowe



Haga

Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Medal in Power Engineering at Virginia Tech; **Nena Bauman** has joined as senior director of development at Virginia-Maryland

College of Veterinary Medicine; **Michael Stowe** has been named communications for Virginia Tech News; and **Tony Haga** has been promoted to lieutenant of investigations for the police department at Virginia Tech.

**Glen Chilcote** (Kipps Elementary, Montgomery County); **Michelle Lionberger** (Herman L. Horn Elementary, Roanoke County); **Jalenda Settles** (Huddleston Elementary, Bedford County); and **Tina Tapp** (Radford High School) have been recognized by the 2015 McGlothlin Awards for Teaching Excellence.

The Virginia Western Community College Educational Foundation has announced **Nancy Howell Agee**, Carilion Clinic; **J. Spencer Frantz**, Graham White Manufacturing Co.; **William Farrell**, Berglund Automotive Group; **Leon Harris**, Keltech Inc.; **Drew Parker**, Carter Machinery; **Garnett Smith**, Advance Auto Parts (retired); **Dr. Charles W. Steger**, Virginia Tech (president emeritus); and **Nicholas F. Taubman**, Mozart Investments to the 2015 board of directors; and President, **J. Kenneth Randolph**, Rockydale Quarries Corp.; Vice President, **Warner Dalhouse**; Secretary, **Bertram Spetzler**; Treasurer, **Neil D. Wilkin Jr.**, Optical Cable Corp.; and Immediate Past

President, **Edwin C. Hall**, Hall Associates Inc. as officers.

## CULTURE FRONT



Mikula

**David Mikula** has been elected to the board of directors of Southeast Tourism Society.



Lionberger

The Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America has elected new officers for 2015: **Chuck Lionberger**, APR, president; **Betsy Parkins**, president-elect; **Melinda Mayo**, immediate past president and assembly delegate; **Jennifer Ward**, treasurer; **Scott**

**Ramsburg**, secretary; directors-at-large are **Douglas Cannon**; **Katie Gehrt**; **Alison Hammond**; and **Catherine Fox**.

**Linda Gavel Webb** has joined Opera Roanoke as executive director.



DeVries

**Afira DeVries** has been appointed president and CEO of United Way of Roanoke Valley.

**Gerald Burr**, **Charles Famuliner**, and **Susan Sisk**

are new members joining nine others on the Community Housing Partners–Christiansburg volunteer board; **Andy Hall** has been named chief administrative officer; and **Karen Turner** as chief business development officer.

**Lucy Cook** has been hired as executive director at Mill Mountain Zoo.

## MUNICIPAL FRONTS

**Corrie Teague** has been named assistant director for the Danville office of economic development.

*Compiled by Tom Field*

## Have a career announcement?

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

“ ”  
 Sit without  
 using the back  
 of your chair

— Page 31

# FRONT Notes

## *Out on a rail*

### **Norfolk Southern**

announced on Jan. 27 it is moving out 500 jobs from its downtown Roanoke office of marketing, accounting, and information technology positions. Employees were informed they must relocate to centralized services in the company's Norfolk or Atlanta offices if they want to remain employed by NS. The move equates to a thirty percent drop in the railroad operator's current 1,700 workforce.

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## *Bank on the move*

Lynchburg-based **Bank of James** has expanded to Harrisonburg; the additional site following other new locations opened in Charlottesville and Roanoke in the past year.

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## *In on a rail*

**BRC Rail Car Service Company** in Lynchburg has been purchased by Appalachian Tank Car Services; the sale

brokered by Roanoke's Bundy Group.

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## *Frisbee fame*

The **Greenfield Disc Golf Course** in Botetourt has been ranked 20th in the world (out of 5,000 courses) by DG Course Review.

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## *Li'l Joes*

**Aldi** grocery store (also owned by Trader Joe's) is opening at the former Books-A-Million space near the airport in Roanoke.

---

## *Beltway abroad*

**Regional Conveyor Services** in Salem has been accepted to the VALET program (the Virginia Leaders in Export Trade funding and support initiative by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership).

---

## *Fair thee well*

**Franklin County Agricultural Fair** won

17 accolades, including eight first place ribbons, two Best of Show and a Best Over All at the Virginia Association of Fairs Communications Award.

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## *Poly moves*

**Polymer Solutions** has moved to the new Falling Branch Corporate Park just off I-81 in Christiansburg.

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## *Long name med school gets funds*

**Integrative Centers for Science and Medicine & College of Henricopolis School of Medicine** has received an \$800,000 grant from Virginia Tobacco Commission's Tobacco Regional Opportunity Fund for the development of a medical school in Martinsville.

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## *No smoke at smoke shop*

The Supreme Court of Virginia ruled in early January that **She-Sha Café and Hookah**

**Lounge** in Blacksburg is not exempt from the state's smoking ban in restaurants, because the lounge also serves food, is not exclusively a retail tobacco store, and does not have a separate room with ventilation.

---

## *Tiring news*

**Yokohama Tire** in Salem is cutting 31 jobs; the plant will have an employee count of 880 after the layoff.

---

## *From building to insuring*

**Metis Holdings**, an insurance company, has purchased the building on Franklin Road near downtown Roanoke, formerly owned and housed by Hayes Seas Mattern and Mattern architecture and engineering (that since merged with Aecom, now in Wells Fargo tower).

---

## *Bankin' Franklin*

**American National Bankshares** in Danville

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has completed its merger with MainStreet BankShares (including Franklin Community Bank); with offices in Franklin County and Smith Mountain Lake.

## *Furniture out*

**Vaughan Furniture** is closing in Galax, citing “weak sales” and displacing about 20 employees as inventory is sold.

## *New River on top*

**Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford** metro area has been ranked number one best performing small metro in Virginia by the 2014 Milken Institute Best-Performing Cities Index.

## *Room please*

Smith Travel Research reports an increase of 2.35 (25,104 additional) hotel rooms sold in **Virginia’s Blue Ridge tourism destinations** from 2014 over 2013.

## *No raise in labor cost*

**Virginia Chamber of Commerce** released its report in opposition to legislation introduced in the 2015 General Assembly to raise the minimum wage; citing data from the Congressional Budget Office and adverse

effects such as: expected job losses, more difficulty finding work for unskilled, a barrier to entry, a barrier for gaining experience, a lack of correlation to poverty, and the forcing of businesses to charge higher prices.

## *Back office power*

Roanoke-based **SiteVision** has deployed a new data center and infrastructure upgrade, with fiber-optic backbone, multi-featured capabilities, a separate backup and disaster recovery operations and services.

## *H2O degree*

The State Council of Higher Education has approved Virginia Tech’s new Bachelor of Science degree in **Water: Resources, Policy and Management**, the first of its kind at the undergraduate level in the U.S.

## *Grass is greener*

**Lawnstarter**, an online lawn care company in collaboration with Blacksburg’s NuSpark, has raised \$1 million in startup funding.

## *Revised mall directory*

**Valley View Mall** in Roanoke is experiencing numerous changes in

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

its retail lineup offering, including the exit of Gap, Baby Gap, Wet Seal, and Body Central; and the recent additions of H&M and Versona.

## *Luna eclipse*

**Luna Innovation** has moved from VT-Carilion’s Riverside Center to a new location on First Street in downtown Roanoke.

## *Risky behavior*

In a study by Virginia Tech management professor **Anju Seth** on executive compensation plans, he and Todd Alessandri of Northwestern University

propose that “pay packages that are heavier on cash and lighter on stock appear to motivate top corporate managers to pursue risky but potentially very profitable international diversification strategies, but have less influence in the pursuit of high-risk, high-return domestic diversification strategies.”

## *Loco flav*

**Wicked Taco** has opened its newest restaurant in Blacksburg, promising some of its ingredients from local produce.

Compiled by Tom Field

“ ”  
 You have to  
 fight for every  
 penny you get  
 — Page 26

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



Dr. Tooke-Rawlins and student in the pharmacy at Dominican Republic field clinic

## Rising to the challenge >

### Executive Summary:

*The new leader at VCOM is a story of one woman's rise from humble beginnings to serving rural locations with medical treatment to president and provost of one of our region's leading educational institutions.*

By Sarah Cox

Dr. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins, who took the position of president of the Edward Via

College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) upon Dr. James Wolfe's, retirement in early December, served as founding dean of the College in 2001 and has an extensive background in teaching and a special interest in rural medicine.

In fact, over 60 percent of the 1,300 graduates of VCOM to date have entered the primary field care, and 61 percent are serving in Appalachia. Tooke-Rawlins herself grew up in a rural community of 2,300 in Missouri and says that her high school jobs in a nursing home and at a primary care doctor's office were early influences. She pointed out that rural areas don't support specialists, and that a primary care physician takes care of all generations' needs, from



Dr. Tooke-Rawlins overseeing patient care Dominican Republic



Dr. Tooke-Rawlins El Salvador treating a child

babies to grandparents, and make referrals to specialists. Her inclination towards the osteopathic route was also influenced by the same family physician, a DO. "I liked the way he practiced medicine. It was patient-centered care, and he really worried about the whole person, mind-body-spirit, and I wanted to be a physician just like he was."

She gravitated towards education, teaching both medical students and residents after graduating from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (KCOM) and doing post training and a faculty development fellowship. She was a family medicine residency director in Michigan, director of medical education for St. Luke's Hospital in Allentown, PA, associate dean for clinical affairs at KCOM, and then interim dean there before being lured away by VCOM.

"I do have a passion for education, and I think that all physicians in some ways are teachers. I found that when I first started teaching residents that I really liked it. I felt that it was important in life if you can be involved in educating others. It was a natural progression," she said.

Most of Tooke-Rawlins' career has been focused on rural medicine and the medically underserved population. She has served on the Southwest Virginia Healthcare Authority as well as the Governor's Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse and the Task Force on Health Reform and Virginia Healthcare Workforce Authority. She is of one mind with VCOM, whose mission states that it "provides medical education and research

that prepares globally minded, community focused physicians who improve the health of those most in need."

She founded VCOM's second campus in Spartanburg, SC, and served as provost while establishing its second branch campus with Auburn University, which will graduate its first class of medical students this year. She feels that sending students abroad to clinics in the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Honduras gives them exposure to providing care "to those who need it the most. It's real life experience for our students, and they gain an understanding of how much need there is around the world. They translate that back to Appalachian rural areas," she said.

She is aware, coming from a humble background, of the financial struggle that medical students face. While last year VCOM was ranked the sixth lowest in tuition among United States' private medical school, it doesn't receive state funding, and she intends to work hard toward building the endowment for scholarships as well as focusing on repayment plans for their loans. She said that she also wants to increase the research already being done on their campuses.

"I have been very fortunate," she said of her mentor Wolfe, who had a long history of administrative experience. "I was able to learn a great deal from him, and I have a wonderful board. It makes my job easier." 



Auburn campus Dean Elizabeth Palmarozzi DO, Pres Dixie Tooke-Rawlins DO, and Chairman of the Board John Rocovich Jr, JD.



2014 commencement ceremony with graduate

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