

Valley Business

FRONT

THE SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR
CHAMPION IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
FREE • ISSUE 98 • NOVEMBER 2016

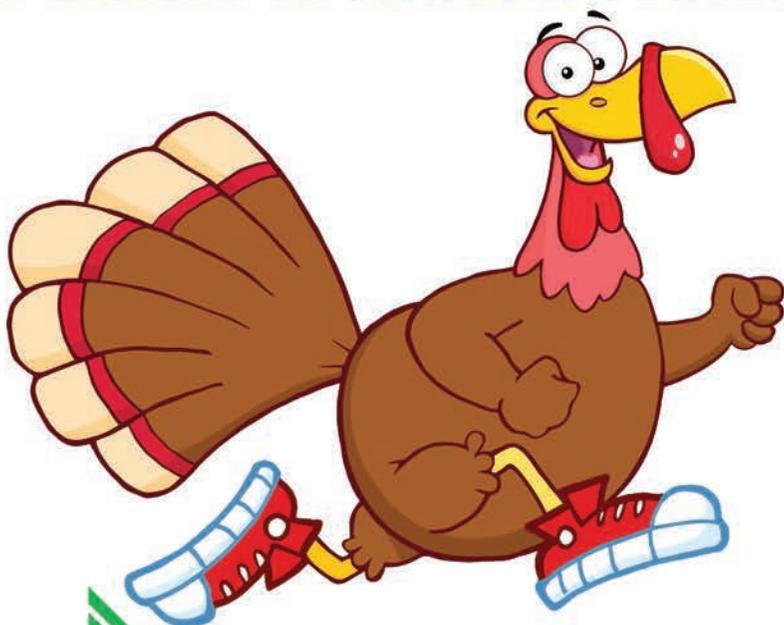
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A Southern Thang

Marie March,
Due South BBQ

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I love barbecue. Barbeque. BBQ. However you spell it.

I love tearing into the meat, right off the grill or smoker. And the sauces... I'll take them all, thank you very much. Throw some fries or hushpuppies in there, slaw, sweet tea or cold beer—I'm in heaven, southern style. Complete with sauce-stained angel wings and flying pink pigs.

I didn't go back and dig up every story from the past 28 years we've been covering business here in our region; but I'm not sure we've reported on a barbecue joint, shack, or restaurant to any significant degree.

What? Are you kidding? How is that possible?

Maybe it's because a lot of BBQ Shacks come and go. But although we're not North or South Carolina (or even Kansas City), Virginia is most assuredly a barbecue-friendly state. Our Virginia ham ranks number one in the world, for heaven's sake.

I'm sorry. It's inexcusable that we haven't delivered the hot and sweet (or spicy) story of a BBQ business to you... until now. But son, do we have an example. Locally owned and operated. A favorite stop for the locals. A surprising and pleasing experience for those passing through.

Sit right there and check out this most colorful southern tale. We'll let the owner herself describe it all.

But for heaven's sake, tie a napkin around your neck.



Tom Field

“
”
Mini donkeys are
adorable, after all — Page 24

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 Athleisure-wear...is
 still frowned upon

— Page 18

COVER STORY



Hard Work and Luck
 builds a popular barbecue
 joint in Christiansburg



Cover photography of Marie March by Anne Sampson.

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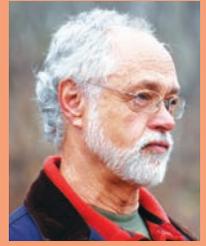
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NOVEMBER



Jeanne Chitty



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Mike Leigh



Dan Smith



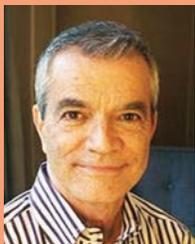
Kathy Surace

Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 14 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



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Anne Sampson



Nicholas Vaassen

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 40.

2016 Members

Nancy Agee Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford Claire V (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Carilion (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Seniors)
John Garland Garland Properties (Development)
Nancy Gray Hollins University (Education)
Nanci Hardwick Aeroprobe (Tech/Industry)
George Kegley Retired (Seniors)
John D. Long National D-Day Memorial (Culture)
Nancy May LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)
Stuart Mease Virginia Tech (Education)
Mary Miller ACI (Tech/Industry)
Ed Walker Regeneration Partners (Development)

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

“”

I need to practice what I preach

— Page 27

“”

The only reason these people were asked to sign those agreements was to bump them off — Page 29

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all photos: Anne Sampson

General Manager Bobby Finamore slings pork and sports one of DSBBQ's colorful shirts, which includes phrases from actual comments made by staff and customers



'Let's Do This!'

Hard Work and Luck builds a popular barbecue joint in Christiansburg

Uch. There's nothing quite like a bee sting to get your day started. Marie March steps out of the bathroom with her finger wrapped. The owner of Due South BBQ in Christiansburg is a hands-on kind of gitt'er done southern gal, and that can mean getting your hand stung as well as getting them dirty on this extra warm and sun shining Tuesday in October. We pull up at mid-morning, to what we thought was well ahead of any lunch crowd—but the cars start pulling in way before noon, like NASCAR pit stops, at this eclectic roadside barbecue shack. A minute before our arrival, Marie got stung by a bee just outside the door. The notion of that sting being a bad omen is quickly dismissed though; because we see everybody around—the staff, the customers, some guys working on a new structure attached to the property—smiling and laughing. Even wounded Marie. Due South is that kind of place. No room for worries.

We see this neat barbecue joint sitting off the road. You can't miss it. Everybody knows about it. It's even surrounded by other iconic sights and sounds in the curve just prior to the U.S. 460 interchange to Virginia Tech, including one of the rarest sights anywhere: the entrance to a real live working drive-in movie theatre, the Starlite. There's a certain irony in that all this mismatched, hodge-podge of colors and shapes and shops and structures along a cluttered roadside actually fit together. Like a folk art painting of Americana, Marie's Due South BBQ beckons the hungry. Those hungry for "good eatin'" or perhaps a little splash of "good livin'" in an otherwise ordinary day.

The Sights, Sounds, and Tastes of Due South BBQ >

Executive Summary:
Christiansburg's Due South BBQ is the fairytale small business story you have to experience—including its southern twist.

**A Special
FRONT Interview**



Here is a story of a young couple who drove up from South Carolina one day, got to thinking about their love of a southern staple in roadside dining, and pretty much on a whim, said, 'we could do that business here. Let's do it.'

And so they did.

Why did you decide to go into this business?

My husband and I went to Clemson; and we used to host pig pickin's at our house and entertain at Clemson games. We loved it, and we'd go to barbecue competitions... it was

Samples, anyone?

For such a small place, DSBbQ posts a HUGE menu, for lunch or dinner. Here's just a sampling:

pulled pork * beef brisket * baby back ribs * smoked chicken * wings * coleslaw * mac & cheese * baked beans * green beans * potato salad * meat or veggie salads * sweet tater casserole * fried green maters * fried okra * hushpuppies * banana puddin' * apple fritters * racks, ribs, plates, and sandwiches

DSBBQ In Brief

Owners:	Jared & Marie March
Ages:	39, 38
Family:	Married; Two boys, 18 and 9 years old
Background:	Moved from South Carolina, started two southern style restaurant icons
Years in Business:	10
Staff:	About 20; General Managers Bobby Finamore and Hannah Hawthorne
Product:	Extensive Menu (see sidebar); slow smoked pork, beef, and chicken, pit-style barbecue; accompanied by southern style sides and five signature sauces
Other ventures:	Fat Back Soul Shack (just down the road, soul food and pub); home grown collard greens and other vegetables; upgrading restaurant; about to purchase restaurant property; sauces about to be distributed at Kroger grocery stores

kind of our hobby. And then, Jared got accepted at VCOM [Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Blacksburg] and we moved up here 12 years ago. I couldn't get a job; this building was vacant, we literally were eating barbecue one day, played around with the idea and just said, 'let's do this.'

We got so lucky... at the time. Back then [2006], banks would loan you money. We were young and had a lot of energy. The guy who owned the property, Bill Craft... we went to church with... and honestly, I think he kind of felt sorry for us! He dropped the rent from what he was asking [to less than half] and that enabled us to get up and going. He's a nice dude; and I tell him this all the time. He's a big fan and has supported us. You know, you just get lucky with certain things throughout your life; and I just feel like Bill has been a huge help to us.

Any surprises since that decision?

We didn't expect it would be this successful. The health inspector still laughs at me; because he remembers me coming down as a kid, and I tootle in there like I think I know everything when I know nothing really. [The inspector] could tell I had no business getting into all this; but I had all my math worked out to where I figured we only needed 80 customers a day. We do so much more than that.

“ “
We got so
lucky





From the minute we opened the door, we had a line going out the building. We were the only approved smoker device [operator] in the New River Valley at the time.

What do you like about being in this business?

It's really rewarding. I'm a goal-oriented person, and we're always working toward the next thing and fixing processes and getting better. I'm really competitive too, and we've got some new competition coming into the area about a year from now; so our strategy is making sure every process is foolproof. They're from big business. So will we still do



We just roll it out—and roll it up

So where's that food truck?

Given the colorful identity of the brand, the iconic pig, and the tremendous loyalty, one might expect to see a DSBBQ food truck. The business does offer catering and does have a head-turning pink van with ears and all, but not the conventional food truck like we see rolling all over the region with increasing popularity.

"We don't have a 'real' food truck," Marie says. "We roll out tents."

"We've done festivals for years and have always had the longest lines. One of the girls who is big time into carnivals and vending sales and state fairs came up to me and said, 'Marie, you have figured it out.' I didn't know what she meant; and then she told me the weirdest thing. She said by you all not being up above everyone [in a truck or trailer or elevated window] and being on ground level with the people who can look right at the food, seeing it and smelling it... you sell way more. She said all the 'old time carnies' know that secret. She said this is why we are always so slammed. We get everyone in and out. We just roll it out—and roll it up."



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just as good against some real competition? Hope so.

Competition can be good. It can bring more people to the area to eat barbecue. I think people will try theirs, try ours... and you get a lot of loyalty. People get very loyal with their barbecue. They say 'Yours is the best I've ever had in my life'... or you get the other part, like 'You need to try so-and-so at such-and-such...' We get compared with the North Carolina places a lot.

Frustrations, difficulties, challenges?

I'm going to get a little political here: regulations are very difficult. I've watched it for ten years. Things were real simple, people were easy, local government was easy. Now it's almost like there have been so many rules created and so many permits and so many fees and taxes have gone up. It's been a real squeeze. I don't know where this all comes from, and you end up being so busy in your business that you just don't have time for all the politics or figuring it all out to do anything about it.

It's way different now than it used to be.

We were young and the bank extended money to us. Young people can't even get loans to get off the ground now.

Who are your customers?

We get everybody. Where we're located we get a lot of Virginia Tech parents, kids, a lot of tourists and travelers off the interstate, and locals, of course.



People get very loyal with their barbecue

Get Sauced, Five Times

Due South BBQ's signature sauces (which are about to be included in Kroger inventory)

Sweet Brown	molasses, brown sugar, root beer
Sweet Red	gently sweet with a ketchup base
Hot Red	award winning ketchup with lots of peppers and spices
Lexington	NC's favorite vinegar base with some spice
Mustard	SC's favorite mustard base and mildly sweet



What do your customers tell you about your business?

Here's where Marie simply walks over to the pink customer comment box and dumps the entries out on the table; a random collection from just the past few days. In this sampling, all of the entry forms were marked EXCELLENT on staff, food, service, and atmosphere; and YES for cleanliness.

One suggestion did include the comment that "old time music is better" than whatever was playing at the time. DSBBO has musicians playing about four times a week.

Love that sign

DSBBO General Manager Bobby Finamore is enamored with the business piggy icon now included on the standardized blue interstate signs showing restaurant choices off the exit. "Honestly, in the past year, I'd say we now have 50/50 between local customers and tourist or people passing through" he estimates. Finamore is passionate about the food, insisting you sample your preference of beef or pork pulled right off the smoker.

All about the process

Marie and Bobby say the challenges of running a "roadside barbecue joint" include processes with the food preparation and the duties of the staff. Consistency can be difficult to maintain anytime you're dealing with home-cooked food. A "dash" of cayenne pepper to one person can mean a little more or a little less to another person, says Bobby. Also, the kitchen and logistics itself are somewhat restricted, given the space. With little room for storage or space for pre-made food, the shop is ran in "just-in-time" fashion, says Marie. The limitations work, though, says Marie... because the result is it ensures "food is fresh."

When you're out of town or on vacation, do you eat at other barbecue joints?

Oh my gosh, that's all we do. It's an obsession.

A lot of times, it's like, 'Ours is better—or—their ribs are better...' But there are very few things at this point we can change, because we just don't have the room in our kitchen.

If one of those television reality show restaurant experts came into your business, what would he tell you to do?

What would he yell at us about, hmmm... I think first of all, he'd be blown away by how tiny our kitchen is versus what we're sending out of here.

We're one of our health inspector's only mom-and-pops, and he also regulates Virginia Tech; so he ends up getting us to utilize better methods like they're using, if we can afford it.

Other ventures?

Fat Back Soul Shack. It's basically stuff I wanted to add to the menu here at Due South; because you know when you go to real barbecue places in the Carolinas, a lot of times they have fried catfish. So we wanted to do that, but our kitchen is so small here we needed another place. It's going really good.

Plans?

The pig pen [extra space]. More parking. We're buying the property. We'd like another store, but we can't find a good place for it yet. 



Due South BBQ

1465 Roanoke Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073

540-381-2922

www.duesouthbbq.com

Monday–Saturday
8:30am–9pm

Sunday 9am–8pm



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
Another stalwart of conventional business attire may be slipping to the casual side.

Oh, no—say it isn't so >

When business casual attire became acceptable in the 1990's many of us hoped it wouldn't last. However, business casual attire now dominates in most workplaces and grows more casual every year. For decades the fields of banking, law and government seemed immune to the casual trend in work attire, but change is coming.

In June 2016, the banking giant JP Morgan Chase introduced an updated dress code policy for its workforce of 240,000 employees. According to a fashion blog on Rue La La, a popular shopping site, "The dress-code policy is switching from business-formal to business-casual, which includes business-appropriate capris, dresses, skirts, blouses, tops, and sweaters, as well as dress shoes and sandals. Jewelry and fragrances should be minimal. Athleisure-wear, despite its growing popularity, is still frowned upon."

Why the change? HR specialists believe it may be a result of the way we do business today. Nowadays we conduct business via Skype and teleconferences versus customers and clients coming into the workplace. Other trends like co-working spaces, remote jobs, and start-up culture also impact whether we need to look formal or casual.

Business Insider.com also commented on the new dress code, saying "The memo cautioned employees against interpreting the new dress code as "weekend casual." According to the company dress code, athletic shoes, flip flops, sweatpants, leggings, yoga pants, hats, hoods, halter-tops, or anything "distracting, tight, revealing or exceptionally loose or low-cut" isn't allowed. Jeans are also not considered business casual, according to the dress code."

Although JP Morgan's new dress code is very specific, it's only a matter of time before employees begin to misinterpret the guidelines and exclusions. For example, the "cold shoulder" blouse, a hot trend with cutouts revealing the shoulders, is definitely not business-appropriate, but undoubtedly some will dispute that.

Lately the fashion industry seems bent on creating extremely casual fashions that challenge the boundaries of previous decades. Every fashion rule from the 20th century has been bent, changed or dismissed.

Women and men are confused about what is acceptable office attire and find it tempting and convenient to buy one set of clothing for both personal and workplace use.

Don't let your standards slip, though. The operative word in Business Casual is still "Business". If you don't look business-like, you won't be taken seriously when it comes time for a promotion. 

Comments or questions? Email Kathy@peacockimage.com

The inauguration of a president >

In October I had the privilege of attending the inauguration of Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D. as the Seventh President of Radford University. The inauguration of a university president is a momentous occasion, not only for the institution and the new president, but for higher education throughout the world. President Hemphill's inauguration was full of pomp and circumstance as befitting the historic nature of the event. There were five distinct parts and symbols that were part of the ceremony.

The Academic Regalia: Part of the thrill of an inauguration is when the processional party enters in their vibrant academic robes.

The Processional: The party marched in to the stirring sounds of bagpipes, and consisted of the Chief Marshall (carrying the Mace), the color guard, students, learned societies, alumni, and faculty members, delegates from other colleges and universities, the university administration, members of the Board of Visitors, the platform party, and the Rector of the Board of Visitors escorting the President.

The Seal: University Seals harken back to the Middle Ages. The Seal is a legal mark, and one of the University's most significant symbols. The seal is incorporated into the inauguration both for its symbolism and legal significance.

The Mace: The Radford University Mace was presented to President Hemphill as a symbol of the authority invested in him by the Board of Visitors. The ceremonial mace was adopted in the late 16th century by academia, and is only used on formal occasions.

The Presidential Medallion: The Medallion, again, is a tradition dating from the middle ages. It was placed around the President's neck by the Rector of the Board of Visitors, symbolizing the authority vested in the office of the presidency by the Board.

It was an honor to attend a ceremony which continues one of the great traditions that reaches back through the centuries to medieval universities of Paris and Bologna. It was one full of pageantry, the protocol of which was planned out to the last detail. As professionals we will be invited to many formal events. We can appreciate an inauguration more if we understand its symbolism.

Let's segue to the upcoming Presidential Inauguration in January, 2017. You will not see the pageantry of an academic inauguration, but be sure protocol officers are even now planning the event down to the minutest detail. This event characterizes the civility with which governments change hands in our country. Despite the charged events that led to the election, we can expect the outgoing and incoming presidents will be extremely civil to each other – no matter which party is elected! 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary: Radford University's inauguration of its new president reminds us the importance of the occasion and how such events should be celebrated.



These portraits of the ALCOVA top dogs were painted by Rob Lindstrom's mother

Leaders of the pack >

Executive Summary:

ALCOVA continues to be nationally recognized for its growth; a story of top dogs marking their territory in the mortgage market.

By Jeanne Chitty

Three childhood friends bound by a common background and inspired by a passion to serve have created one of the most dynamic independent small businesses in the whole country. Bobby Nicely, Billy Siple, and Rob Lindstrom partnered thirteen years ago to establish their mortgage firm that has been recognized as one of the Inc. 5000's fastest growing private companies in the United States for the fifth year in a row. Honoring their roots, the trio named their company ALCOVA, an acronym

for Allegheny County and Virginia. Its phenomenal growth of 96% in the past three years propelled it into the league of such legendary superstars that gained notoriety on the prestigious list as Dell, Microsoft, LinkedIn, Pandora, Timberland, Zillow, Yelp, and Domino's Pizza. With 40 branches in 10 states along the East Coast, ALCOVA has assisted over 10,000 people achieve their dreams of owning a home. With a comprehensive portfolio of loans, the successful company offers a broad spectrum of opportunities for individual homebuyers, builders, realtors, and investors.

Little did the three friends know that they would make such a far-reaching impact on so many lives when they were growing up in Allegheny County. Growing up in Covington, Bobby and Billy met when they were eight years old. Both of them played in the Little League and were later coached by both of their fathers when they transitioned to the gridiron. They met Rob at Allegheny High School, where he was a grade behind them.



Hark, what business occupies nearly half a block on Roanoke City Market? >

THIS JUST IN / LATE OCTOBER: ALCOVA Mortgage has purchased three buildings on historic market in downtown Roanoke—moving right across the street. The 27,410-square-foot space houses Chocolate Paper, 310 Rosemont, and La-De-Da at the corner of Church and Market; and ALCOVA offices will locate its corporate headquarters in the second and third floor levels. (See photo, Page 23) New Address: 308 Market Street, SE; Roanoke, VA 24011

Billy and Rob remained close during their college years at Virginia Tech, while Bobby went to Radford. Eventually, the trio got into the real estate market after graduation and soon discovered the frustrating road to finding a mortgage. Bobby remembers, "When I bought my first house, I realized how confusing the mortgage process could

be. I thought 'there has to be a better way to do this.' The three of us had a dream to build a company from scratch – something that we could be proud of. We knew we could offer a more community-minded approach that would simplify the process. We [would] focus on educating and communicating with our borrowers every step of the way."

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From left to right: Bobby Nicely, Billy Simple, and Rob Lindstrom (who broke his foot recently)

Their dream became a reality in 2003, when they began their own mortgage business founded on the customer-centric principles of exceptional service, reliability, and integrity. Billy states, "We are all dedicated to attention to detail, truthfulness, open communication, and a thorough knowledge of the mortgage industry." Billy, Bobby, and Rob kept true to their goal of simplifying the mortgage process based on the high tech, high touch concept without losing the small company feeling. As ALCOVA expanded into many rural areas in Virginia and surrounding states, their long-time friend Jason Helmtoller joined the team. He met Billy in kindergarten, Bobby when they were eight, and Rob in high school. Jason is now their Branch Partner in Covington and according to Kim Bratic, ALCOVA's Director of Marketing, "is not only one of the company's top producers but also one of the top USDA loan producers in the nation." ALCOVA's ability to provide top-notch service to their clients across several states with a comprehensive and consistent level of excellence has garnered the company its coveted position on the Inc. 5000 roster five times in a row. ALCOVA definitely has its finger on the pulse of home buying up and down the East Coast.

According to industry sources, mortgage applications this year are predicted to reach \$2 trillion. Bobby comments, "We are seeing a balance between home buying and home refinancing. Interest rates are forecast to remain below 4% for the remainder of the year and into early 2017. With the increased confidence of homebuilders, their construction projects and home sales have increased." Zillow mentions that 5.9 million borrowers nationwide owe more on their mortgages than their houses are worth. They often hang onto their homes hoping they won't have to sell them at a loss. Now the inventory of homes is low, so home prices are rising. "Because of these price increases, attractive financing options, and lower interest rates, this is a great time to buy a home," he concludes.

One of the most important aspects of ALCOVA's success can be attributed to the partners' passion to serve others. Making the analogy of their having a large responsibility to pay it forward, Rob Lindstrom remarked, "We're like the quarterback who has to take the ball into the end zone." Not only has the trio created a list of their favorite charities, but also they encourage their staff to get involved by choosing their own special cause. Bobby states, "We decided that the

best way to make a difference in each of the communities we serve was to let each branch choose the local charities that they want to support. Each month we choose outstanding employees and recognize them by making a donation to the charity of their choice." ALCOVA contributes regularly to charities involved with health care; children; animals; victims of domestic abuse; nutrition; literacy; sports; the environment; education; fighting hunger; and Christian-based organizations. In August this year, ALCOVA honored Blacksburg Loan Officer Wally Andrus by contributing to his favorite cause, Micah's Backpack. This organization provides food for 280 children in low-income families at 10 Blacksburg schools during the school year and 140 during summer break. Every Thursday evening up to 100 people gather together to fill backpacks with breakfasts, lunches, dinners, snacks, juice and milk boxes, as well as an educational insert.

ALCOVA's Director of Marketing Kim Bratic says, "When we give locally, we know we are impacting the operational needs that truly make a difference in our communities. Our staff is very engaged in their communities and is passionate about the causes they support. In my first month here, I had the

opportunity to see the passion our staff has to serve. The historic flooding devastated the areas around two of our branches in Covington, VA and Lewisburg, WV. Our branches in both regions were on the ground donating cleaning supplies, food, and clothing to those in need. We shared those efforts to all our 40 branches and within 48 hours, we raised over \$10,000 to help those who were affected. We were able to reach out to help those who had lost loved ones and everything they owned. The tragedy was much more than just a headline to us – the people affected were our friends, our neighbors, and our borrowers – many of who lost the very homes we helped them secure."

Passionate people and enthusiastic problem-solvers, the team at ALCOVA has forged its place not only in the spotlight, but most importantly in the hearts of so many people whose lives they have touched with their generosity, compassion, courage, and guidance. Rob, Billy, and Bobby have earned their rightful place at the forefront of the mortgage industry. Like the humorous portraits painted of the trio by Rob's talented mother, each of them proves that they are indeed the loyal and dedicated top dogs from the boardroom to paths of those in need. 

FRONT





The art of sharing >

Scrolling through my Facebook newsfeed, these are the first three headlines I encounter: “20 Mini Donkeys in Need of a Home,” “There are Five Living U.S. Presidents. None of them Support Donald Trump,” and “Everyone Needs to See the Video on Police that Mike Rowe Just Shared.” All of these articles are on my feed because a friend shared them. In all instances, the article was simply shared, not described, summarized, agreed or disagreed with.

We’ve all been there. A headline catches our eye (mini donkeys ARE adorable, after all) and we don’t think twice: we click through the process of sharing the link with a thousand or more of our closest friends... without reading the article. I have done this before, admittedly, with local news stories. If a story mentions a project or business I support, I’m likely to add it to Facebook, either through my personal page or one of the organizations I represent through social media. Sometimes I skim for a quote, sometimes I read the article, and sometimes I let the headline speak for itself.

This has come back to bite me and my organizations on more than one occasion. By adding content to my pages without any commentary, I am complicit in the spread of whatever facts, opinions and arguments were published. This phenomenon is common on Twitter (you may have seen profile descriptions that say “Retweets are not endorsements”), where retweets are incredibly common and often come without commentary.

In an effort to drive more traffic to our sites and to generate interesting, timely content, reading each article thoroughly to check for unsavory attributes or disputable “facts” does not seem like a smart way to spend our small business “time is money” dollars. And in most cases, the problem solves itself: most people do not actually read the articles.

This being the case, it is easiest to be lazy about that which we share. I’d like to offer an alternative perspective. When we talk about our local economy, people often say “vote with your dollars,” meaning, if you want more local businesses, pretend as if your dollar bills were ballots. Every vote counts. I have started to think about our headline culture the same way. Every time you share an article or headline, pretend that you are adding one more vote to the opinions and facts expressed therein. The more it gets shared, the more those words matter in our society. It turns the act of sharing into a much more meaningful experience.

In a time of intense political and social turmoil, it is more important than ever to put more intentionality behind what we share. I intend to walk this talk, starting today. No more thoughtless sharing. Not even if the picture included in the article is that of an adorable miniature donkey. 

Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

Executive Summary:

Sharing content on social media calls for more discretion than you might think.

The Millennial myth >

I recently read that Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as America's largest generation. For years, organizations have put a high emphasis on recruiting, retaining, and understanding this younger generation. Many of the companies I work with have asked me for training on how to lead and communicate with Millennials. Others have hired consultants and speakers to help them. It's difficult for business leaders to connect with their younger professionals because let's face it, Millennials are lazy, entitled, and too willing to change jobs ... or are they?

There is nothing unique about the Millennial generation from any other generation. It's all a myth.

Multiple studies have shown that generational differences in the workplace probably do not exist. The stereotypes that exist for Millennials are no different than any other young generation before them. But yet the myths about Millennials still persist.

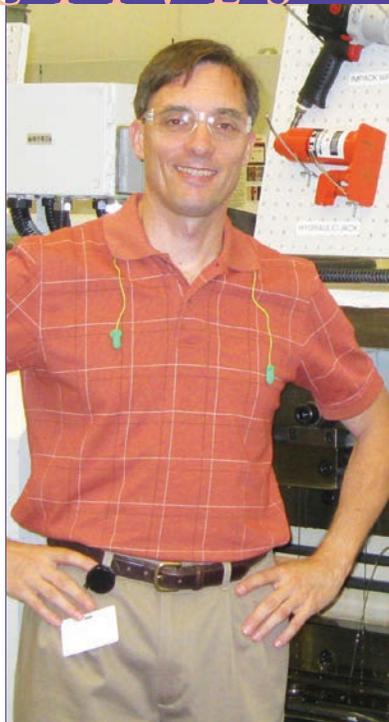
There is no significant difference between the preferences of Millennials, and those of Gen X and Baby Boomers. The percentage of Millennials who put a priority on factors such as work-life balance, promotion, ethics, and profitability are not significantly different than older workers.

So, instead of concentrating on how to better engage the Millennial workforce, put your efforts into how to engage your entire workforce. Millennials seek the same work environment as other employees:

- The need to do something meaningful.
- A competent boss who values employees and treats them fairly.
- Training and development.
- To be part of a winning organization.

I have had the opportunity to coach and develop numerous Millennial professionals. As a group, they were intelligent, hard-working, innovative, and willing to learn. But each one was different and had unique goals and interests, just like their older co-workers. Do you know what the goals are for your youngest team members?

Take off your stereotype glasses, concentrate on being an effective leader for all of your employees, and be pleased you have Millennials on your team! 



Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:
Understanding generational differences for your recruiting or management practices could be a pointless pursuit.



The write way to write >

Executive Summary:

Lee Hunsaker reacted to a difficult diagnosis by changing just about everything, but holding to the idea that artistic talent should help pay the bills.

By Dan Smith

When she was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago, “it was a life-changer,” says Lee Hunsaker.

Indeed it was. She has since moved home to Roanoke from Austin, Texas, and traded a successful career in the movies for a chancy new gig teaching writers and prospective writers to express themselves.

She is busily working with established businesses who are providing space so she can attract people who want to tell stories, charging a meager \$5 a class for her “Hoot and Holler” classes (Search Facebook page for details and schedule).

Hunsaker, daughter of Julie Hunsaker, the former owner of the Grandin Theatre in Roanoke and a long-time movie and stage costume specialist, followed her mom into the movies. She designed costumes for such notable films as “Miss Congeniality,” “Office Space” and “Boyhood,” among many others. Her husband, Jonathan Shaffer, a movie prop master, and her 10-year-old son, Dexter, are with her in Roanoke.

When the then 42-year-old (she’s 47 now) Lee got the bad health news, she almost immediately decided to return

home, and her mother came, too. “Working in films contributed to the stress [at the root of the cancer],” she says. “The move was spontaneous” and very much a reaction to the fact, intense pace of moviemaking.

“I took some time to re-invent myself,” she says, noting that her college degree from Virginia Commonwealth is in writing. She has only occasionally been published, but her talent for teaching is undeniable. “I want to help others realize their potential” as writers, she emphasizes. She is in the process of setting up an extensive series of writing workshops at coffee shops, restaurants and other businesses with artistic clientele and space to handle the workshops.

“One of the first workshops,” she says, “was with cancer survivors, helping them work through the cancer by expressing themselves. I have a deep connection with those students” and she has been working to set up classes through Carilion Clinic, the region’s largest hospital organization. In the past, Carilion has had a writer in residence.

The classes, says Lee, “are part of a lifelong struggle to take my random talent and generate money. It is a labor of love now and I want to dig deeply into the community and hope to help writers find a jumping off point. I want to be able to encourage people to have the courage to do it. My purpose is to help writers tell the truth as they see it.” The classes at this point are for those who are 16 or older, but Lee sees potential for teens in the future.

“Stories are our connection with each other,” says Lee. “Writers must develop the courage to speak that first line of truth.” With the classes, she says, “I need to practice what I preach.” 



I took some time to re-invent myself



Unfair, mean, and slimy (but legal) >

After years of covering Southwest Virginia for a local company, the salesman had just started covering the same territory for a competitor from up North. The big-city folks had enticed him with promises, but after just three months he was fed up.

"This new job is just awful," he said. "They promised me that I'd have Southwestern Virginia all to myself, but now the main office swoops in from up North and takes over the account whenever I'm about to close a sale. And the customer support is appalling. My customers make a repair call and then have to wait for months. My customers are my friends, but these Yankees are treating them like dirt. So I'm changing jobs again."

"Back to your old job?" I said.

"Sort of," he said. "They got bought out, and the new company wants to take me on. I'd be covering East Tennessee. But they don't like my noncompete with the Northern company. That's why I came by your office. I know that noncompetes can be hard to enforce in Virginia, and so I want you to explain to them that they can hire me even though I have a noncompete."

I flipped through his noncompetition agreement with the Northern firm. "OK, here's the problem," I said. "This contract isn't governed by Virginia law. It says here that any disputes will be decided in your employer's city, and that their state law will control, not Virginia law."

"But I've never even been up there," he said. "All this time I've only been working in Virginia."

"They're allowed to have their own state's law govern the contract," I said. "Once you sign a contract with a paragraph choosing the law of the other state, a Virginia court will enforce it and apply the other state's law."

"So I can't get the noncompete cancelled under Virginia law?" he said.

"No, and that's a shame," I said. "Right here on the first page, this noncompetition agreement says that you 'shall not work for any competitor in any capacity.' That would be enough to invalidate this agreement under Virginia law. But under the law of this other state, it's perfectly enforceable."

Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

Executive Summary:

Beware of the noncompetition agreement whose only purpose is to neutralize you.

"What about this two-year ban on me working for a competitor in any Southern state, even though I've only ever worked in Virginia?" he said. "My new job offer is to work in Tennessee, but I've never worked there before."

"Again, that probably wouldn't be enforceable under Virginia law," I said. "But under the law that your employer picked to control the contract, it's fine."

"Even though they're treating me like dirt?" he said.

"Actually I am getting the impression that that was the whole point," I said. "You were the sales champion at your old job for that local company, right?"

"Year after year," he said.

"So, has it ever occurred to you that they hired you away just in order to neutralize you?" I said.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"I mean that they probably never even intended to treat you fairly," I said. "The only thing they wanted was to get you to sign this noncompetition agreement, so that they could get you out of the way for two years."

"Can they do that?" he said. "Is it legal?"

"Perfectly legal," I said. "In fact, we've had people come in who signed a noncompetition agreement and who were fired the very next month. Usually a noncompetition agreement applies regardless of whether you quit or whether you're fired. The only reason these people were asked to sign those agreements was to bump them off. I think the same thing might have happened to you."

"That is so unfair," he said.

"Unfair, mean, and slimy, but legal," I said.

I do wish people would talk to us before signing these things, instead of afterward. 

Note: *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn't legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when deciding whether a noncompetition agreement is enforceable, drafting a noncompetition agreement, selecting governing law, etc.*



An employer is allowed to have their own state's law govern a contract. Once you sign a contract with a paragraph choosing the law of the other state, a Virginia court will enforce the paragraph and apply the other state's law.



This noncompetition agreement says that you 'shall not work for any competitor in any capacity.' That would be enough to invalidate this agreement under Virginia law. But under the law of this other state, it's perfectly enforceable.



Solar garden in Rockbridge County

The sunny side of life >

Executive Summary:

The future looks bright for Rockbridge County and Virginia's first community solar program, spearheaded by a forward-thinking executive.

By Christine Liana

What do five islands in the South Pacific Ocean have in common with Rockbridge County, Virginia? Sunshine. More specifically, sustainable solar energy. The link between the two is Mike Keyser, an innovative executive. His push for a renewable energy source has Rockbridge residents and businesses looking on the bright side of things with Virginia's very first community solar project.



It's the 2000's in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Power plants are burning over 12 million gallons of diesel fuel every year. There must be a better way. Mike Keyser, CEO and general counsel of American Samoa Power Authority has an idea that's literally ... brilliant: why not harness the natural power of the sun? That's when he started working on a feasibility study with Stanford

University to develop solar power for the islands. What he started, they're working on.

After Keyser returned to the United States, he was chosen to lead BARC Electric Cooperative in 2010. BARC, a customer-owned electric utility established in 1938, serves members in Bath, Allegheny, Rockbridge,





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Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe flips the switch for solar power

Highland, and Augusta counties. Members expressed an interest in a solar-powered system, particularly one they could see. Realizing the challenges of adopting widespread roof solar because of the expense, the need for space, and for adequate sun exposure, BARC contacted the Department of Energy's Solar Outreach Program (SolarOPs) for assistance.

Their Wish is Granted

SolarOPs partner, Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA), provided information on community solar programs. With a financial feasibility study, the choices for a community solar program came down to a fixed-rate per kilowatt hour, which would work better if a cooperative receives grant funding, or a fixed rate



per panel if the cooperative has no grant. BARC needed a grant. "Basically, without a grant the price per kilowatt-hour would be too high to attract subscribers. Nobody is going to pay a 4.5 cent premium," said Keyser in an earlier interview.

Keyser attended the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) workshop in July 2014 to see if this project would work. While

there, he learned that a community solar project would qualify for funding up to \$500,000, with a 50% match by BARC. With the help of SEPA's team, BARC applied for the ARC grant that autumn for the community solar program.

SolarOPs sent out a request for information to approximately 30 solar developers. BARC



Solar program

received six positive and qualified replies. Then, with the project details worked out, the project was proposed to and approved by BARC's board of directors.

"Save the Polar, Go Solar"

The Community Solar program is available to its residential and small commercial members. BARC builds and maintains the solar garden, so customers don't have the initial costs and maintenance with rooftop. This also benefits customers who are renters, or low-income, or have insufficient space for roof-mounted solar. It also replaces grid power, or "electric supply service" that BARC would purchase at its substation for customers.

Under the program, customers may subscribe for up to 25% of their average annual electric usage, so that everyone has a chance to participate and no one customer monopolizes it. Subscriptions are required for at least 12 months. Member rates are fixed for 20 years if they continuously subscribe, which hedges against future rate increases. "We really liked that [their] customers subscribe at a fixed kilowatt-hour rate for the life of the project," said Keyser. "This allows customers to hedge a portion of their electric consumption against future

rate increases and keeps a revenue stream coming in over the life of the project."

Depending on availability, solar energy ("number") blocks of 50 kilowatt-hours each may be increased or decreased at renewal. The program is so popular that it's now fully subscribed and there's a waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis for the next expansion phase.

Rockbridge County actively supports the project, having sold five acres to BARC for the solar site. According to Rockbridge County Administrator Spencer Suter, "We consider BARC to be an innovative community partner. As the first of its kind in the Commonwealth, BARC's solar community project in Rockbridge will set the bar. We look forward to other partnerships, such as BARC's planned utilization of the RANA cooperative broadband network and data center, to help launch and grow its fiber-to-the-home project across its service footprint."

Curious about the solar program? Highland Belle, a surplus elementary school on the site, is being converted to a solar learning center. Customers and students can illuminate their minds with hands-on exhibits, slide presentations, guided tours, and field trips to the solar installation.



Highland Belle School's Solar learning center

Setting the Standard in Virginia

But solar usage hasn't dawned on everyone yet. Virginia ranks near the bottom of an annual ranking of solar power capacity, according to the Environmental Virginia Research and Policy Center. "I sense that some utility executives are not taking solar seriously enough. But solar can take off quickly in the right environment," said Keyser. "It's not a matter of whether it will take off, but when. And when it does, we want our community solar facility to be a demonstration project for others to emulate."

According to a July 2016 press release from Environment Virginia Research and Policy Center, big utility providers like Dominion Resources were trying to block efforts, despite strong public support for clean energy. But the outpouring of businesses, elected officials, and others pushing Governor McAuliffe to support renewable energy apparently had some influence. In a September 18, 2016, report by The Roanoke Times, Dominion Virginia Power is building solar facilities in Isle of Wight, Powhatan, Louisa, Chesterfield, and Fauquier counties. 

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On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Many entrepreneurial experts, business coaches, and management consultants agree that delegation is the most critical ingredient for success in leadership.

My delegation >

I don't have a problem with delegation. I love to delegate. I am either lazy enough, or busy enough, or trusting enough, or congenial enough, that the notion of leaving tasks in someone else's lap doesn't just sound wise to me, it sounds attractive. — John Ortberg

Thank you **JD Sutphin, Samantha Steidle, Mike Leigh, Adam Linkenauger.**

You aren't just noteworthy individuals in our business scene at the moment. You give your lessons by example. I could call out other leaders who are and have been crossing my path; but you happen to be four current movers and shakers who keep showing me a truth that I still have difficulty grasping—even though the proof is in the pudding.

You can't possibly accomplish what you've accomplished on your own.

You tell me this very thing all the time. I've always admired the solopreneur. The self-made man (woman). The rags-to-riches stories. And the David and Goliath outcome.

But though I know each of you is chock full of self-driven determination and internal goal-oriented principles, you constantly prove your understanding, your optimization, and your utter reliance and downright commitment to the d-word.

Delegate. That's what you do best, you say.

JD, who I once labeled the Energizer Bunny: you have more activities running in a given month than organizer and promoter companies four times your size. The way I see it, you have to have a good crew to pull off what you do, or you'd be dead by now.

Sam: the fact that every time I see you, you're walking in one direction (usually in one door and out another) reveals you can't possibly be micromanaging the affairs of all the collaborations and business units you've developed or helped develop. I meet so many of your "delegates" who are planted in their pots of specialization as you buzz on to the next thing.

Mike, our business operations columnist: there's no question you figured out the delegation of duties advantages years ago. Hardly an advice column gets published without some reference to efficiency being the result of one soul—regardless how talented—not doing everything on his own.

Adam, the dude I characterized as a real life Pied Piper: you're

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Regulating the “tourist home” >

FRONT readers may want to pay a bit of attention to a bill passed by the legislature last session, but one that requires the next session to also pass it before it becomes law. Called the “Limited Residential Lodging and Short-Term Rental Lodging Act”, the bill could threaten both local zoning and local tax collections.

The current bill was essentially developed by Airbnb lobbyists. It does two basic things: it creates a state-wide permission for less-than-30 day rentals (basically Airbnb rentals and similar short term rentals); and it pulls all taxes generated by such rentals into state coffers for redistribution to the local county or municipality.

The background can be complex. On the zoning side, current standards for this kind of rental housing are established by the local jurisdiction – local town or county zoning generally allows rentals as “tourist homes” and specifies just what standards and requirements must be met by such homes. Most tourist home permits require a zoning variance and a public hearing, thereby giving nearby residents the opportunity to express their support or opposition. Should the bill pass, then anyone that wishes to sign up to Airbnb or other short-term rental providers is essentially approved: there will be no local control over these rentals.

On the local tax side, whatever meals or lodging taxes may be due will be collected by the provider and sent to the state for redistribution to local jurisdictions. The obvious concern here is that once the state gets its hands on the money, the likelihood of all those taxes still flowing to local towns or counties may be somewhat suspect.

Advocates point to the confusing array of local zoning ordinances and the need for short-term rental standards that all must meet, a level playing field, state-wide. They also point out the increased potential of local income from purchases by renters, the benefits of a more diverse tourism base and the income generated by each local host. Opponents object to the loss of local control over just who sets the requirements short-term rentals ought to meet, the concerns of rural residents who find their narrow roads traversed by people they don’t know, perhaps even many people they don’t know, and the occasional proclivity of the state to keep money it receives and leave local jurisdictions without any means to collect the taxes they currently receive from short-term rentals. There are significant concerns on both sides and it will be up to the next legislative session to make a final decision.

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Guest Commentary

By T. Allan Comp

Executive Summary:
Mostly thanks to the increasing popularity of Airbnb, local communities are wondering what to do about zoning and taxes.

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Kathy Surace is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years. [kssurace@aol.com]

Nicholas Vaassen is a graphic designer with 15 years experience, specializing in publications. His design projects include FRONT, lifestyle, real estate, municipal, classified sales and cultural organization magazines in Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets. [nvaassen@berryfield.com]



Should the bill pass, then anyone that wishes to sign up to Airbnb or other short-term rental providers is essentially approved — Page 39

Field / On Tap

from Page 38

all about generating a following. But you make it clear that crowd of support and engagement is not a blind attachment to a solo leader. Visionaries accomplish little or nothing until they surround themselves with expertise and competency. You spend more time calling out the successes of other folks even as you advance your own cause. Pretty fly formula.

All four of you are running different enterprises. You don't look like each other. You don't talk like each other. Your personalities are as different as night and day.

But you all certainly know how to delegate.

Delegation is not giving up. It's not relinquishing your skills or letting loose of your knowledge base or hard-earned experience. And here's the real eye-opener: Delegation is not really the sharing of success, although that sounds nice in theory and can certainly be a byproduct. No, I think each of you has proven that your successful endeavors still remain yours in the fullest sense.

Proper delegation is akin to that mathematical expression, the way I see you employing it. You know the one... where there exist a number, but in superscript up at the right sits that other number, in smaller type. It's a factor. A number represented in smaller size, but not only powerful... it's as equally powerful as the base number!

Your success can be truthfully subscribed to you as the base figure. But you've factored it all up by two or more times. Practically speaking, your success has been factored up and multiplied, multiple times.

Maybe that's why these lessons and proofs you have been showing me are ones I continue to struggle with.

I never was much good at math. 

Guest Commentary

from Page 39

If you want to read more, just go to the Virginia legislative web site (www.virginia.gov) and look up SB 751 or HB 812 for a 7-page summary. Any citizen or municipality that depends on lodging taxes for part of their support – or that values the quiet rural qualities of so much of Virginia and so much of Virginia tourism – would be well-advised to do so. The next legislative session starts in January. 



Delegation is not giving up. It's not relinquishing your skills or letting loose of your knowledge base or hard-earned experience. And here's the real eye-opener: Delegation is not really the sharing of success

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

Blowing the whistle

Saints, Sinners & Heroes: Covert Ops in the Wars against the C-Suite Mafia (Sutton Hart; 2016) is by Brian Mahany, an expert on the Federal Whistleblower Law that gives incredible power to employees who expose companies breaking laws, cheating the government or committing fraud. The book simplifies whistleblower laws and demonstrates their effectiveness with shocking case studies: an oncologist who gave healthy patients cancer diagnoses to collect from Medicare; C-suite bankers who tanked the U.S. financial system; hospitals paying kickbacks to ambulance driver recruiters; fake "Made in USA" labeled components; government contractors double billing; surgeons doing unnecessary back surgeries.

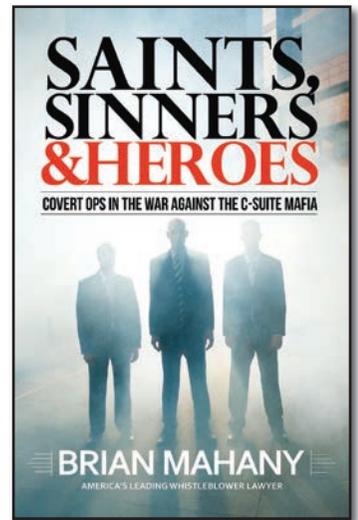
Statistics include: 20% of the U.S. budget is spent on healthcare, and 10% of that is lost to fraud; \$26 billion recovered for taxpayers under False Claims Act since 2008; \$4+ billion reward money paid to whistleblowers since 1986; \$104 million for single biggest whistleblower reward; and \$170 million bounty split by three whistleblowers under federal whistleblower law.

Saints, Sinners & Heroes is a guide for whistleblowers to stop fraud, protect their jobs, and collect big cash rewards.

—Maggie Jessup

Second chances

Salsa & Speed Bumps (CreateSpace; 2016) by Susan Baganz is the second book in the series, but you do not need to read them in order, other than



to get to know the characters. Stephanie Simson works at DeLucia's. She's pregnant with her ex-boyfriend's child even though she said no. Can she ever trust a guy again? She feels so alone.

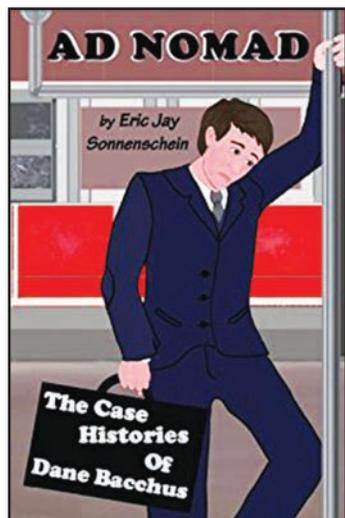
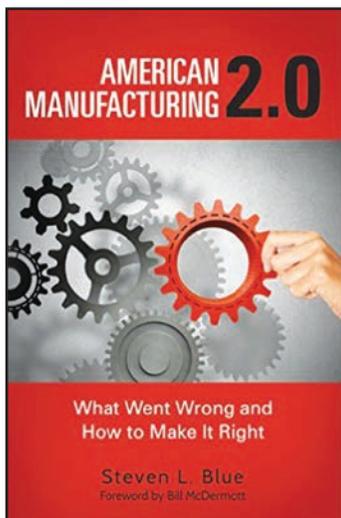
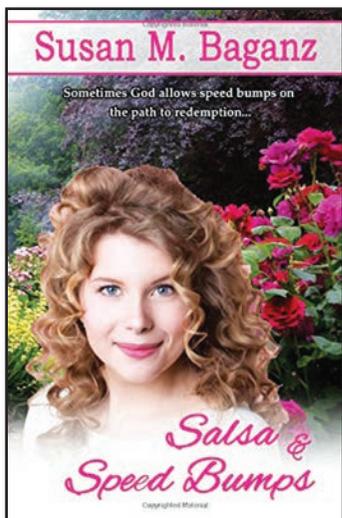
Roberto Rodriquez has Christian parents who adopted him and he wants to help others because of the gift he was given by his birth mother. He is an attorney and is asked to join Every Child a Home organization. Roberto lets God lead his every move. Can Stephanie have a relationship like that with God? She's not who she used to be, but she still has to deal with the consequences of what happened before. God doesn't make your past go away, but He helps you through your choices as you trust in Him. Can Stephanie trust Roberto or will he be like her ex-boyfriend and force himself on her? Why is God bringing a new man into her life now? How can she know God is talking to her?

From date rape to drug addiction, to stalking to ties with the mafia and sex trafficking, this book has it all. This resonated with me while reading this book: Everything I need to fulfill my life is right here in God. We find it hard to forgive ourselves. Can Stephanie forgive her past to have a future with Roberto? Pick up this great book to see!

—Sally Shupe

Making it right again

For nearly two decades, America's industrial manufacturing sector has been in decline, and as a result, the nation's prosperity and strength is at risk. Meanwhile, China's manufacturing capabilities and competence continue to grow,



threatening to overtake America as the world's most powerful and prosperous nation. Drawing on straightforward principles that can effectively be applied to a broad spectrum of manufacturing companies, *American Manufacturing 2.0: What Went Wrong and How to Make it Right* by Steven L. Blue (Praeger; 2016) taps his leadership skills and proven processes honed over his career of growing companies – and saving them – to offer readers an inspiring vision for revitalizing the entire manufacturing sector.

Using case studies and examples from his own experiences, both as CEO of Miller Ingenuity, a global supplier of mission-critical components in the transportation industry, and in other roles earlier in his career, Blue organizes his lessons in leadership, strategy, and change management into The 7 Values of Ingenuity™: innovation, excellence, commitment, community, teamwork, respect, and integrity. *American Manufacturing 2.0* explains how this highly integrated system of operating values can be implemented to turn around a company (if needed) or to propel it to extraordinary growth and prosperity.

—Erin MacDonald-Birnbaum

Discontentment prescribed

You don't have to work at an ad agency to appreciate all the nuances of our protagonist's life in *Ad Nomad: The Case Histories of Dane Bacchus* (Hudson Heights; 2016) by Eric Jay Sonnenschein—just like you don't have to be in the paper business to relate to *The Office* television sitcom. But oh boy, do those subtleties smack you in the face. People stealing your ideas. Having to capitulate to the client, a regulator, or worse—your superior or

backstabbing coworkers. Selling out your soul and desire for meaningful artistic expression to an industry that at least lets you engage your craft on some bastardized level—even though you were surely meant for greatness and legendary lasting effect (unlike the temporary lasting effect of an erectile dysfunction drug). Dane's job hopping antics in pharmaceutical advertising is an exercise in layered frustrations. It doesn't take long to see why his personal career development is a bitter pill to swallow. He's not a team player. He doesn't handle bumps in the road (that are as certain as medical side effects). And his DNA is most definitely that of a nomad.

Ad Nomad is a long read. It's kind of funny really, when you absorb a lifetime of a man's advertising profession to realize we're talking a timeframe of only about a decade here. There's one point where Dane thinks "work was good... it was corporate life that was corrupt." But he soon discovers that even freelancing has its issues. Solo or group, pharma-copywriting is a never ending battle as a sickness envelops you in your quest to sell wellness. The whole story is one where you ride along with Dane to his jobs and his one-part-crisis, one-part-neurosis. But like the television series where you willingly sit in on the daily antics and the next episode, you swallow your dose and stick with it.

—Tom Field

(The reviewers: Maggie Jessup is a publicist from Vancouver, WA; Sally Shupe lives in Newport, works at Virginia Tech, and is a freelance editor; Erin MacDonald-Birnbaum is a publicist from Cherry Hill, NJ; Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT magazine.)



Bring your ID >

Emory & Henry College cut the ribbon on Sept. 22 for its new Inclusion & Dialogue Center (I.D. Center), a place for providing "services for student advocacy, diversity training, and diversity resources."



Ooh, pick me >

College Fair, an annual tradition at Salem Civic Center and sponsored by Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem City Public Schools, was held on Sept. 20, featuring 79 schools; students checked out their schools of interest and vice versa.



Delicioso >

Virginia Foundation for the Humanities Folklife Area and Stage and the 2016 Folk Festival on October 7–9 featured "Tasty Licks: Virginia's Food Traditions" including songs and food pairings of both local international cultures that contribute to our part of the world; Luz Lopez (pictured) of Earlsville, VA offered her Mexican cooking traditions.



A major affair >

Virginia Tech's Majors Fair was held Sept. 28 at the Squires Student Center for undergraduates to scout out 60+ major offerings in a one-stop-shop format from various departments and colleges; the university offers more than 100 different majors.



Tracking well >

Jonathan Freedom (center, holding \$5,500 check) and his Game Tracker bowhunting app (smartphone game recovery system), won the "Get Started Roanoke" startup funding competition on Oct. 4 Cox Business / Inc. Magazine sponsored pitch event.



Not just food >

Kroger Mid-Atlantic Division donated more than \$85,000 of clothing to Feeding America Southwest Virginia; totaling more than \$130,000 of clothing for 2016 to the clothes closet managed by the distribution center in Salem.



Creepy crawly conference >

Hokie BugFest was held Oct. 15 at the Inn at Virginia Tech by the VT College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; promoting entomology to youth and the public at large.



Wheeled in tastes >

Food Truck Rodeo confirmed the high interest in specialty food trucks as organizers estimated over 1,000 people attended the gathering at Village Grill in Roanoke on Oct. 8; vendors included Baum's BBQ, Rick's Wrap it UP, Toasted by Casey, Thai This Food Truck, Viva La Cupcake, Oi Polloi, El Budare Grill.



FRONT



Crowd storms beer scene >

Blacksburg Brew Do craft beer festival by The Blacksburg Partnership was held at Virginia Tech / Corporate Research Center on Oct. 8, drawing a large crowd, despite the cloudy and overcast skies from the fringe remnant of Hurricane Matthew.



Celebrating the pumpkin >

The Great Pumpkin Smash was held Oct. 8 at Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges; featuring food, music, adult beverages, great pumpkin toss off the bridge, and contests such as these decorated entries.



Old mudslinging >

Roanoke County Library (South County branch) hosted a reenacted presidential debate on Oct. 21, discussing contested views on everything from presidential powers to freedom of speech to the Constitution by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, who remained friends despite their differences..



Econ showcase >

The annual summit for the North America organization **University Economic Development Association** (UEDA) was held in Roanoke this year, Oct. 16–19 at Hotel Roanoke; which included local presentations from regional success sources such as Virginia Tech's "Same Ecosystem: Different Entrepreneurs" and a interactive session with **Samantha Steidle** (VWCC) and **Sarah Lyon-Hill** (VT) on "Startup Communities & Better University Engagement" (above).



Watch it, try it, race it >

GO Outside Festival (GO Fest) was held Oct. 14–16 at the Rivers Edge Sports Complex in Roanoke; featuring outdoor activities from bikes to canoes to climbing to training classes, music and food.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Blues soar >

Soaring Ridge brewery in Roanoke hosted the **2016 Sedalia Blues Society Blues Challenge** on Oct. 16, featuring six blues band performances from around the region; local blues promoter **Kerry Hurley** awards judges choice for first place to Charlottesville's Jon Spear Band.



75th on approach >

Roanoke Regional Airport Commission celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the commissioning of **Woodrum Field** on Oct. 14–15 at the airport, which included vintage aircraft such as World War II planes and the Pan Am DC-3.



Here they come >

The City of Salem held its first ever **Half Marathon** on Saturday morning, Oct. 15; the race and accompanying 8k, Kids Fun Run, and After Party attracted runners of all ages and skill levels.

FRONT'N ABOUT



Soupy sales >

Big Lick SOUP (Supporting Outstanding Urban Projects) micro-grant event held its Fall 2016 session on Oct. 20 at Soaring Ridge Brewery in Roanoke with over 200 in attendance; raising \$1,681 as four organizations pitched (Girls Rock won the vote).

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

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Allen

David Allen has been promoted to Virginia regional president at BNC Bank.



Holt



Dillon



Fridley

George "Ed" Holt, III has been elected chairman of the board of directors; **Cheryll Dillon** has been promoted to treasury services officer, and **Teresa Fridley** has joined as Daleville branch manager at The Bank of Fincastle.

Phillip Walker has been promoted to assistant vice president / loans at National Bank.

Brian Wilson has joined as financial advisor, vice president investments in the Roanoke market at Wells Fargo Advisors.

David Tingler has been named director at Foti, Flynn, Lowen & Co.

Anne Baskette received the 2016 Outstanding Claims Adjuster of the Year from Virginia State Claims Association.

LEGAL FRONT

Nathan Schnetzler and **Daniel Smith** have joined as associates at Frith, Anderson & Peake PC.

WELLNESS FRONT



Baumgardner

Brian Baumgardner has been named market president at LewisGale Regional Health System.

Matt Cassell has been promoted to

association property director at YMCA of Roanoke Valley.

Dr. Joseph Foley of Family Chiropractors in Salem has been named 2016 Chiropractor of the Year by the Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Bumgarner

Robert Bumgarner has joined as IT systems analyst with SiteVision.

Megan Seibel has been named Virginia's assistant secretary of agriculture and forestry.

Kevin Hite has been hired as director of operations; **Randy Blout** has been hired as director of safety; and **Adam Muretisch** has been hired as director of finance at Fleetmaster Express.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Greg Otey has joined as special projects executive at The Branch Group.

Mark Mast of Nicholls Auction Marketing



Otey

Group was named 2016-2017 Virginia Auctioneer Champion by the Virginia Auctioneers Association.

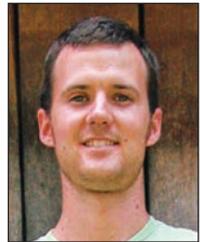


Mann



Hooper

Kayla Mann and **Charles Hooper** have joined the Roanoke office of Long & Foster Real Estate.



Nicholson

Chris Nicholson of Energy Check has achieved the Healthy Home Evaluator Certification from the Building Performance Institute.

Have a career announcement?

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

Patricia Boone of Miller, Long & Associates has earned the MAI appraisal designation.

EDUCATION FRONT



MacKinlay

Andrew MacKinlay has been appointed assistant professor in the Department of Finance, Insurance,

and Business Law at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business.



Watts

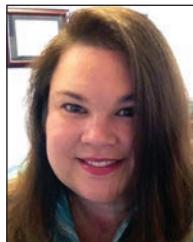
Chelsey Watts has been named assistant director for partnerships and affiliations at

Virginia Tech's Global Education Office.



Morrison

Mark Morrison has joined as director of development at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.



Brannan

Christina Brannan has been hired as business manager at Central Virginia Community College.

Thinking of Medical School?

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Career FRONT



Shortridge

Julie Shortridge has been named assistant professor of biological systems engineering and Virginia Cooperative Extension specialist at Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



Huang

Haibo Huang has been named assistant professor of food science and technology at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech.

Kim Blair has been promoted to senior

principal gifts officer at Virginia Tech.



Mercadante

Vitor Mercadante has been named assistant professor of animal and poultry sciences and Virginia Cooperative Extension specialist at Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



French

Gina French has been promoted to chief of staff in the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech.

Catherine Larochelle has been named



Larochelle

assistant professor of agriculture and applied economics at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Virginia Tech.

CULTURE FRONT



Waalkes

Ruth Waalkes has been elected to the board of directors for Chamber Music America.

Joy Sylvester-Johnson received an honorary

doctorate from Virginia Theological Seminary for her accomplishments and service as CEO of Roanoke Rescue Mission.



Batzel



Bowser



Fogarty

Donna Batzel, Suzanne Bowser, Clark Cole, Michael

Read the FRONT online

vbFRONT.com

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



Lambert



Payne

new board members for JDRF Greater Blue Ridge Chapter.



Moskal

Fogarty, Sheila
Lambert, Pam Moskal,
Stedman Payne, Jr.,
and Michelle Peery
have been appointed

Ann Blair Miller has been named director of business investment for the Roanoke Regional Partnership.

Brooke Tolley has been named director of operations at Opera Roanoke.

Compiled by Tom Field

“”

It's not a matter of whether it will take off, but when — Page 37

“”

Sickness envelopes you in your quest to sell wellness — Page 43

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FRONT Notes



Screen capture of animation on BigLickBoomerang.com describing its service

DD app

Big Lick Boomerang, a designated driver service operating in similar fashion as ride sharing apps (except using customers' own vehicles) has opened in Roanoke.

Analytics lab

Virginia Tech has announced plans to build a \$225 million Global Business and Analytics Complex on campus, including two

academic and two residential buildings to accommodate around 700 students.

ISP change

New River Valley Unwired has been acquired by All Points Broadband.

Big bucks to small business

The Advancement Foundation in Vinton received a \$70,000

Building Collaborative Communities grant from the state for its Regional Small Business Collaborative Program.

Sweets with antiques

Mom's Bakery has opened inside Buy the Season antique and consignment shop in Salem.

NS building to reoccupy

110 Franklin LLC and its four-member investment

group have signed a contract to buy the large 200,000+square-foot multi-story Norfolk Southern building in downtown Roanoke that was vacated in 2015; plans are to lease multiple tenants.

Play ball

Salem, VA was named in the Top 10 of Best Minor League Baseball Towns of 2016 by smartasset.com, the ranking influenced by the Salem Red Sox



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holding the best record of all teams in the Carolina league.

Bridge to state park

Natural Bridge attraction in Rockbridge County has been declared Virginia's 37th state park and will also be an affiliated area of the National Park Service.

Southside suds

Ballad Brewing in Danville received a \$90,806 Virginia Tourism Growth Fund grant (with locality matching investment) and plans to open in 2017 in the River District.

Technically creative

A Creativity and Innovation District has been formed by Virginia Tech along the eastern

edge of campus where it intersects with downtown Blacksburg; the project includes construction for studio and artistic spaces and collaborative environments for creative performance and production.

Heated argument

Ferrum College has been sued by English Biomass Partners over a thermal energy biomass boiler and steam turbine generator installation payment arrangement; the lawsuit lists damage and breach amounts between half a million up to \$5 million.

Gut check

TechLab in Blacksburg with manufacturing in Radford has been acquired by Texas-based Pharos Capital Group;

Have an announcement about your business?

Send announcements to **news@vbFRONT.com**
 A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

the company conducts medical research and provides testing devices for intestinal diseases.

Another champ host win

Salem has been designated host of the 2016 CIAA (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) Football Championship.

River access

The **Kayak / Canoe Launch** site (Roanoke City, The Bridges Development, Carilion Clinic, Roanoke Outside Foundation collaboration)

at South Jefferson Street and next to Honeytree Early Learning Center in Roanoke has opened; after a community support push and \$80,000 crowdfunding campaign.

Home on big floor

HomeTown Bank has been listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange; symbol HMTA.

Scots in bath barrels

Speyside Bourbon Cooperage has announced a planned



VT's Creativity and Innovation District will make the most of facilities already in place

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City of Radford; Tourism



Ingles cabin

\$5 million investment in Bath County for building a stave mill for oak barrel production; 30 jobs expected.

Settler honored

Glencoe Museum & Gallery Grounds in Radford installed an 8-foot bronze statue of Mary Draper Ingles, mid-18th Century frontier heroine of the Draper's Meadows settlement and subject of numerous histories and books.

DAA adds ATS

Draper Aden Associates engineering has merged with Advanced Technical Services International; continuing as DAA, the firm has offices in Blacksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond, and Newport News and in North Carolina.

Insurer lays off

Chubb insurance company is eliminating about 60 positions at its Salem office; a post

acquisition restructuring is cited as the reason.

Beer beside animals

Great Valley Farm Brewery has opened in Rockbridge County at Natural Bridge near Virginia Safari Park.

Light driving

Martinsville Speedway is adding a lighting system at the track for night and low light racing; the \$5 million investment

is called "Light Up Martinsville" and could be completed by the end of the year, resulting in the first 100% LED lighting installation facility for motorsports.

It took a village

Fincastle was listed under "4 Historic Eastern U.S. Villages You Can Stay In" travel section of Paste [pastemagazine.com] online lifestyle and pop-culture magazine in September.

Compiled by Tom Field

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

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“ ”

There is nothing unique about the Millennial generation from any other generation. It's all a myth.

— Page 25

“ ”

This is a great time to buy a home

— Page 22

1983 ... 2016 ... tomorrow



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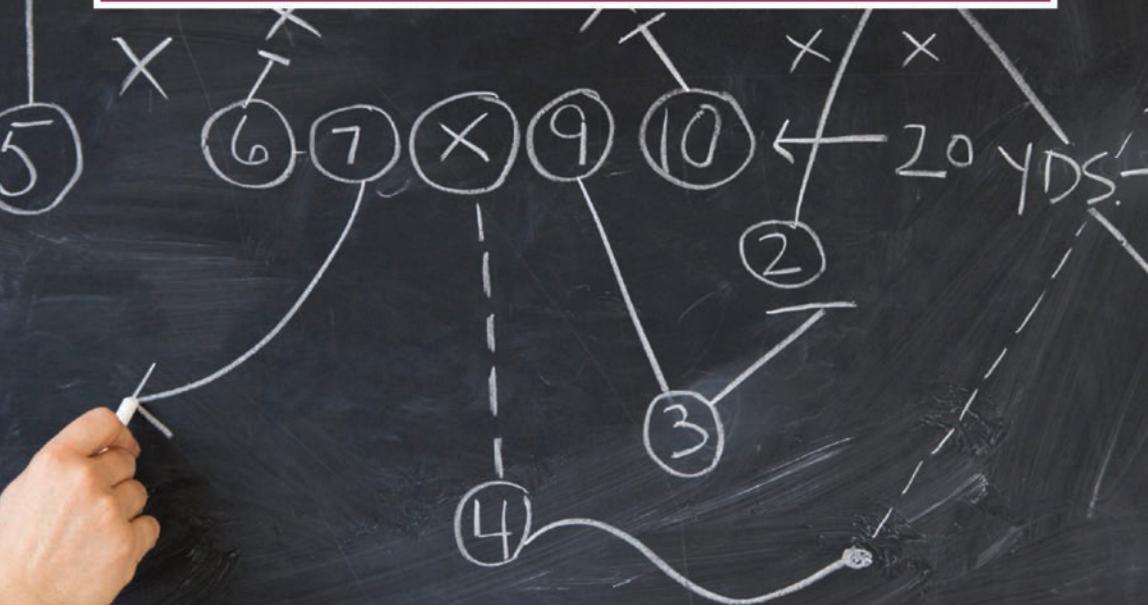
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