

Valley Business

# FRONT

Roanoke's  
Education  
Choices

THE SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR  
CHAMPION IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE

FREE • ISSUE 81 • JUNE 2015

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## Is It Your Turn?

Dr. Tom McKeon,  
Roanoke Higher Education Center



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**taking the stairs**

***Moments***

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

If you want to get a good conversation going at your next social gathering, bring up the topic of American Education. Depending on the crowd (or perhaps, whom you hang with) you're sure to get great diversity of opinion. Limit the topic to college and the value of higher education, and the breadth of diversity doesn't seem to shrink any. What usually gets added to this discussion is the perspective of our history and our future. Some will say they are in positions right now without a college degree that today would require advanced credentials just to be considered for an interview. Others will say liberal arts degrees are overpriced for what income they are likely to return in today's job market. Still others will say specialized skills have their own inherent risks as we don't know what industries will thrive or even be around in the upcoming decades. About the only two areas that get the most agreement these days are: 1) college is expensive; and 2) having a college degree advances your chances of securing higher paying jobs. If one could continue to work in his hometown, while getting the credential that will enable him to take the next big step up the career ladder, then he could capitalize on both of those areas of agreement. That's where the Roanoke Higher Education Center model fits the piece in the career development puzzle for a lot of folks. If you want to reach higher, you can do it here. And do it now.



Tom Field

“  
We've got miles of fantastic greenways and we've got great mountain biking. We've got it all

— Page 31



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### COVER STORY

## ROANOKE'S WHEEL OF CHOICES in higher education



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# JUNE



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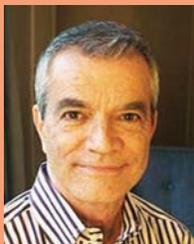
Kathy Surace

## 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.

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. "They 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



Dan Dowdy



Tom Field



Mike Leigh



Ariel Lev



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 36.

## 2015 Members

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**Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)  
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**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.



Great Britain [has]...eleven parties... France has seven... Germany boasts five...India, twenty five... Japan, ten... Canada, six... Mexico, seven. Quite a lot of choices, wouldn't you say? — Page 41



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# ROANOKE'S WHEEL OF CHOICES

## in higher education

### Roanoke Higher Education >

**Executive Summary:**  
*There are 200 programs from 12 colleges and universities: all available right here in Roanoke.*

By Dan Dowdy

You've probably driven by the eight-story orange brick building on Jefferson Street just north of downtown Roanoke and seen the sign, Roanoke Higher Education Center. Even after 15 years of operations, some of us might still be wondering what goes on there? What's a higher education center anyway?

The term "higher education" simply means education beyond the high school level, usually at a college or university. But the Roanoke Higher Education Center (RHEC) provides opportunities for learners to earn diplomas and degrees from a GED to a Ph.D., with a plethora of certificates, training, and other credentials thrown in the mix. The good citizens of the greater Roanoke area who are looking for educational and professional development opportunities, other than traditional campus-based environments, need look no further than this jewel in our midst.

# COVER STORY

During the '90s, there was discussion about Roanoke needing a bricks and mortar four-year public institution. Those involved in these conversations recognized the value of nearby private colleges and the proximity to neighboring state universities, but Roanokers felt they needed their own state institution.

A group of forward-looking and entrepreneurial community leaders hatched the idea of creating a higher education center and inviting both public and private colleges and universities to offer their programs in Roanoke. Norfolk Southern had built a new office building in downtown, and its old headquarters on North Jefferson Street, then known as General Office Building North, had sat empty for several years. With the guidance of these leaders, the donation by NS of its GOB North, and funds provided by state and local governments and private capital, the Roanoke Higher Education Center began to take shape. Two local architectural firms transformed an unused 70-year-old edifice into a state-of-the-art facility by preserving the charm and integrity of the building's art deco features and upgrading its interior into a beautiful and highly functional center for learning.

The Roanoke Higher Education Center, a new paradigm in higher education, opened its doors in August 2000 with 12 institutions as tenants. Roanoke had more than it wished for. It had five public and seven private colleges and universities, in addition to training and professional development entities, all in one building. Roanoke had a high rise higher ed mall—a place where would-be learners could shop among these institutions and organizations; choose one that fit their needs; and pursue degrees, certificates, endorsements, and professional development in myriad fields.

Since operations began, the RHEC and its educational partners have served over 8,000 learners—students who completed degrees or earned other educational credentials—as well as workers who sharpened their skills. The center averages 1,700 students per semester.

Today's mix of 12 institutions differs somewhat from the RHEC's charter member lineup. You might be surprised to learn how far-flung their main campuses are: from right here in the Roanoke area to the Tidewater, Piedmont, Shenandoah Valley, Southside, Central, and Southwestern regions of Virginia to central Florida! And the breadth of the more than 200 programs they offer is extensive and impressive. Did you realize you had access in downtown Roanoke to such an array of educational opportunities from all of these colleges and universities? See the sidebar for a summary of each RHEC institution and organization. More information can be found on the "Program Offerings" tab, and even more at the dozen other tabs on the RHEC's website at [www.education.edu](http://www.education.edu). (A clever URL, don't you think?)

Dr. Tom McKeon, executive director of the Roanoke Higher Education Center, and Carla James, director of academic



**Roanoke Higher Education Center**



RHEC

**Roanoke Higher  
Education Center's  
Carla James**

services, oversee a staff that maintains the building and provides amenities such as a full-service library; state-of-the-art computer labs; a testing center; a café; and rooms for classes, lectures, and meeting rentals. Both have been with the RHEC since it opened. James is nearing completion of a doctorate from Old Dominion University, one of the member institutions.

So, who takes advantage of these 200 programs? A 2012 market assessment of the RHEC provided a general student profile. It concluded that students ranged from 25 to 60 years of age with the 25-34 year-old age group comprising the largest percentage. At the time of the assessment, 44% of students came from Roanoke City, 16% from Roanoke County, 10% from Salem, 8% from Franklin County, and 7% from Montgomery County. The majority of students lived within a 30-mile radius of the RHEC. An interesting finding from this assessment was that nearly 90% of area residents interested in education were aware of the Higher Ed Center, but far fewer knew who the educational partners were.

Thousands of adult learners have benefited from the collaborative efforts of the universities, colleges, and workforce training organizations at the Higher Ed Center, but so has our economy. An economic impact study conducted in 2010 concluded that the RHEC produced an annual impact of \$32 million on the region and supported nearly 310 jobs. The report noted that this was quite an impressive impact considering that it was generated from a base of \$9 million, which represented the combined budgets of the RHEC and its institutional members' operations.

With nearly 15 years under their collective belts of providing education and training, the institutions at the RHEC, many of which qualify as military-friendly schools, can boast of significant accomplishments. Let's take a look at some of the student success stories.

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## WHERE LEARNING MEANS BUSINESS

The **Roanoke Higher Education Center**, the region's premiere education and training facility, offers more than 200 degree, licensure, and certificate programs from our 14 member institutions. Classes are conveniently scheduled and learners have access to comprehensive student services including a full service library, state-of-the-art computer labs, and an educational testing facility.

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Center Members:

Averett University  
Bluefield College  
Florida Institute of Technology  
Hollins University  
James Madison University  
Mary Baldwin College  
Old Dominion University  
Radford University  
Roanoke College  
TAP—This Valley Works  
University of Virginia  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Virginia Tech  
Virginia Western Community College



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Sandra Bryan Burks graduated from University of Virginia's Curry School of Education in 1999 with a Master in Education, Curriculum and Instruction degree, which she completed through the university's Roanoke Center. Sandra went on to complete 36 credit hours in Educational Leadership with UVA, with most courses available in Roanoke. She is currently the Executive Director for Human Resources with Roanoke City Public Schools. Dr. Rita Bishop, Superintendent for Roanoke City Public Schools, states, "Sandra has worked for RCPS for 25 years and has held numerous positions in Instruction, Transportation and Human Resources."

Lynchburg Acting EMS Battalion Chief Heather Childress completed a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree through James Madison University's Roanoke-based program. In her words, "The classes covered a variety of issues that public managers face every day. The program provides a good balance of theory and practical application of the material. I am frequently able to use skills learned in class to handle issues in my current position. I enjoyed the classes for my MPA so much that I decided to pursue a doctorate after graduation. I can only hope that my next learning experience is as positive as the one I have had at James Madison."

Ashley Hobbs is Radford University's 2015 Criminal Justice Dean's Scholar award winner. Coming to Radford through the university's 2+2 dual enrollment program and satisfying her first two years of courses at Virginia Western Community College, she is about to complete her bachelor's degree in the criminal justice program offered at RU's Roanoke Center. For this 32-year-old, the program fit well with her full-time day job since most of the classes were taught in the evenings. She has been accepted into Radford's criminal justice graduate program in which she will be a teaching assistant. Ashley doesn't plan on stopping until she earns her Ph.D.

About Va Tech's Master in Counselor Education degree, 2008 grad Bethany Smith says, "The Virginia Tech Counselor Education program offered at the RHEC is an innovative and award winning program. Led by nationally recognized professors, this program houses a state-of-the-art clinic designed to provide hands-on training. With an emphasis on empirically-based theory and technique, students graduate with advanced skills to successfully enter the field of counseling. This foundation allowed me to work as a school counselor in a local school system for six years. I now provide outpatient mental health services to children and adolescents in private practice. The VT counselor education program at the RHEC has been an ongoing and integral influence on my evolving career."

Ellen D'Ardenne completed her B.A. in Health Care Administration at Mary Baldwin College's Roanoke Center and graduated in 2014. She is Director of Health and Wellness at The Glebe in Daleville. In the words of her supervisor, Ben Burks, The Glebe's Executive Director, "Ellen is an invaluable

leader at The Glebe. As a result of completing her degree in Health Care Administration, a door was opened that enables her to advance professionally within the industry. Without a degree, she would have had a false ceiling holding her advancement back. Her senior project at Mary Baldwin College became the catalyst for our planned dedicated memory support neighborhood." He also observes that "Ellen is giving back to the program by working as a preceptor/mentor to other Mary Baldwin interns in the Health Care Administration degree program."

Bluefield College grad Dericka Anderson ('14) has this to say about her educational journey: "What I love most about Bluefield College's online program is that I was able to work full time, take care of my family, and complete my degree within 15 months of starting the program. Overall, there was a sense of achievement going into the program even before completing my degree [in Human Services], because the professors reassured me I could do it and that I would do great in life."

Travis Vass, Anthem HR Consultant and 2011 Averett BBA grad, says, "The program at Averett University allowed me

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RHEC

## RHEC mascots

to pursue my education and advance my professional career. The blend of night classes, small workgroups, and leveraging the power of technology really allowed a higher level of collaboration between the instructor and my peers in the classroom. Non-traditional programs like those offered at the RHEC make it possible to earn degrees while managing careers, families, and outside commitments.”

Site coordinator for Virginia Commonwealth University’s nurse anesthetist program, Gary Hahn, provided these comments about a recent grad: “Hannah Forbes, MSNA, BSN, is a 2014 graduate from the Roanoke cohort of VCU’s School of Nurse Anesthesia. She began her career as a nursing assistant at Roanoke Memorial Hospital, obtained her RN degree, and is now a member of the CRNA (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist) staff at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. She is an example of what hard work and dedication can do.”

Jim Zeisler, Virginia Western’s culinary arts program head, shared these observations about 2014 graduate Darla Mehrkems: “She was a stellar student who led a team at the Children’s Miracle Network fundraiser and won based on the popular vote for her appetizer. She is our only student, so far, to receive the American Culinary Federation credential of Certified Executive Chef, and she’s currently vice-president of our local ACF chapter. Since graduating, she has become Carilion’s catering chef/supervisor.”

The Higher Ed Center also houses TAP/This Valley Works. TAP (Total Action for Progress) is a 50-year-old, Roanoke-based non-profit organization. With a staff of over three hundred, TAP serves eleven localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its diverse programs foster self-reliance and self-determination. They strengthen and empower individuals, families, and communities by expanding access to existing opportunities, creating new opportunities, and mobilizing the community’s goodwill and resources. TAP advocates for the oppressed, the disadvantaged, and the disenfranchised.

From Annette Lewis, TAP's President/CEO, comes this success story about Sharette Jefferson. A brain injury led doctors to think that Sharette wouldn't be able to walk or talk, but she proved them wrong. Sharette's hard work, beginning with her attempt to pass the GED exam in 2006, paid off when she proudly walked across the stage to receive her GED on June 21, 2013—her birthday. She was presented the Ronald James Jones Achievement Award because of her perseverance and drive. After graduation, Sharette enrolled in Virginia Western's culinary arts program.

In addition to education and training opportunities, the RHEC provides an educational testing center. Fourteen tests are administered including GED, PRAXIS, and VCLA for prospective teachers; graduate school admissions; and ISO credentialing. The Center rents rooms and its computer labs to businesses and organizations for lectures, classes, meetings, and workshops.

But, there's more to the RHEC than what is inside that eight-story building. The Claude Moore Education Complex, located across the parking lot from the Center's main entrance, and the result of another historic renovation project, has been the home of Virginia Western's Al Pollard Culinary Arts Program since 2007. What started with 18 students has grown to over 200 rising chefs in the two programs (associate's degree and career studies certificate). Administered by three full-time chefs and a staff person, this culinary program is nationally accredited. The nearest similar one is in Charlotte, NC. The CMEC will soon expand by over 8,000 square feet to allow more growth in this program. Graduates are in demand. They can pick and choose among food establishments looking for qualified staff. According to Deborah Yancey, Virginia Western's dean of the School of Business, Technology, and Trades, "There are more jobs than there are grads in our culinary arts program."

Whether producing sought-after chefs or newly minted Ph.D.s, the colleges, universities, and training enterprises at the Roanoke Higher Education Center comprise a one-stop resource for learning. Educational attainment, frequently cited as an important factor in ensuring growth in this region, is abundantly accessible right here in the heart of Roanoke.

If you have education and training needs, or if you're just curious, spend some time on the Higher Ed Center's website. Better yet, visit the center and wish everyone a happy 15th anniversary. Attend an open house (next one on October 1st), eat at the café, spend time in the library, or drop by the offices of the educational partners and explore their offerings. It could change your life. In the words of Victorian novelist George Eliot, "It is never too late to be what you might have been."





RHEC

**Averett University's Sarah Hudson**

**AVERETT UNIVERSITY:**

- RHEC member since 2000
- One enrollment counselor oversees Roanoke-based offerings.
- Offers associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Fields of study include business administration; criminal justice/sociology; and education: curriculum and instruction, special education, and administration and supervision.
- Most courses are online; some in classroom format.
- More info, visit [www.averett.edu](http://www.averett.edu)

**BLUEFIELD COLLEGE:**

- Affiliated with RHEC since 2000; in Roanoke 20 years
- Bluefield's degree completion program, with hubs in Roanoke and Richmond, was designed to offer working adults a convenient, flexible, accelerated, non-traditional way to finish their bachelor's degrees.
- One representative oversees the college's Roanoke programs including bachelor's degrees in e-business & entrepreneurship, management & leadership, human services, criminal justice, early childhood education, and nursing (RN to BSN); master's degree in education.
- All Roanoke-based courses are online.
- Bluefield's strength is being a Christ-centered learning community.
- More info, visit [www.bluefield.edu](http://www.bluefield.edu)

**FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY:**

- Recently became a member institution at the RHEC
- Program offerings not yet available; FIT offers programs at several other Virginia locations.
- More info, visit [www.fit.edu](http://www.fit.edu)

**HOLLINS UNIVERSITY:**

- Main campus in Roanoke County founded in 1842 (first chartered women's college); RHEC member since 2000.
- No on-site presence at the RHEC; member in a supportive capacity.



**Bluefield College's Cathy Payne**

RHEC



Hollins University's  
Celia McCormick

RHEC

- Offers undergraduate degrees in 28 majors to women on its main campus; co-ed graduate degrees in a variety of fields; some certificates.
- Undergraduate courses offered in traditional, campus-based classes; some online classes in graduate programs.
- More info, visit [www.hollins.edu](http://www.hollins.edu)

#### **JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY:**

- RHEC member since 2008
- No on-site faculty or staff; JMU faculty travel to Roanoke for classes.
- Currently offers a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree at the RHEC.
- MPA courses are taught in classroom format.
- JMU offers other online programs but not directly through the RHEC.
- More information, visit [www.jmu.edu/outreach](http://www.jmu.edu/outreach)

## Interested in earning your Master of Public Administration Degree?

James Madison University is enrolling a new cohort to begin this fall at the Roanoke Higher Education Center!

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*Classes meet in the evenings to enable working professionals to study directly with a dedicated program faculty while building relationships with other professionals in the New River Valley.*

Applications are due July 15.

For more information visit [www.jmu.edu/mpa/roanoke.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/mpa/roanoke.shtml)





**Mary Baldwin College's Tamra Willis and Marion Ward (from left)**

RHEC

### MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE:

- MBC's Adult Degree Program, which serves undergraduate women and men, has been in Roanoke for 31 years; RHEC member since 2000.
- Staff of three advises 149 undergrads pursuing 16 of the college's majors and/or teacher licensure, and 85 grad students in the co-ed Master of Arts in Teaching and Master of Education programs. Certificates also offered.
- Courses available in classroom, online, and hybrid formats.
- Top five Roanoke-based majors: business, psychology, history, social work, and liberal arts education studies.
- Personalized advising is one of MBC's strengths.
- MBC recently announced a name change to Mary Baldwin University effective 8/31/16.
- More information, visit [www.mbc.edu](http://www.mbc.edu)

### OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY:

- RHEC member since 2000
- One on-site staff person oversees ODU's offerings at the RHEC, Virginia Western Community College,

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**Tyler Azucena Pace**  
Roanoke, VA  
Radford University '16  
Major: Nursing



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**RADFORD  
UNIVERSITY**

and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College.

- All of ODU's online programs are available to Roanoke students including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as certificates and licensure.
- More information, visit [www.odu.edu](http://www.odu.edu)

### **RADFORD UNIVERSITY:**

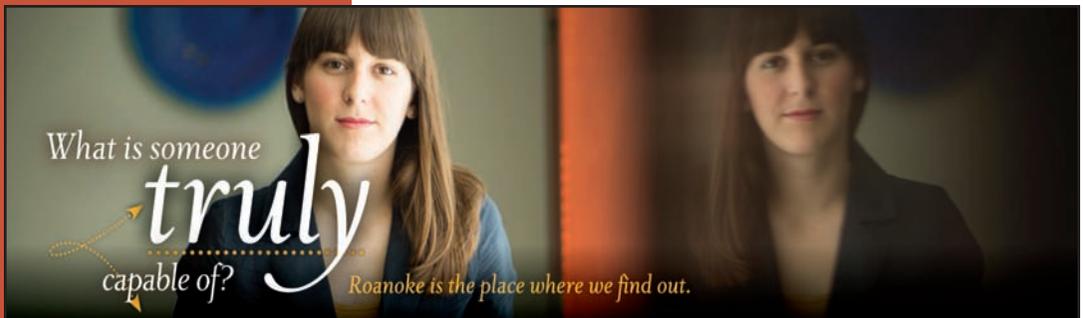
- A presence in Roanoke for over 20 years; RHEC member since 2000
- Staff of three oversees a variety of programs and degrees at the undergraduate and graduate levels, teacher licensure, and non-credit training.
- Courses available in classroom (daytime, evening, weekends), online, and hybrid formats.
- Most popular Roanoke-based major is bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN). Students complete all junior and senior level degree requirements, including clinicals, at the RHEC.
- RU's Clinical Simulation Center (CSC), with a facility at the RHEC, is the only accredited simulation center in Virginia and one of 34 in the nation. The CSC enables nursing students to complete up to 20 percent of their required 500 hours of clinical hours in a lab. The Roanoke CSC is shared by Jefferson College of Health Sciences, Virginia Western Community College, and Patrick Henry Community College.
- More information, visit [www.radford.edu](http://www.radford.edu)

### **ROANOKE COLLEGE:**

- Main campus in Salem founded in 1842; RHEC member since 2000
- No physical presence at RHEC, but a member in a supportive capacity.
- Offers undergraduate degrees in a variety of majors on its main campus.



Radford University's Eulah Price



We teach our students to out-smart, out-solve and out-do the expected. The world needs people who want more than business as usual. Solving our biggest problems requires it. [www.roanoke.edu](http://www.roanoke.edu)

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- All courses offered in classroom format in a traditional campus environment.
- Through its main campus, Roanoke College's community outreach includes a management institute, an institute for teaching and learning, a regional children's choir, Elderscholar programs, community lectures including the Roanoke Regional Forum, plays and concerts, art exhibits, and athletic events.
- More info, visit [www.roanoke.edu](http://www.roanoke.edu)

## UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA:

- A presence in Roanoke for 89 years; RHEC member since 2000
- Staff of three oversees undergraduate and graduate degree programs and educational endorsement programs through the university's School of Continuing & Professional Studies and the Curry School of Education. Certificates also offered; some non-credit training.
- All courses are online.
- UVA's strengths include a close affiliation with area school systems and the university's offerings to meet



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### **VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY:**

- Affiliated with the RHEC since 2011; in Roanoke since 2009
- Offers a master's degree in nurse anesthesia (MSNA) and a doctorate in nurse anesthesia practice (DNAP) through VCU's School of Allied Health Professions.
- Roanoke-based classes are delivered by two-way synchronous telecommunications technology. Roanoke students take classes simultaneously with students in Richmond, Abingdon, and Northern Virginia. VCU faculty come to Roanoke to deliver lectures, meet with students, and visit clinical affiliates.
- Basic and simulated lab experiences are provided through Carilion Clinic's Center for Simulation, Research, and Patient Safety. Students are placed at area hospitals for in-depth clinical experience.
- VCU's MSNA was the first master's level program in nurse anesthesia in the U.S.
- More information, visit [www.sahp.vcu.edu/departments/nrsa/distance-education/roanoke-site/](http://www.sahp.vcu.edu/departments/nrsa/distance-education/roanoke-site/)

### **VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY:**

- In Roanoke for 26 years; at RHEC since 2000
- Staff of six oversees on average 150 students per semester pursuing doctorates and master's degrees, and approximately 600 per year who enroll in workshops and prep courses for various certification exams and participate in customized training. This staff also administers the university's Catawba Sustainability Center.
- All courses, both credit and non-credit, are classroom-based.

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Beverly George-Gay and Chris Adams (left) began VCU's Distance Learning program together: she as the program leader, he as an aspiring CRNA. A decade later, it's clear to both that VCU's innovative Distance Learning model is helping to advance the delivery of anesthesia care in medically underserved areas—and making patient safety real.



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- One of Va Tech's notable strengths is the design and delivery of customized training to meet the diverse needs of businesses and industries in the Roanoke region.
- More information, visit [www.vtrc.vt.edu](http://www.vtrc.vt.edu)

#### **VIRGINIA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE:**

- RHEC member since 2000
- Current programs offered at the RHEC are an Associate of Applied Science degree and a Career Studies Certificate, both in the field of culinary arts.

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- Three full-time chefs and a part-time staff person oversee this program at the RHEC.
- Completion of the associate degree satisfies the American Culinary Federation eligibility requirements to test for both the Certified Culinarian (CC) and Certified Pastry Culinarian (CPC) designations.
- Classes are held in the RHEC's Claude Moore Education Complex and on VWCC's main campus.
- VWCC sees itself as a foundation for all students in their choice of career pathways. Virginia Western, third largest community college in the commonwealth, prides itself in a strong commitment to the community and in building relationships with a diverse population of students to meet their needs and expand their career pathways.
- More information, visit [www.viriniawestern.edu](http://www.viriniawestern.edu)

#### **TAP—THIS VALLEY WORKS:**

- TAP's mission is to help individuals and families achieve economic and personal independence through education, employment, affordable housing, and safe and healthy environments. It offers over thirty programs focused on the areas of education and career development, housing and community solutions, and economic and community development.
- Programs include Project Discovery which provides first generation college access training to middle and high school students; YouthBuild in which students obtain a GED and pre-apprenticeship certification; and Fathers First offering classes for fathers in parenting skills, healthy relationships, and economic stability.
- All programs focus on soft skills training in which students learn about conflict resolution, teambuilding tools, communication skills, time management, and understanding workplace culture.
- More information, visit [www.tapintohope.org](http://www.tapintohope.org)

#### **WESTERN VIRGINIA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD:**

- The WVDDB is a business-led organization comprising representatives of the region's key employers in a variety of industries. It serves as a conduit for matching individuals seeking employment with businesses needing workers.
- Its mission is to cultivate a dynamic workforce development system that stimulates economic development in the cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem; and the counties of Alleghany, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, and Roanoke.
- More information, visit [www.westernvaworkforce.com](http://www.westernvaworkforce.com)

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## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

### Executive Summary:

*To t-shirt or not to t-shirt; that is the question.*

## The undershirt – is it necessary? >

The debate continues to rage about whether or not a t-shirt is necessary under a dress shirt. Some say it's essential to be properly dressed and others say it's an outdated garment, due to improvements in shirting fabrics over the years.

The original purpose of the undershirt was to prevent the outer garments from touching the skin and picking up sweat and body oils, reducing the frequency of laundering. They also protected the skin from rough fabrics.

In early dress shirts, the collar and cuffs were designed to be removable from an undershirt for laundering. The undershirt was not a visible part of the outfit. This was partly because laundering was labor intensive and expensive; you laundered only the parts of the outfit that were seen.

Over time, laundering became easier, fabrics were developed that are easier to keep clean and more comfortable, and men began removing their jacket, exposing their dress shirt.

Because of all these changes, the original intent of the undershirt became moot. The question is, "Is an undershirt necessary in today's business world?"

Do wear an undershirt:

1. If you sweat profusely - it absorbs the sweat, keeping the shirt dry.
2. To keep a sturdy fabric from chafing the skin.
3. For warmth.
4. If fabric is loosely woven. It prevents flesh and hair from being seen through the shirt.

Reasons often cited to go without an undershirt:

1. The lines of undershirt can be seen through the dress shirt. If a man has dark skin the contrast with a white t-shirt causes a visible line through the dress shirt.
2. Its cooler without the t-shirt.
3. Today's shirt fabrics are softer, often allow more air flow, cause less sweating and aren't as sheer.

First and foremost, the wearer should be appropriately covered when dressed for business. No flesh or hair should be visible through the fabric of the shirt. If that's not possible, seeing the lines of the undershirt through the dress shirt seems more acceptable, although some suggest dyeing the t-shirt with tea so it blends with the skin, eliminating the line.

Like so many customs, the original function of the undershirt has changed, but it remains a useful tool for those men who need it to look appropriately and impeccably dressed. 

*For more on this topic email: [Kathy@peacockimage.com](mailto:Kathy@peacockimage.com)*

## Flag etiquette >

When my youngest son was a very little boy he looked forward with great anticipation to visiting his grandfather. Each morning and evening they raised and lowered the American flag together. I can still see this little boy lowering the flag, while the elderly gentleman admonished "don't ever let the American flag touch the ground." That little boy grew up to be a career officer in the United States Marine Corps. I have often thought that the seeds of his patriotism were sown during those long ago days with his grandfather.

Some Americans think that patriotism and showing respect for the American flag is not "cool." As we prepare to celebrate Independence Day, let's reflect for a moment on respect for our flag. In 1942, Congress passed a joint resolution which was to become Public Law 829 "The Flag Code." This code definitively states the correct use and display of the flag for all occasions. Most of us have a working knowledge of the "do's of flag etiquette. Let's look at the Code to see specific instructions on how you don't use the flag.

They include:

- The flag should never be dipped to any person or thing.
- The flag should never be displayed upside down, except to signal distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property.
- The flag should never be used as drapery or any decoration. (I remember a friend of mine, a paragon in the community and a member of the DAR, being mortified when it was pointed out that she should not have used the flag to drape the buffet on which she was serving dinner!)
- Not the flag, but blue, white and red bunting should be used as decoration, with the blue on top, then white, and the red on the bottom.
- The flag should not be used for advertising purposes.
- It should not be displayed on cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins, or any other articles that will be discarded. (Oh, boy! How often have we - including yours truly - violated that rule!)
- The flag should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform. The exceptions are small flags sewn on the uniforms of the military, firemen, policemen and members of patriotic organizations.
- When the flag is lowered, it should not touch the ground or any other object: It is received by waiting hands and arms.

Happy Independence Day! 



## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

**Executive Summary:**  
*Treatment of the flag should be done with respect, regardless the level of patriotism.*

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## Great rides beneath the star >

### Executive Summary:

*Starlight Bicycle shop not only serves the enthusiast, but is enthusiastic about biking in our region.*

### By Anne Sampson

According to [roanokeoutside.com](http://roanokeoutside.com), the Roanoke Region boasts more than 2,500 miles of scenic byways ideal for road cycling. In addition, there are over 1,450 bike trails, many dozens of events and clubs, and recent improvements have made some city streets friendlier to cyclists.

And there is one Starlight Bicycle shop.

"Every neighborhood needs a bike shop," says owner Stratton Delaney. "And a coffee shop," he adds, looking down two doors from his shop on Grandin Road to Cups Coffee Shop.

As you would expect, you can buy a bike at Starlight, mountain, road or greenway, with big names like Guerciotti (they're one of the

first US dealers), Bianchi and Felt on the frame. Gear and apparel fill out the merchandise, and the shop offers skilled service, too. Bikes for every age and skill level cover the floor of the corner shop, lit by picture windows overlooking busy Grandin Village. The original pressed tin ceiling adds light and ambiance, as staff member Kathleen writes up an order behind the counter. But there are a couple of things about Starlight that make it unique among area bike shops.

For one thing, you can buy one of their house-designed steel bike frames, called the Peakwood after a popular local climb, and customize it. Choose your color or go with their classic orange frame, an homage to all-time great competitive cyclist, Eddy Merckx, and his Molteni team colors. The steel construction itself is a throwback to the steel Italian racing bikes of the 1960's and 70's.

"We want to separate ourselves from the herd," says Delaney. "This way we can design the way we want and make them in small batches."

For another thing, speaking of standing out from the herd, Starlight offers unique custom cycling apparel.



"This is our year-round business," says Delaney. "We have clients from all over, every state on the East Coast. We're big in North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee, and we're getting into Michigan and Ohio."

Delaney has used a factory in Guanzhou, China (with an SA8000 certification for social responsibility) since starting the line in 2011. Using fabrics and materials from Italy, and a digital sublimation process requiring a quarter million dollar heat press, they produce well-made apparel with custom designs in small or large batches.

"They do a fantastic job," says Delaney.

"They enable us to give some of the fastest delivery times in the business, and they work with us to provide a two week rush program."

Teams from universities like Kentucky, William & Mary and Virginia Tech have worn kits from Starlight, as well as professional teams, and the shop produced all the promotional jerseys for the World Championships in Richmond. Team Lupus, dedicated to raising funds and awareness for lupus research, wears elegant Starlight designed and produced jerseys. Delaney was instrumental in bringing the team to this area for training.

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"They stayed at Camp Easter Seals," he says. "They really enjoyed the riding and they enjoyed coming in for dinner at Blue 5 every night. That's 20 professional athletes who now know how great the riding is here."

Starlight's small batch capability on custom designs makes it possible to partner with local businesses. The shop carries logo jerseys and jackets representing local watering holes like Parkway Brewery, Sweet Donkey Coffee, Wasena Tap Room and River and Rail.

"We have a free license to use their logo," says Delaney. "They don't have to buy 5000 jerseys at a time and everybody benefits."

Delaney feels that the region is at an important point in the development of its outdoor culture.

"Organizations like Carilion Clinic and the medical school are bringing in younger,

## On the Web >

There are plenty of online resources to help you get offline and outside on a bike. Check out:

- [www.starlightbicycles.com](http://www.starlightbicycles.com)
- [www.roanokeoutside.com](http://www.roanokeoutside.com)
- [www.visitroanokeva.com](http://www.visitroanokeva.com)
- [www.mapmyride.com](http://www.mapmyride.com)

more health-conscious people," he says, "and outdoor initiatives like Go Outside are paying off. We've got miles of fantastic greenways and we've got great mountain biking. We've got it all." 

## FROM THE Grapevine

The Source for Roanoke's Commercial Real Estate Buzz  
By Richard Wellford & Bryan Musselwhite



### The Demand for Apartments Continues.

Investors purchase income producing real estate to make money from cash flows, and that is exactly what a properly managed and maintained apartment building will bring. The manageable risk of multiple tenants is one of the things that makes multifamily properties a favorite vehicle for many investors.

Another advantage is that multifamily property typically offers a higher ratio of building to land value which means more of the capital investment can be depreciated. Additionally, the depreciation life of residential income property (27.5 years) is shorter than other commercial property types (39 years). Combined, these two factors can result in higher annual depreciation write-offs.

Industry projections show apartment demand and multifamily property values rising over the next 5-10 years. In Roanoke, apartment building values have held steady or increased even in the face of the increased supply. That's a result of increased tenant demand and the low cost of money.

So, let's review; cash flow, low risk, tax advantages and increasing values. Sounds like a good time to buy.



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## Focus >

*If you chase two rabbits, you will catch neither.* This Russian proverb communicates a very simple, but powerful message – the importance of focus.

Peter Drucker, the well-known author and educator on business management, said, “Concentration is the key to economic results. No other principle of effectiveness is violated as constantly today as the basic principle of concentration. Our motto seems to be, ‘Let’s do a little bit of everything.’”

In *The Road to Business Success*, Andrew Carnegie stated, “And here is the prime condition of success, the great secret: concentrate your energy, thought and capital exclusively upon the business in which you are engaged. The concerns which fail are those which have scattered their capital, which means they have scattered their brains also.”

Organizations lose focus in a myriad of ways. Manufacturers can lose focus when they attempt to expand their products and processes beyond their core competencies. Start-ups can lose focus when they try to provide services outside their expertise in order to get business. All businesses lose focus when they haven’t clearly defined their target market, and instead, try to be everything to everyone. I learned this lesson early in my business when I pursued sales outside my business strategy.

Steve Jobs contributed much of his success at Apple by staying focused. He said, “People think focus means saying yes to the thing you’ve got to focus on. But that’s not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas that there are. You have to pick carefully. I’m actually as proud of the things we haven’t done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things.”

To stay focused, businesses should start with a strategic plan. What is your company’s mission and vision? Who is your target market? What are your core competencies and strengths? From your strategic plan, you must craft clear, concise short- and long-term measurable goals. When considering a tempting opportunity, ask yourself, “Is this my target market? Does this adhere to my strategic plan?” By learning to say “no”, you have more time and energy to pursue your organizational goals.

The same focus, concentration and analysis are needed by every leader in your organization. Does everyone know the organization’s mission, vision and goals? Does each leader have his or her own clear goals that support the company’s mission?

During his recent win at the Masters, golfer Jason Spieth was reminded by his caddie on every shot to “Pick a small target.” When companies have clear and concise targets, their energy and investments will be more focused and greater success can be achieved. 

# Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

**Executive Summary:**  
*From manufacturing a product to selling a service to playing golf, success comes to those who intentionally restrict their attention to a goal with clarity.*

## Coworking's impact on nonprofit startups >

The word "entrepreneur" has adopted a variety of connotations. For many, the word relates to one's status as a business owner. For others, the word describes a type of person. In most cases, though, "entrepreneurs" are those starting or who have started for-profit organizations.

In recent years, the term "social entrepreneur" has been developed to describe those starting organizations that are mission-oriented over profit-oriented. It also encompasses the blurring of the lines between non- and for-profit organizations. Each designation has challenges, but in most case they are discussed as unique and separate.

This silo-ing has impacted the world of coworking. When the CoLab first opened in 2014, the target demographic for members included tech startups, budding entrepreneurs and small business owners. The CoLab now serves more than 100 members, 15 of whom started, direct or work for nonprofit organizations.

The perceived difference between for- and nonprofit organizations exists within their disparate missions. This does not mean, however, that the paths toward the mission are entirely separate or different. Money, marketing and relationships are crucial for most organizations at an early stage. Many startups struggle with these issues on a personnel level, not because of the mission or business plan.

To combat these issues, for-profit startups are encouraged to collaborate and learn from each other, often within the walls of a coworking space or incubator. In fact, coworking spaces tout the effectiveness of sharing ideas as essential to business growth. This is partially because it is actually effective, and partially because coworking spaces are built as collaborative institutions.

Nonprofits, however, are encouraged to hoard seemingly finite resources and keep their success secrets to themselves. With so many nonprofits in the Roanoke region, the startup situation ranges from tough to dire. The glamour of the startup is less-so with a nonprofit and because of this they



## Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

### Executive Summary:

*When starting a business, the difference between for-profit and not-for-profit should matter little when it comes to the benefits of coworking.*

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“”

Guys that have lunch here in suits can be different people at 2 in the morning

— Page 61

“”

All businesses lose focus when they ... try to be everything to everyone

— Page 34

# PERSPECTIVES

are not offered the same kinds of opportunities and resources. From the CoLab's perspective, this segregation is unfounded. From ideation to launch to maturation, non- and for-profit organizations require the same bootstrapping and innovative thinking, and often make the same avoidable, expensive mistakes.

We do our local businesses and nonprofits a disservice by treating them like they exist in silos and keeping them physically separate. Coworking, conceptually, describes a physical space that provides accelerated serendipity. Coworking is one solution. Putting different startups, non- or for-profit, in the same space creates a more communal, trusting approach to organizational growth.

The responsibility to take action to end the unfortunate separation of for- and nonprofit organizations rests in the hands of those working in business services and resource dissemination. By creating a space for cross-industry idea generation, a richer, more productive environment will exist for the members from every sector. 



We do our local businesses and nonprofits a disservice by treating them like they exist in silos and keeping them physically separate.

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Ashley is administering a laser therapy to Angel May.

## Healing medicine >

### Executive Summary:

*Hanging Rock Animal Hospital used traditional medicine or holistic treatment for its customers' pets—sometimes both.*

### By Nicole Dobbs

When Dr. Todd Czarnecki walks into an exam room at Hanging Rock Animal Hospital in Roanoke County, he clears his thoughts and silences his mind of both ego and an agenda. His initial objective is to listen. His second objective goes far beyond diagnosing an ailment but discovering the root cause which is all too often hidden. He listens to his patient's guardian then he listens to the patient. Though his patients do not speak in the way people most often communicate, they excel in the art of communication. "Animals are simple and honest in a way that is quite inspiring and makes the work very rewarding," this line was humbly spoken by Dr. Todd Czarnecki yet it echoes to the heart of his medical philosophy.

Dr. Todd, as he is referred to by his patients' guardians, unashamedly stands in the balance between a holistic approach to medicine and the traditional western practices. He holds

firm to the core belief that the purpose of medicine, whether holistic or traditional, is to heal the patient. In today's society, the holistic approach to how people live and view healthcare, for themselves and their pets is increasingly gaining momentum. Dr. Todd embraced the Whole-Life approach to medicine and wellness more than twenty-three years ago when he began as a general Veterinary Practitioner.

His love of animals and helping the body heal itself guided his mission to seek balance within his patients. "To me, holistic is a description of a type of medicine that incorporates an open-minded, humble and inviting practice that strives to determine the root causes of health and illness in each individual patient. It is a combination of functional and integrative medicine that doesn't start and stop with a disease centered diagnosis and doesn't start and stop with pharmaceutical medications."

Hanging Rock Animal Hospital was established in 1996 and is accredited by the American Animal Hospital Association. It is a place where Dr. Todd's philosophies and treatments are embraced. He is one of two full-time veterinarians; there are also two part-time veterinarians. All four specialize in traditional small domestic animal veterinary medicine. The hospital employs a total of 19. By standing in the gap between the holistic approach

and traditional medicine, Dr. Todd is helping to advance the opportunities available to his clients in Roanoke and surrounding counties, which he has been doing since joining Hanging Rock Animal Hospital in 2007.

Dr. Todd makes certain not to forsake the foundation of traditional medicine and utilizes homeopathic remedies, acupuncture, chiropractic or laser therapy treatments. In doing so, patients are not restricted to a singular personal preference dictated from only one school of thought. Instead, their sicknesses and diseases are viewed in a poetic fashion. Once he has a read on the root cause, Dr. Todd isolates the optimum course of healing by the best possible means; whether through holistic means, traditional medicine or a marriage of both practices.

Though no course of treatment is infallible, the highly specialized laser therapy seamlessly blends technology with a holistic treatment. The treatment directs light waves (energy) to a problem area in the body stimulating the body to increase circulation and of ATP in the cell's mitochondria. This healing accelerator completely encompasses Dr. Todd's holistic approach towards health for his patients. It supercharges the body's natural ability to heal itself.

Treating the whole animal is not just a desire but a mandate for Dr. Todd. "I believe the



**Dr. Todd Czarnecki, DVM, CVA**

core of healing medicine is a present and loving heart." Medicine in its most simple form seeks to heal one of the most complex systems in nature. Through an observant lens, Dr. Todd is helping his patients find health and healing with an unprecedented combination of holistic philosophy and traditional medicine. 





## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*The choice in whom you do and do not want to do business with should be the privilege of both the consumer and the business; some of us want to take that away.*

## Meddlemaniacs >

Here's the best one word response I can suggest to the statement "I don't agree with that":

Fine.

You don't think a business should refuse to serve someone because it disagrees with that person?

Fine.

You don't think a business should be compelled to serve someone it disagrees with?

Fine.

In any truly progressive society, disagreement prevails. In a peaceful land, disagreement reigns. Why is that? Because you can't have tolerance if nothing is intolerable.

Particularly in our world today, everything is up for inspection. Between social media and camera lenses recording everything we think and do, we have less reason than ever to allow the additional meddling by a governing or policing body. And taking it all the way down to the level of whom we choose to conduct business with? What is the impetus for that? To create a "more perfect union"?

I should say not. History has proven when controls get to those levels, all hell breaks loose.

But how do we protect ourselves? you say. How do we get rid of the idiots... those people who are just... wrong? you say.

Not by telling them how they must believe. Not by telling them whom they must accept. Not by telling them where, when, and how they will serve.

In a free market, free thinking, free working society, the offensive get pushed down. In a regulated and controlled society, the offensive get enabled. In fact, the offensive always mobilize, either in an underground mode or a primary role by radical rebellion.

As publisher of the FRONT, I can accept or reject stories and advertising for whatever reason. I don't want that privilege taken away, even though I happen to consider myself a pretty tolerant and liberated individual. I'd like to stand up for what I believe in. And stand against what I don't. I'm perfectly willing to stand behind my choices; and we should all be so lucky to live in a society where we are each responsible for the consequences of our actions.

The day you are told you MUST bake a wedding cake for a gay marriage or you MUST bake an anniversary cake for the Ku Klux Klan?

That's not fine. 

## Joy of competition >

Most people view competition as a good thing. In the world of the free market, businesses competing for land, labour, capital, and profit helps ensure many things: services are offered fairly, employees are given just compensation, and customers get a high quality product for a reasonable price. However, when it comes to the issue of political competition, I regret to say that our nation is in a woeful state.

On Mat 7th, voters went to the polls in Great Britain to select member of the House of Commons. As a result of that election, eleven parties won seats in that chamber. Moving across the channel, we find varying numbers of parties in other legislatures. For example, France's National Assembly has seven political parties and Germany's Bundestag boasts five. Shifting over to Asia, we find that India, often billed as the world's largest democracy, holds an astounding twenty-five parties in its Lok Sabha, and Japan's National Diet has ten different political parties. Looking at the neighbors of the United States, Canada has six parties in their Parliament and Mexico's Chamber of Deputies holds seven. Quite a lot of choices, wouldn't you say?

However, as you undoubtedly know, only two parties hold seats in either the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The situation is the same in Virginia as there is no member of the General Assembly outside of the Republican and Democratic parties in both the House of Delegates and the Virginia Senate.

Why is it that we typically have only two choices in this country, and, even worse, often are faced with candidates running unopposed? Well, part of the problem deals with gerrymandering. Given that in Virginia we allow legislators to draw their own districts, effectively choosing which voters they wish to represent, they usually do their best to gather citizens who are of their same political persuasion. Perhaps you've never seen them before, but here are maps of the House of Delegates and Senate districts. I should note that I did not create these images and unfortunately, the person or organization who crafted them did not mark them so they could be given proper credit.



Virginia House of Delegates Redistricting Map



Virginia Senate Redistricting Map

As you can clearly see, some of the districts are extremely peculiarly shaped, avoiding certain areas, lumping others together, and dividing cities and counties for maximum political advantage. As one example, the 24th Senate district, pictured in mustard yellow slightly north of the center of the state, will be holding a Republican primary in about a month. As you can see, this district stretches from the West Virginia border, jumps



## Guest Commentary

By Joshua Huffman

**Executive Summary:** *A prevailing and entrenched two-party system has produced limitation; and at the state level, any chance at progressive change is near impossible with the current rules in place.*



Another issue which squelches competition is the fact that Virginia only recognizes two political parties. As such, if a candidate from outside these parties wishes to run, he or she must collect signatures to appear on the general election ballot while the Republican and Democratic candidates do not have to face this hurdle.

over the Blue Ridge Mountains, and encompasses some of the people of Culpeper, combining voters from unrelated communities separated by over a hundred miles. It should be noted that prior to redistricting the 24th was more compact, remaining almost entirely on one side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. However, as the incumbent, Senator Emmett Hanger (R-24), faced a relatively close race from a challenger in the southern part of the district in 2007, the lines were redrawn in such a way to exclude this territory to make certain that his previous opponent, Scott Sayre, had been gerrymandered out of the 24th.

Another issue which squelches competition is the fact that Virginia only recognizes two political parties. As such, if a candidate from outside these parties wishes to run, he or she must collect signatures to appear on the general election ballot while the Republican and Democratic candidates do not have to face this hurdle. In addition, the law states that if other candidates jump through the hoops to become eligible, their names must appear on the ballot after both the Republican and Democrat. In case you are wondering, research has shown, all other factors being equal, that being listed first on the ballot does provide a small electoral advantage. Also, while the Republican and Democratic Parties are allowed to hold nomination primaries, paid for by the Virginia taxpayers, no other political party or group can do so. Not the Libertarians, not the Greens, not the Constitution Party, nor anyone else.

As a way to help promote political competition in Virginia, prior to the 2015 legislative session I approached both my delegate, Tony Wilt (R-Rockingham) and senator, Mark Obenshain (R-Rockingham) with an idea to help level the political playing field. My proposal was that each candidate, regardless of party or lack thereof, would be required to collect the same number of signatures to appear on the ballot. In this way, the Republican and Democratic candidates would have to follow the same requirements as everyone else. Unfortunately, both my representatives declined.

In the 2015 session, two legislators proposed bills that would expand political competition. Delegate Sam Rasoul (D-Roanoke), sponsored HB 1463 which would decrease the threshold for official party recognition in Virginia from 10% of the statewide vote to 4%. That bill was defeated in committee and, although there was no recorded vote, when I investigated further I was told that Delegate Steve Landes (R-Augusta) was the person who killed it. Senator John Edwards (D-Roanoke) offered SB 766 which would decrease the signature threshold for independent and third party statewide candidates to make the ballot from 10,000 to 5,000. This bill met a similar fate, dying in committee at the hands of Republican legislators.

At the same time, two legislators offered bills that would restrict political participation even further. Senator Mark

Obenshain's SB 1060 and Delegate Steve Landes' HB 1518, are pieces of legislation that would mandate party registration. Although one can legitimately make the claim that only Republicans and Democrats should be able to select their own party nominees, when you combine that idea with the fact that districts have been heavily gerrymandered to prevent competition, other parties are more or less forbidden to be recognized, and that taxpayers would be forced to pay for party contests that they wouldn't be allowed to participate in, it is easy to realize this kind of legislation would only diminish political choices further. Fortunately, both bills were defeated. Although the Libertarian Party has increased activity in Virginia, as witnessed in the 2013 and 2014 elections, and would likely draw more from the Republican voter base than the Democratic, the simple fact that some legislators would work to stifle competition for their own political advantage is truly horrifying.

As an additional barrier to allowing for greater political choices, there is the issue of the debates. Whether at the presidential level, or, as was the case with the 2013 Virginia gubernatorial and the 2014 Virginia senatorial, some candidates have not been allowed to participate in the debates. In 2013, both Democrat Terry McAuliffe and Republican Ken Cuccinelli worked together to prevent Libertarian Robert Sarvis from taking part in "their debates". And, in 2014, Democrat Mark Warner and Republican Ed Gillespie agreed to continue the political charade by refusing to appear on the stage with Sarvis. This type of exclusion is utterly disastrous for competition, will ensure that most voters will falsely believe that they only have two choices, and thus will make certain that they will never have more than two options.

Several months ago, Our America Initiative created a video outlining this troubling situation:

As illustrated by these various examples in Virginia and nationwide, this country has a serious problem with a lack of political competition not found in other representative democracies. Due to a series of institutionalized rules, laws, and agreements, politicians have gravely limited competition to two parties or less in order to maintain their own power base. As such, unlike the case with the free market, legislators and political parties have gamed the system and thus have little incentive to improve by following their supposed principles or listening to voters. After all, when you only allow people a choice between Coke and Pepsi, the public will never know the flavour of RC Cola...or Dr. Pepper...and certainly nothing as radical as Peach Snapple. However, I am encouraged to say that there are groups such as Our America and Free & Equal who are working to expand our political choices.

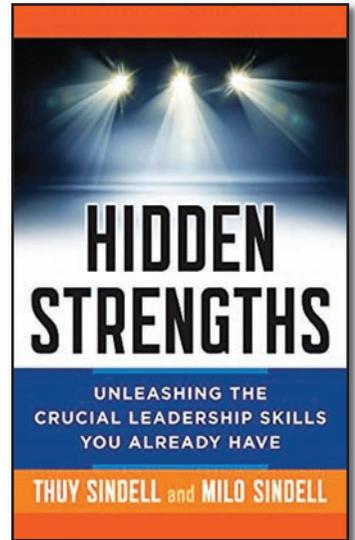
Society, philosophy, and life in general has demonstrated that competition is exceedingly positive for the individual in other facets of life like business, religion, and education. Shouldn't we apply that principle to politics as well? 



In Virginia and nationwide, this country has a serious problem with a lack of political competition not found in other representative democracies. Due to a series of institutionalized rules, laws, and agreements, politicians have gravely limited competition to two parties or less in order to maintain their own power base.

## 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)



### *Middle skills*

Traditional wisdom holds that you should actively work on improving your inherently weak skills, trying to turn them into strengths. However, a new book now suggests just the opposite—you shouldn't waste time on trying to build up your worst attributes, but instead focus your energies on identifying and elevating underdeveloped "middle" skills, those 70 percent of your abilities which lie between your core weaknesses and strengths. Unlike weaker skills—which in many cases cannot be overcome, regardless of the effort involved—these underdeveloped skills are the richest source for potential growth.

Corporate performance expert and co-founder of the Skyline Group Thuy Sindell, Ph.D., along with her husband—President at Skyline Group and human capital expert Milo Sindell—have co-authored the fascinating new book, *Hidden Strengths: Unleashing the Leadership Skills You Already Have* (Berrett – Koehler, May 2015). Divided into six easy-to-read sections, *Hidden Strengths* provides a blueprint for entrepreneurs, aspiring leaders, and senior executives alike to evaluate and evolve their abilities. It also includes a free online assessment tool to help identify and transform their natural leadership abilities.

"Other leadership books help leaders build on what they're best at but stop there. If you only go that far, you're missing a huge opportunity for professional growth," says Thuy. Milo shares, "Relying on your top abilities can actually hold

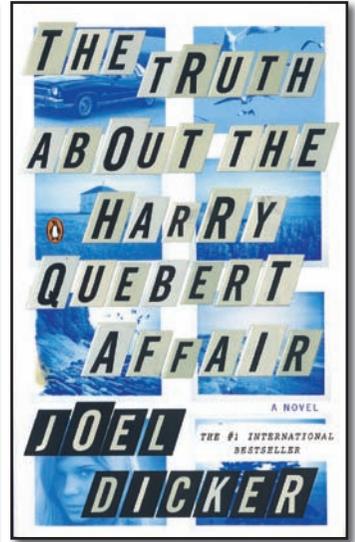
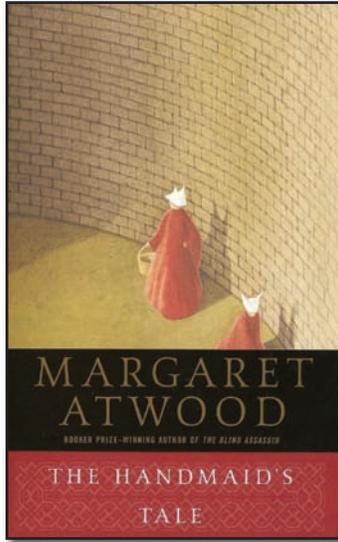
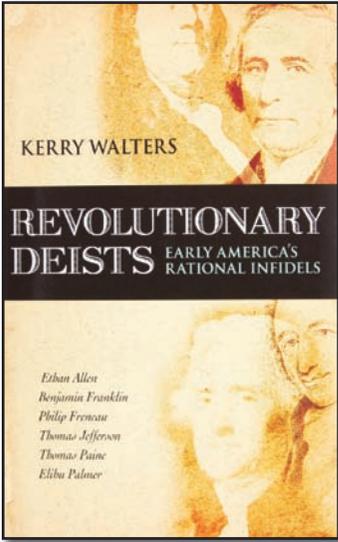
you back. It's critical that you expand your repertoire of skills. The most effective way to do that is find your Hidden Strengths, or mid-level skills that can quickly be elevated into Learned Strengths with attention and focus. This book shows you how."

—Kristin Marquet

### *Faith of our founders*

*Revolutionary Deists: Early America's Rational Infidels* (Prometheus; 2010) by Kerry Walters examines the Deist movement from 1725-1810. The first part of the book describes the effects 18th Century Deism had upon Christianity. The middle six Chapters examine the Deist beliefs of Benjamin Franklin, Ethan Allen, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Elihu Palmer, and Philip Freneau.

Reading these chapters I found myself downloading PDFs of various books by each of several of them in order to further supplement my understanding. The author is a Christian and for the greater part covers the material in an impartial manner and oft times his evaluation of Deist thought is fair, but sometimes it is less so. The author credits the Deist movement as causing American Christianity to retreat from the firm position of Bible literalness to a softer position holding that many passages of the Bible could be interpreted as metaphors or allegories. Anyone interested in understanding early Deist thought, how Deism influenced the



founding of the Union, or the impact of the Deist movement upon Christianity would be well served by reading this book.

—John Brill

## Extremely relevant

Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (Anchor; 1998) is one of those I couldn't put down yet didn't quite understand; but after reading the symbolism of everything online I'm kind of blown away — masterful writing. I avoided reading the online discussions before, but now that I have, I can see myself reading this again and again and picking up new things each time. A truly scary account of what could easily happen to all of us, and has before (Taliban, Nazi Germany) when extremists have been allowed to take over.

—Stevie Holcomb

## Parlez-vous français?

I regret that in all my academic studies of literature, whether the classics, ancient scriptures, or contemporary books, none of my pursuit contained any serious study of translation methodology. I've stuck my nose into some discussion and literary critique on what constitutes good translation; and I've been quite fascinated by the practice of apologetics among philosophers, where much of the defense of their own beliefs is dependent

on translating language expressed in global ideas. Why would I care about accuracy in translation? Because of books like this one.

I simply cannot imagine any plausibility of Joel Decker's *The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair* (Penguin; 2014) being as acclaimed as it is with its "#1 International Best Seller", "chart topping million copies in France and rights sold in more than thirty countries", and prestigious literary prizes, based on one flaw I just can't overlook: the dialogue. There is no way such a book can climb to the top with such dialogue. It's the strangest thing, the story is a good one and the format is attractive. Even the rest of the writing is satisfactory to the point that I did indeed finish the book. But the dialogue almost seems as if it was written by someone else; a juvenile, perhaps. I defy anyone to read aloud a character conversation (i.e. between protagonist/ narrator Marcus and police sergeant Gahalowood) and tell me that's how anybody really talks. Not even in France.

I wish I knew for sure; but I'm willing to bet this is a good novel, utterly ruined by incompetent translation.

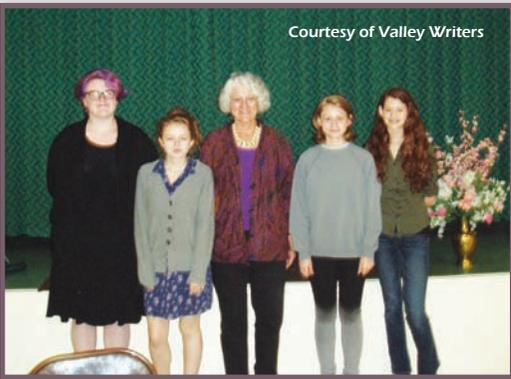
—Tom Field

**(The reviewers:** Kristin Marquet is a publicist with Smith Publicity; John Brill of Roanoke is a reader of books; Stevie Holcomb is a real estate agent and active in the Roanoke and regional community theatre scene; Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT. )



## ROR >

**Cox Business** and **Roanoke's CoLab** held a #FitBiz event, presenting how businesses can use connections to improve customer intimacy for a greater "return on relationship." Above: Ted Rubin (keynote speaker); Dan McInnis (Cox Business, Director of Sales Support); Larry Davidson (Davidson's Clothing for Men); Sherman Lea, Jr. (New Hope Support Services); Elda Stanco Downey (Roanoke Spanish), and Pennie Ahuero (Viva La Cupcake).



## Write on >

Valley Writers, a chapter of the **Virginia Writers Club**, held a Junior Writers Guided Discussion for teens on April 25 at the Salem Church of Christ; attendees included author Betsy Ashton and young writers, Kyoko Leamon, Tess Bryan, Emma Bryan, and Naomi Elliot.



## Traditional app >

A portrait unveiling, book signing, and reception for *Keepers of the Tradition*, an art book featuring character portraits by **Leslie Roberts Gregg** and stories by **Michael Abraham**, was held to a completely packed Alexander House and Cultural Center on April 26 in Blacksburg.

# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## Duck, duck, goose, fish >

The 64th Annual Ernest "Pig" Robertson Fishing Rodeo was held May 2 at the newly re-opened and renovated **Lake Spring Pond** (aka "Duck Pond") in Salem for children fishing stocked trout.



## Ding, ding >

Alumni, council members, students, and representatives of the **Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech** rang the opening stock market bell at Nasdaq's MarketSite in New York's Times Square as a part of Pamplin's 50th anniversary celebration for this year.



## Pomp circumstance >

The month of May held many college graduations in our region, including **Roanoke College** on May 2, where commencement speaker Nancy Agee of Carilion encouraged graduates to "live well."



## Brain power >

**Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council's 2015 TechNite** was held at Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center with After Party at the Science Museum of Western Virginia on May 8 for more than 700 people. Above, attendees play a game where contestants "move" a ball dependent on brain activity. See this issue's FRONT Notes for list of winners.



Courtesy of Botetourt County Office of Tourism

## Tourism trophy >

**Botetourt County's Office of Tourism** won the state's VIRGO award for its "What's Your Bot-e-Type?" campaign entries in print and interactive (under \$1 million budget). Tourism manager Lisa Moorman (second from left) accepted the award.



## Outdoors where it's at >

**Pete Eshelman**, director of outdoor branding at Roanoke Regional Partnership, says not that many years ago when traveling to conventions, people thought of Roanoke as "a suburb of D.C. or 'that Lost Island.'" Today, he says the region is known for its outdoor and recreational amenities, "a sleepy little mountain town that's waking up." Eshelman gave the keynote address at the **Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce 46th Annual Dinner** at Hollins University on May 19.

# FRONT 'N ABOUT



Courtesy of Carilion Clinic

## Teen place >

Carilion Clinic Children's Hospital held a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 8 for its renovated "Teen Room," a special place designated for teenagers receiving treatment for illnesses and injuries.



Jo Lynn Seifert

## Red shoes score >

Tulane Patterson (left) CEO and owner of Generations Solutions (a business opening in 1998 in Lynchburg and 1999 in Roanoke, offering home care services for seniors), won the Virginia 2015 Small Business Person of the Year award by the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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

**Scott Arnett** has been appointed to the investment division at First Bank & Trust Company; his office is at the Christiansburg branch.



Atkins

**Kelsey Atkins** of Brown Insurance in Blacksburg, has completed the Certified Insurance Sales Representative designation.

**Brian Wilson** has been named portfolio manager at Morgan Stanley's Wealth Management Roanoke office.

## LEGAL FRONT



Kinser

**Cynthia D. Kinser**, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, has joined as senior counsel to the firm of Gentry Locke.

## WELLNESS FRONT

**Kristie Williams**, MSN, RN, has been named the new vice president, community hospitals for Carilion Clinic, overseeing Carilion Giles Community Hospital and Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital.



Tilley

**Lisa J. Tilley** has joined the Central and Western Virginia Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

**Dr. Kevin R. Dye**, gastroenterologist, has joined Carilion Clinic.

**Barbara Chandler** of LifeCare Medical Transport has received the 2015 Star of Life award from American Ambulance Association.

## TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Merritt

**Jeff Merritt** has been named market vice

president for Roanoke Operations for Cox Virginia.

**Kimberly Edwards** and **Scott Larrowe** have been hired as household goods managers for Lawrence Companies.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Wiley-Lamb

**Cindy Wiley-Lamb** has been hired as the new resident services coordinator for the Trolinger and New River House apartments at Warm Hearth Village.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

**Craig Farley**, bench jeweler for Fink's Jewelers, won the CAD Challenge event at the SMART Jewelry Show in Chicago.

**Leesa Wilcher** has been named general sales manager of WSET-TV.

**Becky Freemal**, anchor and Curt Schrueth, photojournalist of Fox 21/27 10 O'Clock News received a Regional Edward R.

Murrow Award for the November 2014 "Out and About: Our Journey Home" segment.

## EDUCATION FRONT



Hodgert

**Donna Hodgert** has been appointed men's and women's swimming coach at Ferrum College.



Dudley

**A.J. Dudley** has been named the next chair of the College's Business Advisory Board at Ferrum College.



Davis

**Sandra Davis** of Blacksburg and Radford's BCR Property Management, has received the

William H. Ruffner Medal, Virginia Tech's highest honor.



Gagnon

**Jennifer Gagnon** has received Virginia Agribusiness Council's Land-Grant University Award at Virginia Tech.

**Harald Sontheimer**, a professor of neurobiology at the University of Alabama



Sontheimer

at Birmingham and a nationally recognized neuroscientist, will



Erskine

direct a university-wide neuroscience initiative being launched within

Virginia Tech's College of Science.

**Dr. Michael Erskine** has been named director of Virginia Tech's Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center.

**Anthony Wilson**, chief of the Town of Blacksburg Police

*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.

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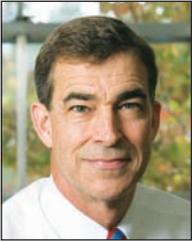
# Career FRONT

Department, and **Kevin Foust**, chief of the Virginia Tech Police Department, have received the Alfred C. Payne Service Award for their effort in establishing the No Hokie Left Behind campaign.



Croy

**Amy Croy** has joined as the new volleyball coach at North Cross School.



Phlegar

**Charles Phlegar** has been appointed Virginia Tech's vice president for advancement.



Eyestone

**Chris Eyestone** has been named chief of the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad.

**Pamela R. Moran**, Albermarle County schools chief, has been named Virginia's

superintendent of the year.

**Sherri Shupe** of Andrew Lewis Middle School in Salem, received the 2015 Virginia Lottery Super Teacher award.

**Dan Earl** has been named the men's basketball coach at Virginia Military Institute.



Eskandarian

**Azim Eskandarian** is joining as head of mechanical engineering at Virginia Tech.



Rikakis

**Thanassis Rikakis** has been named executive vice president and provost at Virginia Tech.



Agarwala

**Vijay K. Agarwala** has been named director of high performance

computing at Virginia Tech.

**Fiona Hill** has been named principal at Cave Spring Middle School in Roanoke County.

**Susan Brown** has been named principal at Burlington Elementary School in Roanoke County.

**Aric Palazzola** has been named assistant principal at William Byrd High School in Roanoke County.



Massey



Ricotta

and visitor services coordinator at the Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau.

## CULTURE FRONT



Davidson

**Pat Davidson**, LCSW, of Family Service of Roanoke Valley has been honored with the Children's Trust annual Golden Halo Award.

**Heather Massey** has been named director of sales; and **Taylor Ricotta** has been named public relations

**Pam Irvine**, president and CEO of Feeding America Southwest Virginia was named Feeding America 2015 Network Leader of the Year at the National Executive Directors' Forum in Scottsdale, Arizona.

## MUNICIPAL FRONTS

**Matthew Reges Lawless** is the new town manager of Boones Mill.

*Compiled by Tom Field*

“Treating the whole animal is ... a mandate

— Page 39

# FRONT NETWORK



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Virginia Tech

## Hotel Roanoke

### Good report card

**Hotel Roanoke** has injected \$616 million into the local economy in the past two decades, according to a report by the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, presented upon the landmark hotel's 20th anniversary reopening (after an extensive renovation and conference center development in 1995). Some of the breakdown of figures includes: \$750 million in downtown investments; \$395 million in direct investment from the hotel (jobs and operating costs, guest spending); \$108 million in renovation, construction and upgrades; \$86 million in conference center sales. The original hotel opened in 1882.

### Tech trophies

The Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council held its 16th annual **RBTC TechNite** awards banquet with more than 700 people at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center on May 8, recognizing the following winners out of

67 nominees: **Card Isle** (People's Choice); **Michael Collver, Darrell Roberts, Skip Larrington** (STEM Educators); **Jonathan Hagmaier** (Entrepreneur); **Rafael Davalos** (Innovator); **Dr. Michael Friedlander** (Regional Leadership); **ORIGO** (Rising Star); **Doug Juanarena** (Ruby Award); **Dr. Mary Miller and Leon Harris** (inductees into Technology Hall of Fame).

### Water workers

**Apptech Solutions**, a water systems designer and manufacturer (septic tanks, rainwater harvesting, wastewater treatment, potable water systems), is expanding; moving from Roanoke City to Roanoke County at Daugherty Road; with plans to hire 100 employees over the next three years.

### 4 for C'burg & NRV

**Christiansburg** has been ranked the fourth lowest average car insurance rate in the U.S. by carinsurance.com; and the **Blacksburg-**

**Christiansburg-Radford** metropolitan statistical area (MSA) has been ranked number four of 132 metro areas with populations less than 200,000 as a "Top Metro" location by Site Selection magazine.

### Merchant of Martinsville

eBay is expanding its operations in Martinsville, investing nearly \$6 million and adding 190 jobs at its new six-building campus facility on Joseph Martin Highway.

### Horse escapes

The **Roanoke Valley Horse Show** was canceled for the 2015 season, after 43 years of showing at the Salem Civic Center; organizers citing lack of sponsorship.

### Forging ahead

**Virginia Forge** in Buchanan is expanding with a \$4.6 million investment and planned hiring of 38 additional employees; the company primarily fabricates steel

automotive wheel hubs and assemblies.

### Won with good reason

**Virginia Foundation for the Humanities** won the regional Edward R. Murrow Award by the Radio Television Digital News Association's small market category for the With Good Reason weekly public radio show; "Messages from a Forgotten Troopship" episode winning first place in Audio News Documentary.

### Our own "Olympics"

The **2015 Subway Commonwealth Games**, billed as Virginia's largest multi-sport festival, will open July 17 with a ceremony at the Salem Red Sox stadium.

### Affordable housing

**Community Housing Partners** (CHP) has been identified by Affordable Housing Finance as one of the nation's Top 50 Affordable Housing Developers of 2014. The

rankings are based on the number of new affordable housing units—those serving residents earning no more than 60% of the area median income—started in 2014.

engineering approaches for manufacturing" while the contractual activities are already approved in advance.

*Pledge of support*

*Grape grant*

The **Institute for Advanced Learning and Research** (IALR) was awarded a \$39,798 grant from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) to facilitate a project designed to help local grape growers; **Hamlet Vineyards** and the viticulture program at **Patrick Henry Community College** to benefit from the research.

**Hollins University** has received a financial commitment of \$6.5 million from Mr. and Mrs. James McDonnell III to fund renovations to the university's Dana Science Building and Hollins Theatre, and expand the number of faculty in the theatre and playwriting programs.

*Fundraising 28*

**Ferrum College** raised more than \$28 million from its 2013 centennial fundraising campaign; more than \$16 million to be allocated to scholarships, and remaining funds for capital projects, faculty endowments, academic programs, and the general endowment.

*P&G + VT*

**Procter & Gamble** and **Virginia Tech** have signed a master alliance agreement, whereby P&G works with VT to "develop improved analytics and

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

**Averett University** raised more than \$28 million from its fundraising campaign that began in 2010.

*Run, run*

**Runabout Sports**, a running and athletic apparel store in Blacksburg, is opening a second location in Roanoke, at the former Trapezi Furniture store on Brambleton Avenue.

*Safe spot*

**LewisGale** hospitals in Salem, Montgomery County, and Pulaski County received an "A"; and its hospital in Pulaski County received a "B" grade for patient safety

by Leapfrog's Spring 2015 Hospital Safety Scores report. The hospital released a statement saying "only 31 percent of the more than 2,500 hospitals nationwide who were scored received the highest grade possible."

*Forest farming here*

The region's first "**Food Forest**" is opening at the Growing Goodwill Community Garden at the corner of 24th St and Salem Turnpike; a partnership of Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Virginia Tech School of Architecture and Design and Roanoke Community Garden Association.

*Perch perch*

The federally endangered Roanoke logperch (*Percina rex*) is included in the Atrium Aquariums of Center in the Square; two specimens of the rare fish now reside there.

*Prestigious landmark available*

The picturesque **Shenandoah Life** corporate estate at 2391 Brambleton Avenue in Roanoke is up for sale or lease; listing agent Poe & Cronk Real Estate Group suggests suitability for a corporate headquarters,



**P&G / VT Alliance: Sallie Keller, director of Social and Decision Analytics Laboratory of the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute at the Virginia Tech Research Center — Arlington.**

# FRONT Notes

educational campus, or even multifamily development; and says the 28-acre property is priced at \$1.1 million below assessment.

## Home sales up

The **Virginia Association of REALTORS** reports home sales in the state increased by 6.3 percent in the first quarter compared to the same period in 2014; also, median sales price increased by 4 percent to \$244,467 for the first quarter.

## Pay ball

**Virginia Tech** has reported an influx of \$69 million in annual economic impact from its home football games; mostly from hotels, restaurants, shops, grocery stores, and gas stations.

## 100G @ VT

**Virginia Tech** is increasing campus connections to Internet 2 with a 100

gigabits per second network access.

## The farmer in the burg

**Christiansburg Farmers Market** has opened downtown; current hours of 3pm to 7pm on Thursdays, through October.

## Uniform expansion

**Cintas Corporation**, a commercial supplies company, is expanding in Bedford County with a \$6 million investment, equipment upgrade, and the hiring of 15 new employees over the next three years at its facility on Industrial Drive.

## Startup star

**Roanoke** has been recognized by Nerdwallet as the top market in the state for starting a new business; scoring based on business environment, average business revenue, percentage of businesses with paid employees,

number of businesses per 100 people, median annual income, housing cost, and unemployment rate.

## Hokie spokie

The use of the Hokie Bike Hub by the Virginia Tech community has grown by nearly 200 percent since it opened in September 2013; more than 1,000 people have either signed up for bicycle maintenance or repair, attended a lesson or workshop, or registered their bike.

## Dramatic replay

The historic **Masonic Theatre** in Clifton Forge is scheduled for an extensive \$6 million renovation; including roofing, painting, seating, orchestra pit work, flooring, sound and lighting. The theatre opened in 1905.

## Chug, chug on back

The **Norfolk & Western Class J 611 Steam**

**Passenger Locomotive**, reportedly "the most powerful steam passenger locomotive ever built," has returned to Roanoke (where it was built), under its own power, after being refurbished. The locomotive is part of the Norfolk Southern 21st Century Steam excursion program in June and July, with Friday, Saturday, and Sunday passenger trips to multiple sites in Virginia; information at [fireup611.org](http://fireup611.org).

## Lighting up

**Hubbell Lighting** is investing \$6 million in expansion and expected to hire 100 new jobs at its facility in Christiansburg; the manufacturer makes lighting fixtures for commercial, industrial, and residential use.

## Coal cold

**Coal exports** from Hampton Roads, North America's largest coal-exporting port, have dropped from 16.2 million



Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech home football games currently account for nearly \$70 million a season in local spending.

tons to 11 million tons between this year and last year in the same period (January through April). The source of coal is primarily from parts of Kentucky, West Virginia, and western Virginia; hauled by Norfolk Southern and CSX Corporation. Annualized, the current coal export would be 33.1 million tons, down from almost 50 tons in 2013.

#### *Shopping milestone*

The American Cancer Society **Discovery Shop** at Smith Mountain Lake has hit the \$2 million mark at its annex sale in May; the milestone will put the Roanoke and Moneta shops (which sell upscale donated items) at \$8 million for cancer research and programs.

#### *Mountain home*

**Virginia Mountains** region is the new branded tourism designation for the western part of the state that includes the counties of Alleghany, Bath, Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Highland, Roanoke, and the cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem. The announcement was made May 11 by Virginia Tourism Corp. and will become official on Jan. 1, 2016. Virginia Mountains will be included in the mix of ten regional tourism destination designations for the Commonwealth; and is supposed to describe the mountainous area of

the state that includes parts of Smith Mountain Lake, Shenandoah Valley, Blue Ridge Parkway, and Appalachian Trail.

#### *U now*

Mary Baldwin College will change its name to **Mary Baldwin University** on Aug. 31, 2016.

#### *On paper*

MeadWestvaco paper mill in Covington has changed its name to **WestRock** after the merger with RockTenn.

#### *Valley victors*

The New River Valley Planning District Commission awarded **Ken Anderson** of Blacksburg's Anderson & Associates the Citizen of the Valley award; and **Rick Boucher**, 9th Congressional District Representative from 1983 to 2011, the Champion of the Valley award at its annual banquet; the organization is also changing its name to New River Valley Regional Commission.

#### *Slump slows coal*

**Patriot Coal Corp.**, with mining operations in the Appalachian region, has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Eastern District of Virginia;

operations are continuing during a restructuring; the company previously filed for bankruptcy in 2012.

#### *No sprawl space*

The **Roanoke Regional Partnership** released a report indicating a lack of available sites for industrial development in the Roanoke Valley that have at least 100 acres and meet minimal specifications, infrastructure, and zoning that new businesses or relocations seek.

#### *BAM in VA*

Governor Terrence R. McAuliffe has declared the month of May to be **Business Appreciation Month** in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

#### *Refrain*

Nationally syndicated public television show **Song of the Mountains**, produced in Marion, is suspending production for approximately six months, as the Lincoln Theatre Board initiates a rebranding process; scheduled taping sessions will continue; host Tim White is leaving; and the reorganization committee is seeking new financial support options.

#### *Unwanted award*

Preservation Virginia has named **Sweet Briar**

**College** and its 3,250-acre campus a most endangered historic place; the college still faces a scheduled closing in August after 114 years in operation.

#### *Gender gain*

Virginia has an estimated 220,300 women-owned firms, employing 212,000 and contributing to roughly \$36,297,800 in revenues according to the fifth annual State of Women-Owned Businesses Report, commissioned by American Express OPEN, a comprehensive report analyzing the 1997, 2002, and 2007 data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Nationally, the number of women-owned businesses has increased 74% since 1997. Virginia is ranked 21 (66.6%) in growth of number of firms over the past 18 years and 12 (107.6%) in growth of firm revenue between 1997 and 2015.

#### *Campaign champs*

The **Roanoke Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau** won the state's VIRGO destination marketing award for last year's summer ad campaign "Blue Ridge Standard Time" in the over \$1 million category. Botetourt Tourism won in the under \$1 million category (see this issue's FRONT'n About).

*Compiled by Tom Field*

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



Classic noir.



all photos: Anne Sampson

**Zack is studying Computer Science. He'll start at UVA through the Higher Ed Center in the fall.**

## Order up >

### Executive Summary:

*This little eatery has as much if not more character than any other Roanoke icon: Texas Tavern.*

### By Anne Sampson

"Will you gentlemen be dining in with us this evening?"

That's Zack, one of the guys at the Roanoke Millionaire's Club, aka Texas Tavern, to two men who just walked in the door. Zack keeps a lot of patter going as regulars come in for a Bowl With or a Cheesy, and Walkin' orders sidle up to the window over the grill. I can see the whole room from the last stool, where I sit with my bowl (no 'with' – onions,

that is) and a 'slab' (cheese on top). At maybe 14 feet wide and 20 feet deep, the tiny kitchen/dining area of the Tavern has famously seated "1000 people, 10 at a time" on its recovered red stools since 1930.

According to their website, founder Issac "Nick" Bullington leased the location for the restaurant from Edgar Thurman, owner of Thurman and Boone furniture store, located on the corner of Church Avenue and Jefferson Street. A handshake and five months of construction later, the Texas Tavern opened on Friday, February 13, 1930. They celebrated their 85th year last February, right after the passing of retired former owner Jim Bullington. Matt Bullington, great grandson of the founder, took over in 2005.

Not much has changed at the Tavern since then, except the addition of an ATM, and a little tweaking of the chile (sic) recipe.



"I've got the look, don't I?"

Chili beans, hot dog chili and sausage gravy are made on the spot, the chili from dried and not canned beans.

"We have to count the beans," says Zack with a grin. "It never fails, you get to 5,004 beans and somebody calls out an order, and you have to start all over."

In classic short order style, orders are called

and not written down and there is, of course, a lingo. 'Walkin' means 'to go,' and 'One' is a burger, although if you want a cheeseburger, you've got to say the word 'cheeseburger'. A 'bowl' is chili. A 'bowl with, walkin' is chili with onions to go. Check the website for a complete list. You can place an order without it, but it's not as much fun.

There's also a 'Secret Menu', with items like



Cheesy Western in the making.



**The 85 year old iron pipe footrest wore through long ago.**

the Zack Burger: a double meat Cheesy Western, which itself is also known as a 'John Wayne', with sausage instead of beef, and the Diesel Dog: a fully loaded hot dog with a fried egg and cheese. Ask about them when you go; the guys will hook you up.

There is a strong sense of ownership among the counter men. They run the place, they keep it clean and stocked, and they keep order at the counter, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



**Biggy Smalls holds a card celebrating the Grand Opening in 1930.**

"Guys that have lunch here in suits can be different people at 2 in the morning," says Biggy Smalls, who, while an affable storyteller, does not take much nonsense from anyone.

The menu is varied but simple, the service fast and laced with jokes, and the patrons range from downtown professionals to folks passing through via the bus station. They all come for reasonably priced comfort food; they leave with the experience of an 85 year tradition. 🍷



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