

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie is wearing dark aviator sunglasses and holding a mobile phone to his ear. He is standing outdoors in front of a building with large windows. The background is split into a dark left side and a blue right side.

Valley Business FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION
FREE • ISSUE 103 • APRIL 2017

vbFRONT.com

Special Network Agent

Marty Muscatello,
FoxGuard Solutions

Financial Solutions for Growing Valley Businesses

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WELCOME to the FRONT

April showers can be sprinkles or downpours. So diverse. Just like our April 2017 FRONT edition. Pop open your umbrella so you can take a good look around.

The IT guy. Soft skills training. A multi-sensory "think tank."
An app to monitor prescriptions. And a curvy spoon for toddlers.

A lineup of business profiles for the right brained, left brained, and the space between.

If that doesn't sound like enough patter on the roof of your little umbrella, we have the advice columns.

How to be comfortable. How to behave. How to train.
How to navigate tuition. How to manage social media. How to network.

Make your splash on through the pages of FRONT. If you're not saturated, at least you'll get a refreshing mist of positive business stories and people who nurture our community.

That's a forecast we can all get behind.


Tom Field

““

Staying focused is nearly impossible
when the devices we use to work
are also used to socialize — Page 23

COOKING DEMOS

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Someone Call Security



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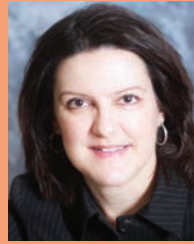
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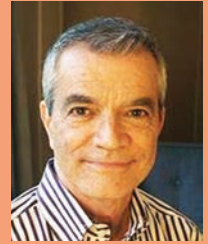
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APRIL



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Dan Dowdy



Kathleen Harshberger



Mike Leigh



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

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



Tom Field



Keith Finch



Sarah Finkner-Roller



Ariel Lev



Christine Liana



Caitlyn Scaggs

““

They had no way of knowing
the power of the return on their
investment in this student — Page 41

Biographies and contact information on
each contributor are provided on Page 42.

2017 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.

““

It's not
entirely
about
the food

— Page 17

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Secret Agent Man >

We often shoot characters and conceptual metaphors for our FRONTcovers. Sometimes, our model (who is not a professional model, but a real subject, directly connected to the story) happens to fit the part rather nicely. This month's FRONTcover model? OMG. Or should we say OMG-Man...Marty Muscatello could be a real life government operative for all we know. A Hollywood casting agent could not have done a better job. People walking by, suddenly got all nervous and started

looking around as if expecting a motorcade. Real life security guards were asking for autographs. Black SUVs started showing up. We started getting mysterious texts from Quantico. And off in the distance, we swore we could hear a helicopter approaching. Gee, thanks Agent M2... We always appreciate publicity at the FRONT, but we'd prefer not to be placed on a watchlist.

—Tom Field

Someone Call Security



It seems everything has software loaded on it these days. Our vehicles, phones, televisions, and thermostats, plus programmable devices used in substations, infusion pumps used in hospitals, and systems used to control locks in buildings are examples. Combine that with the fact that most of these either are, or have the ability to be, connected to the Internet. Once a vulnerability is published for one of these devices, hackers can gain access to these devices and potentially cause harm. Consider the effects on your life if any of the examples listed were to stop working. Some may be minor annoyances, while others could be a matter of life or death. Most believe that all software has bugs. Patches and updates are supplied to address these bugs and keep all of the software-based devices from potential compromise. But as more devices become smart and interconnected the problem grows, as does the need for security solutions.

Enter FoxGuard Solutions, a local company that aims to mitigate such damage. It designs, manufactures, and integrates innovative computing, cyber security, and regulatory compliance solutions used in critical infrastructure markets. An important part of the FoxGuard story is the cyber security industry, one of its two business units (the other being computing). President and CEO Marty Muscatello says that cyber security is the fastest growing side of the business, with annual growth of 30% per year.

Utilitarian application

FoxGuard specializes in utilities. It has built full-featured security and compliance programs for several of the largest energy equipment vendors in the world. Through these programs, it has deployed solutions at hundreds of sites in over 30 countries throughout the world. It also works directly with energy utilities to assist them in building their patch management programs across their infrastructures. FoxGuard has seen great demand for these solutions in the electric utility market as cyberattacks involving malware

Security Solutions >

Executive Summary:

FoxGuard Solutions in Christiansburg provides products and services for sophisticated computer networks—the part of the business growing the fastest? The part that deals with cybersecurity.

**By Jennifer Poff
Cooper**



create more awareness, and as compliance standards increase the scope of assets that need to be addressed.

The importance of how private and municipal utilities will protect and defend their networks is monumental, giving FoxGuard a strong footprint in the industry. Industrial control systems (ICS) in critical infrastructure are high-risk targets for attack and exploitation. These systems are considered so vital to the United States that the interruption or disablement could have catastrophic effects on the security, economy, health, or safety of its citizens. As a result, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has established standards and regulations on securing systems in the ICS environment. Patches and updates are required to help resolve security vulnerabilities, address functional issues, and meet compliance requirements. Besides utilities, other critical infrastructure markets include water and health care, Muscatello says.

A good URL (unique regional location, that is)

Located in the Christiansburg Industrial Park, FoxGuard employs 110 total employees across both business units. Southwest Virginia gives the company access to local universities while also offering a high quality of life without the burden of major metropolitan area traffic and cost of living.

For marketing, FoxGuard is building an integrated plan that will focus on creating a consistent customer experience when interacting with its brand across multiple marketing channels including advertising, sales promotion,



COVER STORY

trade shows, direct marketing, and social media.

How do the pieces of FoxGuard's sister and predecessor companies fit together? CCS-Inc., or Comprehensive Computer Solutions, was founded in 1981 and delivered IT hardware and services to local businesses. FoxGuard Solutions was established in 2009 as a subsidiary to address the cybersecurity and compliance needs of customers in the energy industry. In 2014, CCS-Inc. merged with FoxGuard Solutions to capitalize on brand recognition built by FoxGuard in target industries. Muscatello said, "We wanted a name change and FoxGuard (originally a brand) was getting good traction in market place." Qualtrax was also a subsidiary of CCS. Management decided to separate Qualtrax into a totally different company and take the computing and cyber security business and call it FoxGuard, eliminating the CCS-Inc. name altogether.

Muscatello joined CCS-Inc. in 2003 as President. He began serving as both President and CEO beginning in May of 2005. When the company split into Qualtrax and FoxGuard at the beginning of this year, Muscatello stayed at the helm of FoxGuard, though still with ownership stake in Qualtrax. Muscatello's background includes a BS in Industrial and Systems Engineering as well as an MBA from Virginia Tech. He started as an engineer at Litton Poly Scientific and spent





the earlier part of his career focused on operational excellence and lean manufacturing. Later, he managed multiple divisions of varying corporations. However, "I always wanted to do something on my own," says Muscatello. "I was able to do this with my present business partner, Tim Lawson. We have been business partners for nearly 14 years... Tim and I bought the company [CCS-Inc.] from the original ownership."

Scalability part of the plan

During his time at FoxGuard, both revenue and workforce numbers have more than tripled. Muscatello emphasizes



the importance of innovation, of finding niches, and of taking reasonable risks and turning them into opportunities. FoxGuard has made some small acquisitions, for example, that have generated new capabilities and knowledge. In 2013, FoxGuard was awarded a \$4.3 million cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy to simplify the patch management burden of ICS devices used in the energy utility industry. Muscatello is proud of building the security aspect of FoxGuard from scratch, and now it generates 30% of the revenue.

Watching personnel grow and succeed is exciting to Muscatello. He also enjoys traveling to meet customers – even unhappy ones, because he can take back their



input to build stronger products and services.

One challenge, says Muscatello, is making tough decisions. Early on, some formerly key business segments were sold off to get the company profitable. Trying to figure out the next best move can be painful for the whole team, Muscatello says, but he turns his view of such reinventions to the positive as they force change and ultimately growth.

Muscatello is a self-described “big believer” in the combined Roanoke-Blacksburg technology effort because the synergy promotes competitiveness with other high-tech areas. He says he has stayed based in the New River Valley because he never found a place he liked better, both on a personal level with things such as the weather and the community, and on a business level with the surrounding academic




COVER STORY

institutions and entrepreneurial companies.

Active in the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC), Muscatello says that participation in the board has reaped benefits for his companies in attracting talent, and also personal benefits in learning from and forming relationships with other successful business folks. He serves on numerous boards, being passionate to help up and coming entrepreneurial companies.

The company has enjoyed mentorship from multiple individuals in RBTC who have been willing to share their wisdom. Business leaders, professors and leadership at Virginia Tech, local government leaders, attorneys, and business advisors have all been a part of mentoring FoxGuard to its success.

Utilizing the RBTC forums like Product Manager and Business Development, many of FoxGuard's employees get involved and learn what other companies are doing to solve day to day problems. Also, several leadership team members utilize the Roundtable groups that offer peer to peer discussion. The monthly breakfast meetings and other annual events allow many employees to get to know people within other technology companies in the region.

Cyber security is a matter of national security at this time and that will not change anytime soon. FoxGuard is trying to "figure out all the players," says Muscatello, and partner with the winners. Muscatello has committed his "heart, soul, and financial resources" to the business for the rest of his career. With these components in place, FoxGuard has a template for success. 



Marty Muscatello





Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
No ensemble should be uncomfortable, but there's a trend to ensure one's outfit is extra comfortable.

Today, comfort is paramount >

Changes are coming in menswear trousers; according to the Wall Street Journal, loose trousers are coming back for men. Since 2014, various designers have introduced men's trouser styles that are roomy through the leg and wide at the hem. Each year since then sales of wide leg trousers have increased.

This is good news for men who resisted the switch to narrow-legged flat-front trousers with their correspondingly fitted and shortened jackets. Many men found the fitted styles to be too restrictive and took a long time to adopt slim-cut trousers and suits. Now the pendulum is swinging back toward looser fitting clothing and younger men are embracing the look.

Another way our work clothing is becoming more comfortable is through the use of new, improved textiles.

For example, in 2011 Ministry, a clothing company started by three MIT grads, began asking, "Why can't we make the clothes we wear daily as comfortable as the clothes we wear to exercise?"

Using moisture wicking, four way stretch textiles such as improved polyester, they created a line they call "performance professional clothing". To show how well its fabrics and styles perform, in 2015 co-founder Gihan Amarasiwardena wore a polyester business suit, dress shirt and tie from the Ministry line while competing in a half marathon.

Another company, Aella, is the brainchild of Eunice Cho, 31, a graduate of UCLA's business school. She sought to provide comfortable clothing for professional women to wear to work, at a more reasonable cost. She uses fabrics that "feel like yoga wear but look more polished". Cho's designs and fabrics can take a woman from work to a night out with few or no wardrobe changes. The timeless design of her fashions makes them a coveted wardrobe staple.

The fashion industry is offering us options to be comfortable at work while looking professional. We'll have to search out these options, but it will be worth it. Comfort is not an excuse to wear sweat pants, yoga pants, or tight leggings with short tops to work.

I'm all for comfort. However, I want the people around me to look neat, attractive and sharp in addition to being comfortable. We should choose styles and colors that flatter us, wear those styles neatly and maintain their appearance. Comfort should never be an excuse to look sloppy or unkempt. Always, always strive to look professional.

Comments – Email Kathy@peacockimage.com 

A guide to good manners for the host and guest: Part II >

Last month we started a little “series” and talked about duties and responsibilities of both the host and the guest. We covered the invitation, the response, and the dress code. This month we’ll talk about the savvy host. (Note: I’m going to say “host” from now on, with understanding that I also mean “hostess.”)

Advance planning is key to a successful event. Do as much as possible ahead of time, even if you are a seasoned host. Plan the menu, choose the wines, make lists, and shop early. A beautifully set table sets the tone for the evening, whether it be formal, informal, or a backyard barbecue. Guests become uneasy seeing a harried host rushing around setting the table, so do that ahead of time, too. Some of the nicest tables I have seen didn’t have everything matching, so don’t stress about that. Get creative, and use what you have in different and interesting ways. Fresh flowers always add a welcoming tone.

It’s a good idea to know your guests’ preferences and dietary restrictions. For instance, some religions prohibit pork and alcohol, so you wouldn’t serve those items. Ask “is there anything you don’t eat or drink,” but don’t worry too much about it after that; just make sure there are a few options.

Invite one or two tried and true guests that you know can carry on a good conversation, and can draw out the introverts. Use place cards (that’s right, place cards!) if there are more than six people at a table. It prevents confusion about where to sit, and it allows the host to strategically place people. This becomes essential when planning important business meals.

If you are a gourmet cook, that’s great! If not, remember it’s not entirely about the food. Your guests will remember the warmth and hospitality of an event, long after the food. And should a guest be so lacking in manners so as to complain that the roast was tough, maybe you should consider not inviting him or her back!

The famous American chef Julia Childs said “A party without cake is really just a meeting.” Do serve dessert – fresh fruit on a lovely platter; store bought or homemade goodies; gourmet cheeses with fruit – your guests can enjoy dessert with coffee, or even some well-chosen after dinner drinks.

So, the table is set; the wine is decanted; the food is (well, almost) prepared; the background music is good and not too loud.

It’s time to welcome your guests. Showtime! 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
Proper etiquette for a social event includes advanced preparation by the host.

“

The system is so incredibly fool proof, that it simply will not create a calculation for a medication that should not be administered to a specific patient.

Propelling patient care into the future >

Executive Summary:

A peripheral pharmaceutical venture in Blacksburg received a patient safety innovation award and is getting a lot of attention in the medical community.

By Sarah Finkner-Roller

Dr. James Broselow is an emergency doctor who has spent his life raising the standards of patient care, especially in emergency and critical care situations, with a strong focus on pediatrics. He is best known for his patented invention, the Broselow Tape, which provides a quick guide for correctly administering medications to children in acute situations. It helped him to excel in providing lifesaving medical care, and since its introduction has become a standard of care in U.S. hospitals. Peter Lazar is a highly successful businessman with stunning IT skills. Less than a decade ago, Lazar was looking for new investment/partnership ideas, and a mutual friend of the two men suggested they connect. The result has been an epic partnering of minds, skills, and strategies which has led them on their current mission and to their most current accomplishment: receiving the 2016 Patient Safety Innovation Award from the Patient Safety Movement's Foundation.

Before Lazar describes the award-winning and breakthrough Safe Scan system, he explains the current standard practices and the difficulties that doctors, nurses, and medics experience. According to the British Medical Journal,

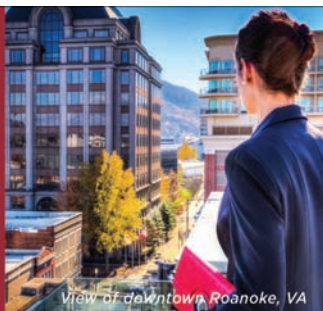
medical error is the third largest cause of death in the U.S., which largely stems from incorrect medication administration. Human error is inevitable, and under the pressure of a literal life or death situation, mistakes are even more common. The drugs need to be precisely calculated and that varies depending on the patient's weight, the dosage, and the concentration. To add another hurdle to this life-saving sprint, the worst errors occur when treating children.

A BMJ report in 2016 acknowledges errors are inevitable, but goes on to say "although we cannot eliminate human error, we can better measure the problem to design safer systems mitigating its frequency, visibility, and consequences." As any successful entrepreneur would present – this is the problem. And as any successful business person would know – the value lies in creating the solution.

Broselow's and Lazar's solution, Safe Dose with Safe Scan, is the beginning of a revolution in patient care. The technology is straight forward. The Safe Dose system has a virtual catalogue of all common medications. The medical staff decides on the medication needed and inputs the weight of the patient. Safe Dose does the rest, delivering an instant calculation of the appropriate dosage. Safe Scan takes the process one step further, providing the technology to scan in the barcode found on each drug bottle, even the tiniest ones.

There are far-reaching implications of Safe Dose. Many hospitals don't have a pharmacist on staff overnight, so this is extremely valuable to night shift staff. The hospitals and medical facilities are also investing in themselves with the Safe Dose system, as it will save them time and money and could likely improve staff morale in the same swoop. The University of

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One study showed Safe Dose completely eliminated clinical dosing errors and reduced all errors by 25 percent.

Kentucky conducted an independent study, using a simulation hospital. The researchers found that the Safe Dose system reduced all errors by 25 percent and it completely wiped out clinical dosing errors. In addition, it saved an average of six minutes per medication administration. And according to Lazar, the system is so incredibly fool proof, that it simply will not create a calculation for a medication that should not be administered to a specific patient.

Safe Scan is already making leaps and bounds into the medical field. The technology is available in five languages and is used in over 300 hospitals in and outside of the U.S. The Safe Scan application has had more than 200,000 downloads by medical professionals since its recent launch. When the team recently attended the Patient Safety Movement Foundation's Conference, with the likes of Bill Clinton and Joe Biden, their work was applauded and medical professionals who

have used the system were sharing personal triumphs and outstanding reviews, which was surely energizing for the inventors. Lazar commented that it was very satisfying, as they can already see Safe Dose is doing a lot of good.

Lazar does touch on the lengthy, and sometimes frustrating, process of making advancements in the medical world. The business model is one uniquely poised to advance the Safe Dose system, but the principals are clearly, fully, and personally invested in the mission of improving patient care. Lazar said that in order to make the advancements, you have to be somewhat disruptive. "Forget about how things are done now", he continues, "and focus on what's the best way to do it in the future."

Dr. Broselow and Peter Lazar have an incredible mission to further medical care and are eager to see their system in every medical facility and available to all medical providers. 



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Training and development >

Let's jump right to the point. The clear majority of you do not invest enough time and resources developing your people.

You don't need me to tell you this. Most of you already know it. How often does someone in your organization make a mistake that's attributed to a "training issue?"

What you may not fully realize is just how significant those training issues are to your business. Insufficient training not only causes mistakes to happen, but it can also contribute to low employee morale, workplace stress, and higher turnover.

Most organizations today are looking for ways to increase employee engagement and motivation. One of the best ways to do that is by investing in the development of your team. You can't proudly say "my employees are my greatest asset" and then not invest in them. There is an old joke that goes something like this:


CEO: What if we train our employees and then they leave?

HR MANAGER: What if we don't train them and they stay?

If you want your organization to thrive, you really don't have an option. The most successful companies invest in their people. Did you notice I used the word "invest"? The first hurdle most organizations need to overcome is to stop thinking of training and development dollars as a cost. It's an investment, and it shouldn't be one of the first things to cut when funds are tight.

Training investments should be evaluated based on the return you get. How much would you invest in leadership development to improve employee engagement by 10%? Or to improve customer satisfaction? Or to reduce the cost of poor quality? Or to reduce employee turnover?

A couple years ago, shortly after I provided a leadership development program for one of my clients, one of the participants left the company. The program helped her clarify her goals and develop her self-motivation, and played a role in her decision to leave the company to pursue an advanced degree. Although she had high potential, the general manager was happy for her, rather than being disappointed. He told me that it was better for her to leave if it wasn't a good fit for her, and she would always be appreciative for investing in her, thereby always speaking favorably of the company.

Look at where you want to improve culture and performance, and invest in the development of your people to make it happen. Develop strong onboarding and technical skills training programs. You may be surprised at the ROI you experience. 

Send your questions or comments to Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com

Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:

Investing in your employees is the smart thing to do for a number of reasons.


Focusing on what's important >

Buzz, buzz. A text comes in at 8:30pm. It's your boss, asking you if you were able to get that important information changed on the website about the event tomorrow. You head to your laptop and open it, and an alert catches you off guard: you have 23 Facebook notifications. You quickly scan them; only one is interesting. You already knew your friend from high school was engaged, but you check the post to see who replied to your comment. Your other friend added a link to a blog you both like. You check the blog and there's a video about on-trend wedding destinations, which reminds you of a video about this vacation spot you'd seen as an ad on Instagram. You pull up Instagram on your phone and scan your notifications. You try to find that video, but you end up just browsing the account of a travel blogger who recently visited Peru. Your computer's screen saver comes on and it eventually falls asleep. The next morning, you arrive at work only to remember you completely forgot to update the website for your boss.

Sound familiar? We live in a world that is screen-oriented, and the apps and sites we use are programmed to keep it that way. Staying focused is nearly impossible when the devices we use to work are also used to socialize, communicate and share. Millennials are often characterized with phones in hand no matter the scenario, and it's no wonder: many technology and communications jobs today demand that the employee mesh her social life with her work life.

The repercussions of this demand can be minimal (a quick text or Facebook post after working hours) or all-consuming (live-streaming events through a personal Facebook page and responding to 100% of messages at all hours on behalf of the employer). In either case, the employee is never able to fully disengage from work. Prioritizing self-care, non-screen time and focusing in general are all difficult to achieve.

Though avoiding this situation is only getting more difficult, here are some ideas to help you focus:

- Delete all non-essential apps from your phone. Only keep the social media apps that you really like or need. Doing this will help keep you from scrolling out of boredom.
- Designate screen-free time. Staring at your phone before bed makes it harder to fall asleep.
- If you use social media for work, write your social media update and check-in time on your calendar. Twice a day for 15 minutes should do the trick.
- Download apps to disable Facebook's news feed. These are easy to find and use and help you focus on the task at hand. 



Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

Executive Summary:
Technology can be equally distracting as it is essential; today's business world demands a management plan.



Success in a spoon >

Executive Summary:

Uniquely designed spoons for toddlers—that's the simple idea behind a product launch with a catchy name: Kizingo.

By Caitlyn Scaggs

Kizingo is Swahili for curve. That is exactly what you will see when you look at a Kizingo toddler spoon, a brightly colored form with smooth curves. For many years, Kiyah Duffey, co-founder of Kizingo, poured herself into research on how to help people make healthier food choices. As a nutritionist, with a Ph.D. from UNC Chapel Hill, much of her research

focused on adults' dietary patterns and the health consequences of these food choices. As she began having children however, she realized the habits she was witnessing in adults were deep rooted and formed years earlier, during childhood.

While this was a topic heavy on Duffey's mind, and the focus of her research efforts, a blast from the past ignited an innovative idea. It was while Duffey and her oldest daughter, only 18 months old at the time, were visiting with her mom. Duffey's mom brought out a spoon that Duffey had used as a child. The spoon had a small, but important difference from most toddler spoons. The handle was twisted just enough that her daughter was able to eat with more ease than a traditional spoon. That caused Duffey to pause and consider that there



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could be a better way to help children eat.

Duffey began searching for a spoon like what her mom had—trying to replace her children's eating utensils. After searching and searching she was still unable to find what she was looking for. While expressing that frustration to a friend, the friend challenged Duffey to go make it herself. That was the exact encouragement Duffey needed to begin pursuing this idea and turning it into a reality.

Duffey began researching companies and individuals that could make her dream a reality. Ultimately, she ended up meeting with Ed Dorsa, the chair of Industrial Design at Virginia Tech. Through her meeting with Dorsa she was directed to a local design firm, Joba Design Group. This group, led by Kevin Jones and Alex Barrett, was the solution she needed. In eight weeks' time, they were able to turn Duffey's vision into a prototype

reality. Duffey said, "Kevin and Alex did a really nice job. They delivered on the function that I wanted, but added a twist to the design that I hadn't imagined."

Joba Design Group brought Duffey's vision to life in both form and function—the end result is a beautiful, bright colored spoon that reduces frustration and encourages self-feeding in young children. The spoon allows the child to eat, without having to turn his or her wrist when bringing food from their plate to their mouth. It sets them up for self-feeding success, which is hugely important when it comes to forming healthy eating habits. It helps avoid overeating, as hunger cues are more readily perceived and followed.

Nearly as soon as the prototype was completed, Duffey was able to demonstrate and highlight it as an inventor at the ABC Kids Expo—and the sales began to pour in. The Kizingo toddler spoon has been on the



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market for just over one year, however it is already sold globally, in 15 countries including the US, Canada, Mexico, Austria, France, Spain and Taiwan.

As Kizingo continues to thrive and respond to demand for this innovative product it is only logical to ask, "what's next?" Right now, Kizingo only offers a right-handed version of the spoon but knows a left-handed version is a must, to ensure all children can benefit from this new approach to eating and self-feeding. A Kickstarter campaign has been launched to raise funds for the mold necessary to

produce this version of the spoon.

It is often said that the Roanoke and New River Valley are hugely supportive of innovation and entrepreneurship. This is a reality Duffey has experienced first hand. "It is a lived philosophy," said Duffey. She continued, "There is an interest in seeing businesses grow and be successful." Duffey intends to do exactly that, as she continues to push forward with the development of new products that enable people to make healthy choices, starting at the dinner table. 

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Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

Executive Summary:

If you're originally from out of state, and you think that it might be possible for you to later claim in-state tuition rates, then check with a lawyer sooner rather than later, in order to avoid making a silly mistake now that will wreck your chances later.

No in-state tuition for you! >

The young gentleman in our office was despondent. "I've lived and worked in Virginia for three years, and I've paid taxes in Virginia, but they still won't give me in-state tuition!"

He had just come from the office of the Virginia Tech Registrar, where they had denied his application for Virginia in-state tuition rates. Frustrated, he had called us to see if we could help.

"You see, I had to stop attending Virginia Tech after my first year," he said. "I just couldn't afford it. So I got a job here and started saving money. Now after three years I'm ready to go back, but they say that I'm still an out-of-state student."

I looked at the letter of denial from Virginia Tech. "Hmm, it says that 'you have not established domiciliary intent,'" I said.

"And what the heck is that supposed to mean?" he said.

"You're from Maryland, right?" I said.

"Yes," he said. "My parents live there."

"Well, your 'domicile' is the place where you presently intend to stay indefinitely," I said. "You can only have one domicile. And if you are a dependent student, then you automatically share the same domicile as your parents."

"I'm not a dependent student," he said. "My parents don't claim me on their income taxes."

"It's more than just a question of who claims your deduction on their Form 1040," I said. "It has to do with whether your parents support you financially. If you're under 24, then you are presumed to be financially dependent upon your parents unless you 'present clear and convincing evidence of financial self-sufficiency.' There are some exceptions, such as for veterans or married students, but they don't apply to you."

"But my parents don't give me anything," he said. "I've been working and living on my own for the last three years. I gave the Registrar all of my pay stubs and bank records to show that I pay my own expenses, that I own my own car, and that I pay my own mortgage. All of that."

"It does say here that you're on your parents' health and car insurance," I said.

"Yes, but that's about the only help they give me," he said.

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

"Unfortunately that's pretty important, because the regulations specifically mention parents paying for insurance coverage as an indicator that you are not financially independent," I said.

"But I have all the other stuff that the Virginia Tech application says they want," he said. "The form asks me if I have a Virginia driver's license, and I do. It asks if I've filed Virginia tax returns, and I have. It asks if I'm registered to vote in Virginia, and I am. It asks if I own property in Virginia, and I do. What else do they need?"

"Actually, those things really aren't terribly important," I said. "For example, everyone living in Virginia is required to have a Virginia driver's license, so having one doesn't help much. (Although not having one would definitely be a problem.) No, the real issue is that originally you moved to Virginia primarily in order to get an education. Just being present in Virginia for educational purposes is not going to change your domicile. You have to show that you moved to Virginia to establish your home here indefinitely, not just to attend school."

"But I got in-state tuition at the community college,"

“““

Your 'domicile' is the place where you presently intend to stay indefinitely. You can only have one domicile. And if you are a dependent student, then you automatically share the same domicile as your parents.

W O R K P L A C E wisdom

By Christine Liana



Q
A

I am looking for employment that matches my administrative background. I get so nervous when I talk with people at networking events that I tend to ramble. I want to let them know how I'm qualified, but I don't want to brag. How can I present myself better?

Whether you realize it or not, you're in sales. You're selling your qualifications to a potential employer. Prepare and rehearse a "30-second sell" or "elevator pitch," and have it ready when opportunities present themselves. It should send a concise message of how what you do can benefit your prospect. Don't make a closed-ended statement like, "I have 10 years' experience as a senior executive assistant." An unspoken reaction might be, So what? Instead, cite your past experience: "I'm a senior executive assistant and I coordinated the 2015 animal rights fundraising benefit, sponsored by my former employer." Once they're interested, you can humbly promote your accomplishments. For example: "We had such a good response at the fundraiser that I planned and promoted the citizens' rally at our state capitol last year. It advocated legislation of stricter sentencing for abusers and investigating case rulings that failed to protect the victims." Remember to hand them your contact card (a smart tool for job searching) and end your conversation with a call to action: If I can help your organization, please call me.

Got a question or an issue you're dealing with at work?
Send it to businesstalk@protonmail.com

This column does not constitute legal advice. Readers are advised to use their own best judgment for responding to a situation and to consult a credible personnel or legal professional if appropriate.

“

If you're under 24, then you are presumed to be financially dependent upon your parents unless you 'present clear and convincing evidence of financial self-sufficiency.'

“

The main issue is whether you originally moved to Virginia primarily to get an education. Just being present in Virginia for educational purposes is not going to change your domicile. You have to show that you moved to Virginia to establish your home here indefinitely, not just to attend school.

he said. "So they must have decided that I was in-state. Doesn't that count for anything?"

"No, one college isn't obligated to accept another college's determination of your status," I said. "So just because you were in-state at the community college doesn't mean that you'll be in-state at Virginia Tech. But tell me more about the community college. When did you take classes there?"


"Oh, I took a few community college courses to try to keep up with my schoolwork," he said. "It was just a couple of credit-hours each year."

"OK then, that must be the main reason why they denied your application," I said. "You have to demonstrate Virginia domicile for at least one year prior to the date for which you're claiming in-state tuition status. But it seems that you've taken at least one credit hour at the community college during each of the last three years."

"That's right," he said. "Is that enough to blow my chances?"

"Unfortunately yes," I said. "You originally moved to Virginia to get an education, which does not change your domicile to Virginia. Since then you've spent three years working here and supporting yourself, but you never went more than a year without taking a community college course. So for in-state tuition purposes, you've been pursuing your education continuously. If you hadn't done that, and if you hadn't had your parents pay for your insurance, then you might have had a decent shot at in-state tuition."

"But as it stands, I'm sunk?" he said.

"I'm afraid so," I said. "I wish you'd come to see us a couple of years ago." 

Note: facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn't legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when deciding whether you might qualify for in-state tuition, how to prepare your application for in-state tuition, what documentation to include in your application, etc.



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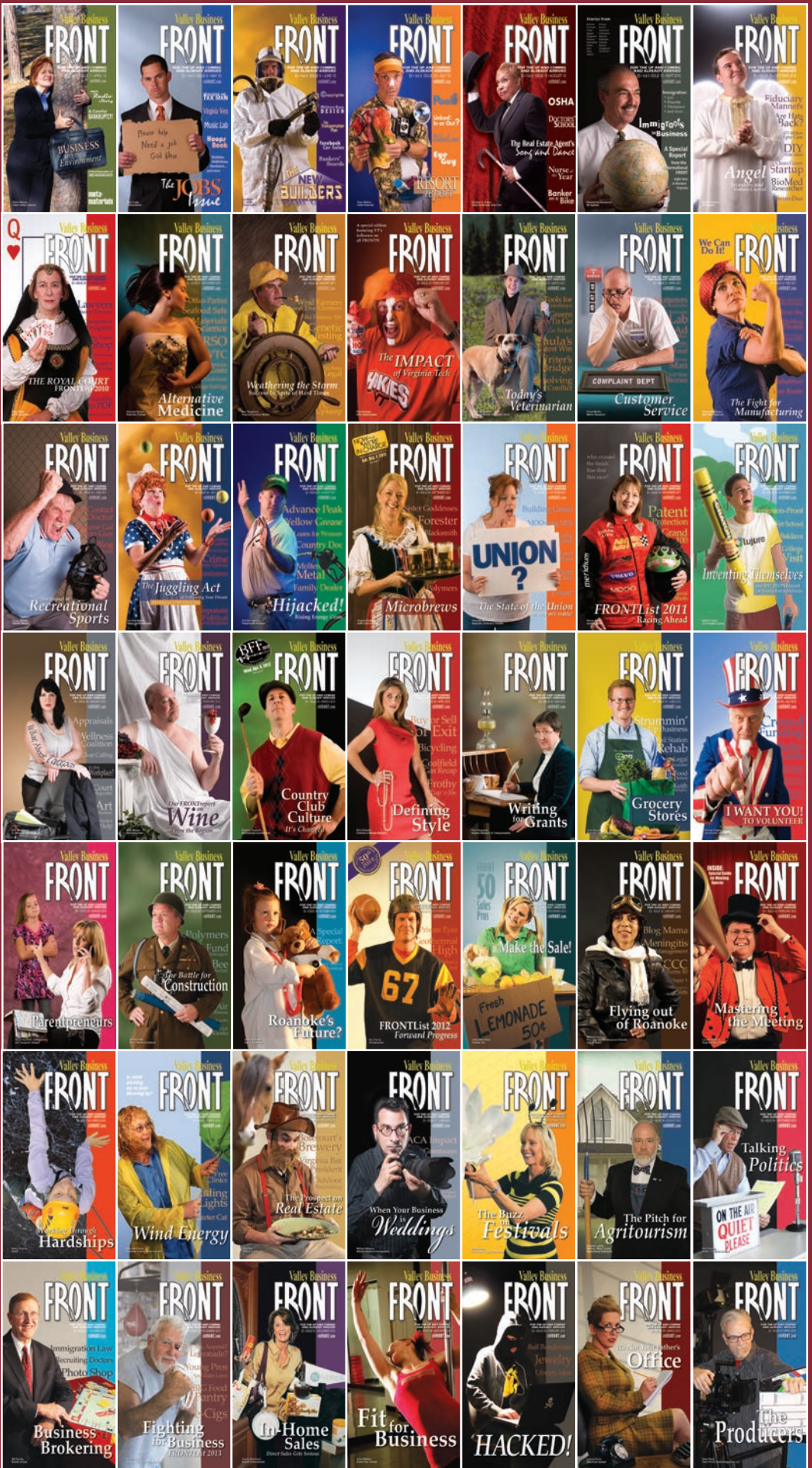
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Seniors taken underwater >

Executive Summary:

Runk & Pratt Senior Living Communities are building out special rooms in their facilities, and the response is mesmerizing.

By Tom Field

Hypnotic. Calming. Peaceful. Soothing.

Just four of the words people use to describe the Snoezelen room at Runk & Pratt Senior Living Community. Runk & Pratt operates independent living, assisted living, and memory support facilities and communities in Lynchburg, Forest, Smith Mountain Lake, and Liberty Ridge. This past year, the Smith Mountain Lake and Forest sites introduced the Snoezelen



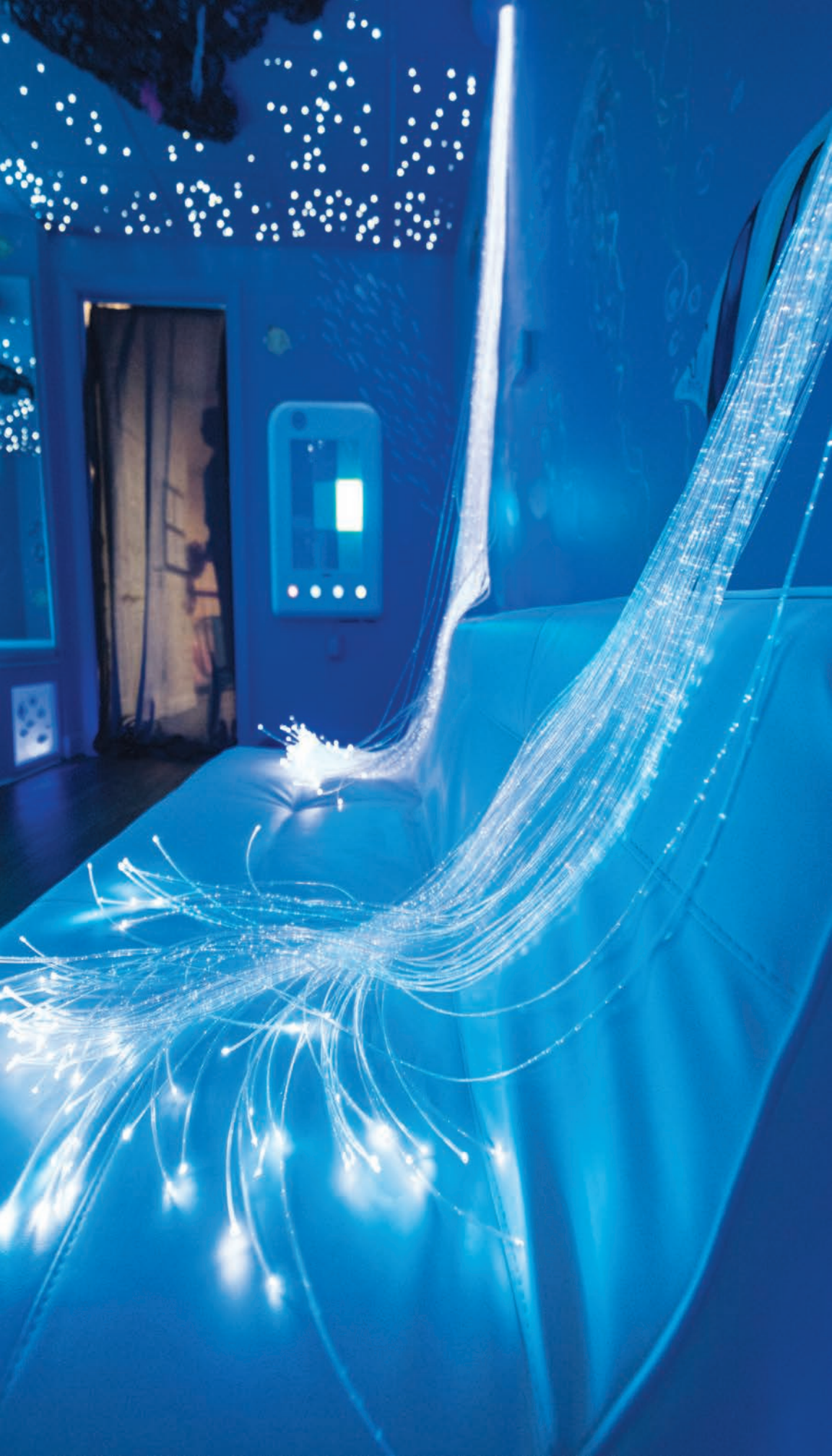
Location #1 >

Runk & Pratt Senior Living Community's Snoezelen Room at Smith Mountain Lake, VA:

- 800 color changing fiber optic strands
- 110 gallons of water columns
- 55 pieces of coral
- 1,200 fiber optic star lit ceiling
- Bose sound system
- Tactical touch rock panels
- LED cognitive memory match panel

Room—a multisensory therapeutic environment for all residents, but particularly effective for those living with Alzheimer's, dementia, and others who need memory care.

Christopher Runk of the family owned and operated business, and a lead designer of the multisensory rooms, says the Snoezelen environments will be placed in all facilities. He's not only encouraged





by the reaction, he's adamant about collecting data and looking for the best ways to serve residents facing memory care issues. "We treat our residents like family," Runk says. "We want what's best for them and for them to receive the best

possible memory support that's out there."


Step inside Snoezelen, and you might believe entertainment is the primary goal, as the "wow" reactions are like those you hear when visitors step into a Disney resort.





Runk accepts that reaction, but he's even more satisfied when he sees the expression and wonder from a senior who is struggling with an enemy that's been attacking the brain in a progressive fashion. The multisensory experience from a room that some have described as amazing provides such a therapeutic relief, and it is so apparent at that moment that this is a step in the right direction.

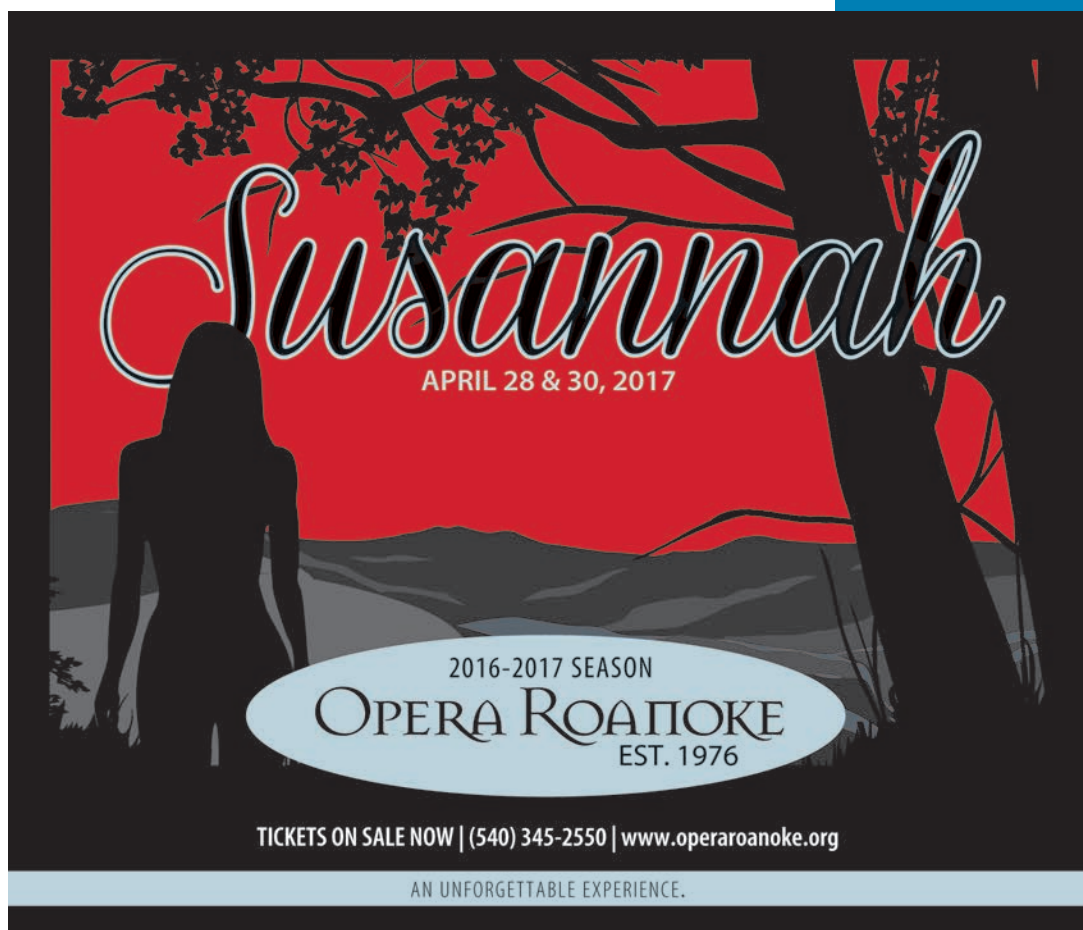
"The ocean itself is so relaxing," Runk says. "This is a good way to work with dementia, Alzheimer's, and we're excited about the possibilities with autism."

The Snoezelen projects are a significant investment in the real estate of Runk & Pratt properties, Runk says. He's convinced the additional money and attention are worth it. If you measure that decision by the faces and reactions from individuals stepping into the room, this whole tour "under the sea" is the place to be. 

Location #2 >

Runk & Pratt Senior Living Community's Snoezelen Room in Forest, VA:

- 100-inch ocean portal display (with calming sea creatures)
- Tactile coral borders
- 6.5 foot and 9.5 foot LED strands with over 800 light strands
- 8 foot LED bubble columns
- LED H2O ceiling mount water projectors
- LED stripping, globes, infinity mirrors, interactive wall panels



A poster for the opera 'Susannah' by Charles Camp. The background is a stylized landscape with a red sky, dark silhouettes of trees and mountains, and a woman in a white dress standing in the foreground. The title 'Susannah' is written in a large, white, cursive font. Below the title, the dates 'APRIL 28 & 30, 2017' are printed. At the bottom, a white oval contains the text '2016-2017 SEASON OPERA ROANOKE EST. 1976'. Below the oval, the text 'TICKETS ON SALE NOW | (540) 345-2550 | www.operaroanoke.org' is displayed. At the very bottom, a light blue banner reads 'AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE.'

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New and improved.

An advertising phrase used so often, consumers are either skeptical about the promise, or we just overlook it altogether. In most cases though, improvement really is desired. We appreciate when a product's ingredients or formula has truly been advanced. Especially if it performs better, is less destructive to the environment, is more safe, or there is some upgrade that just makes our life easier in some way.

However, there are times when a company improves a product or service, and it backfires. (That's not really an improvement, you might say. If a consumer or customer doesn't accept the change, then there really isn't anything better, right?)

Well... in fact, there are times when a better product or service is just not wanted.

Consider the world's largest international online classified listing service: Craigslist. Here we have about the most mundane format. From a graphical standpoint, it's a boring all-text compilation of clickable postings under simple categories. In 1999, Craig Newmark decided to upload a little yard sale-like directory in San Francisco. Today, it is estimated that Craigslist serves about ten BILLION pageviews per month in over 50 countries; and the site still ranks in the top ten of all apps.

The site's look, its utility and function, and its entire operational model has not changed.

In fact, other internet savvy businesses, Fortune 500 corporations, media conglomerates, and aggressive entrepreneurs have tried to launch online classified sales models with features that by any marketer's estimation would be superior to Craigslist. But they failed to match the results. There are countless critics and experts who have addressed the phenomenon of the unchanging Craigslist, and almost all of them begin their commentary with, "but it's so ugly." Preserving the company's copyright and intellectual property could be part of the equation, but the simple fact is—the model continues to work and perform exactly as it was intended. Changing it, could change all that.

Then, there is the opposite transaction.

Consider the fast food chain that changed the oil when cooking french fries. The new oil replaced the bad oil so the food would be healthier. (Still bad for you, but not as bad for you; the result was complete dissatisfaction from the restaurant's most loyal, long-standing customer base. Dissatisfaction at the level that customers were suddenly going to the chain's number one competitor.) Ultimately, the "better" oil prevailed, but to this day, customers never pull up to the drive-thru window for the fries, and staff workers are not inclined to say, "would you like our crappy fries with that?"

continued on Page 43

On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Improving your business should be a continuous goal; just be careful about what really defines "improvement."

Foundationally changing our community >

Recently I was connected to a local professional who is doing a tremendous amount of good in our area, Angie Covey. Angie is the Executive Director of the New River Community College (NRCC) Educational Foundation. While we casually connected over a cup of coffee I was struck by the significance of the effect Angie, and her team, have on our community.

Prior to meeting Angie I had not spent adequate time considering the importance of a strong community college in support of our local economy. As we talked, Angie did a great job explaining how a strong workforce is vital aspect of a healthy economy. As companies consider relocating here and as existing companies strive to grow, a strong workforce is needed. While the graduates are critical to the health of our community they do not always have the adequate resources necessary to gain education and training. That is where Angie and her team enter the picture.

Angie shared a powerful story that demonstrates and personifies the impact of the Educational Foundation. Angie recalled that she once came in contact with a student who nearly missed out on an education because of \$40. This student required special shoes for the nursing degree she was pursuing. She showed up to her clinical rotations just to learn she had spent her last \$40 on the wrong type of shoes. Distraught, and feeling as if this mistake was going to cost her an education, she was directed to Angie and the Educational Foundation.

Angie calmed this student down and assured her that the shoe situation would be resolved. Another member of the Educational Foundation, Erika, was instrumental in making sure the student got the proper pair of shoes and could continue on with her clinicals. Angie described this student's reaction as humble, grateful, and so appreciative. For Angie and Erika, they were just doing their job, working to practically equip a student that had the attitude and aptitude but lacked resources. They had no way of knowing the power of the return on their investment in this student.

Two years later, Erika, was devastated to learn her mom had cancer. One night, she was sitting in the hospital with her mom, and can you guess who walked in? The student who needed the shoes. She had since graduated, earned an excellent job within nursing and was the nurse assigned to care for Erika's ill mother. Talk about it all coming full circle.

Angie and her team are on a mission to provide access and ensure success for a wide variety of students. Providing access is focused on ensuring college is attainable through scholarships and a program called ACCE (Access to Community College Education). The goal of ACCE is to provide community

continued on Page 43



Guest Commentary

By Caitlyn Scaggs

Executive Summary:
A big part of developing our workforce involves the simplest act of helping one another.

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Letters

Ridge and valley

We were absolutely delighted to see "Virginia's Blue Ridge Business Journal" on the front cover of Valley Business FRONT. Thank you for adopting the region's official new name! We enjoy

receiving the magazine each month, reading the interesting articles, and distributing it at the Visitor's Center. We appreciate your support.

Landon Howard

Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge

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

Field / On Tap

from Page 40

We have examples in our own region where improvement backfires. And where lack of improvement, moves a company ahead.

It's a rare phenomenon, and hardly guaranteed to work forever, but it happens right here.

We're moving ahead

An information service provider used to be old school. It sent out "too many" individual and separate pieces of content to relevant recipients. To be less intrusive and more customer-friendly, the company completely transformed its distribution process. *We'll consolidate it all, company decision-makers said. That way, it helps our customers out, information won't slip through the cracks and get lost, we'll send it out in regimental fashion so that it is expected and not random. And as an extra benefit, we'll be able to package it all up in a much more attractive and contemporary presentation.* Indeed, everything about the change was better. Unfortunately, the recipients no longer perceived the information as important. Whereas before, customers could make a judgment call on whether they wanted the information or not, now they didn't bother to sort through the consolidated delivery to do the very same selective process, even though it would actually save time. The new and improved way wasn't as good as the old and ugly way.

We're staying behind


Whether it was truly a strategic decision or just a reluctance to change (or even laziness), a

publisher continued to produce its staple publication in exactly the same way it had since its founding... decades ago. As expected, the company did not experience much growth. While other businesses moved into the market with more progressive (or at least current) options, the old school publisher continued to hang on. The company was so static and planted, in fact, it didn't even upgrade any equipment. Eventually, after being passed and surpassed by other businesses of all shapes and sizes, coming and going, the result was that the company remained in business, and still does today, precisely because of its retroactive if not nostalgic appeal to "doing things the old way." In this case, if the owner had upgraded his business, he would have blended in with the others, and would have not likely survived.

The lesson? Don't try to improve; you'll screw everything up.

Ok, so that's not the lesson; I couldn't resist. Obviously, I need to improve my punch lines.

Just be careful to consider as many outcomes and reactions to your improvement initiatives. Maybe changes are advisable in some areas, and not in others. Nearly every competent expert will tell you if you don't change, you will die; and for the most part, that sentiment has proven to be true. But perhaps complacency is the real sin; not so much the methodology.


It's probably a very rare circumstance, but sometimes, being better is being right where you are. 

Guest Commentary

from Page 41

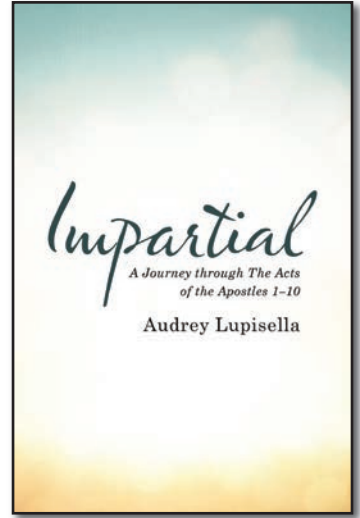
college access to every high school graduate in the New River Valley. Through the work of the NRCC Foundation, the ACCE program is active in Giles County and slated to be active in Radford and Floyd by the fall of 2017. Student Success is focused on keeping them enrolled until graduation (the shoes).

Angie, and her staff within the Educational

Foundation, know that they are able to impact a group of students who will go out and make a difference in our local community. It may be that a student's rate limiting step is a pair of shoes, and if that is the case, you can rest assured that the NRCC Educational Foundation will be ready and waiting to come alongside that student. 

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



Former teen mom's all-inclusive God

Impartial, by Audrey Lupisella (WestBowPress, 2016) is a study of the beginning of Christianity, with an in-depth look at Acts 1-10 of the Bible. Lupisella testifies, through her teachings and highlighting of documented miracles, that God is an impartial God, who does not conform to social standards, but welcomes all. Lupisella was a single mother at just 16-years-old. With help from a supportive family, she completed her education and found her experiences were drawing her closer to God. She spent years studying the Bible, before going to seminary and teaching and writing studies for adult and youth groups.

—Lindsey Gobel

Career girl in the big city

In *Once Upon a Summertime* by Melody Carlson (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2015), Anna Gordon is stuck managing a motley staff for the unprofessional owners of Summerville's Value Lodge. As she laments over her frustrating, dead-end future, a fortuitous turn of events sends Anna off to NYC to apply for a management position at the new Rothsberg boutique hotel in

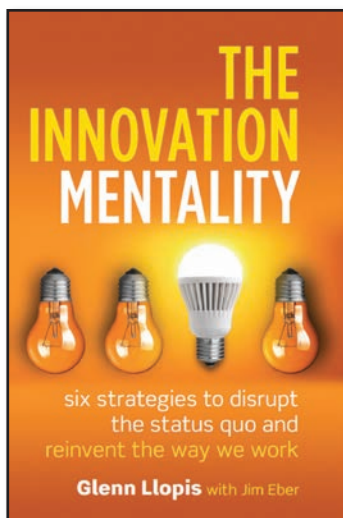
SoHo. As Anna gets accustomed to life in the big city — and sharing a cramped apartment with roommates — she walks a fine line between developing her career and her heart's desire. This fast-moving novel transports readers to scenic lower Manhattan, giving them a glimpse into the realities hospitality management while integrating values and faith in this uplifting story.

—Christine Liana

Success through strategy

The Innovation Mentality: Six Strategies to Disrupt the Status Quo and Reinvent the Way We Work by Glenn Llopis (Entrepreneur Media, Inc., 2017) offers a new strategy for success, because without that strategy, change is merely substitution not evolution. The book instead compels leaders and entire organizations to embrace a new mindset — an innovation mentality mindset — for renewal, reinvention, and growth that empowers them to stay ahead of the rapid changes in the workplace and marketplace by:

- seeing beyond the obvious
- identifying opportunity and performance gaps



- avoiding complacency and unknowingly creating tension
- maximizing people's full potential
- driving sustainable growth through the Cultural Demographic Shift

And here's the most important thing about *The Innovation Mentality*: It works – the content has been validated through Llopis' work with and research on Fortune 500 companies and others. *The Innovation Mentality* is an urgent call-to-action that guides organizations on how to immediately apply evolutionary thinking, strengthen their wisdom, achieve significance, and reinvent the workplace to create and sustain real growth in the marketplace.

—Sandy Sickler

"Modern 'Jew' Family": it's complicated

I have no idea how the production of *Here I Am* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux; 2016) by Jonathan Safran Foer transpired, but I can imagine the editor throwing up his hands and saying, "Fine. You win." It's difficult to tell if the structure of this Modern Family American Jew tale is intentionally chaotic or accidental

slippage into stream of consciousness at times. Get this: in one chapter you have a beautiful story of two boys sneaking into the National Zoo in the middle of the night to brave the lions' den. Another chapter discusses nationalism and whether true allegiance to your motherland requires that you live there. And then there are the introspective chapters on—simply put—self-obsessed dirty talk.

The writing is superb. You're left with the perception that every member of this extended family here allows you to go as deep as you want intellectually, but there is a resistance against going too deep into the spirit—and all of this is culturally induced, somehow. *Here I Am* is that musical performance you attend because there is that one instrumentalist or vocalist who makes the entire concert worthwhile, even though the band as a whole could have been finely tuned a bit more to your liking.

—Tom Field

(**The reviewers:** Lindsey Gobel is a publicist in Phoenix, Arizona; Sandy Sickler is a publicist in California; Christine Liana is interim news editor and writer for the FRONT; Tom Field is creative director and publisher of the FRONT.)



United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd

United Way Teams Up with VT Athletics >

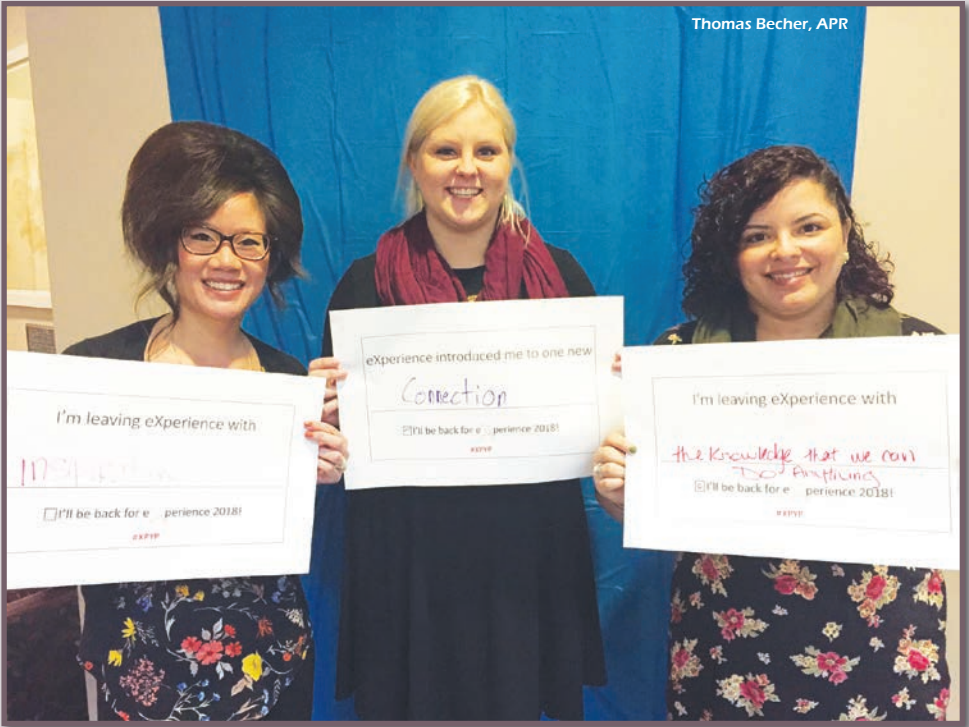
The 14th consecutive **United Way Kid's Day** took place on Saturday, March 4th, at Cassell Coliseum, thanks to Virginia Tech Athletics and founding event sponsor, Bill Roth. In addition to free admission to the VA Tech - Wake Forest basketball game, every child and chaperone received vouchers for concession food; a special t-shirt, sunglasses, and wristband to commemorate the day; and a post-game picture with the Hokie Bird. Participating programs included: Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts (Blue Ridge Mountain Council), Intellectual Disabilities Agency, New River Family Shelter, Toys from the Heart, Women's Resource Center, and Elves United.



20th Anniversary Celebration of the Greenways >

The **Roanoke Valley Greenway Commission** and **Pathfinders for Greenways** are celebrating their 20th anniversary at River's Edge Sports Complex in the City of Roanoke on May 13th. Over 30 miles of greenways and 150 miles of trails were constructed since 1997. Events include a 14-mile triathlon with a run on the Roanoke River Greenway, a paddle in the Roanoke River, and a bike race up and down Mill Mountain. Stay for the after party with live music, local beer, and local food vendors. For more information, visit: www.Gallop4theGreenways.com.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



eXperience for Tomorrow's Workforce >

Participants of the third annual **eXperience conference** for young professionals had a chance to share what they learned at the conference, held on March 10 at Roanoke College in Salem.



Charitable Staff >

Member One Federal Credit Union recently donated \$1,000 to Lynchburg Daily Bread to help support its mission to provide a healthy and hot meal to the hungry in the community every day of the year. The donation was a result of Member One's quarterly Denim Days for Charities where employees donate a minimum of \$5 in exchange for wearing jeans on a specific day.



Streetscape Improvement Groundbreaking >

A recent groundbreaking ceremony kicked off the first phase of the Plantation Road Bicycle, Pedestrian and Streetscape Improvement project. The project encompasses approximately one mile from Plantation Road to Williamson Road. Approximately \$4.2 million in federal, state, and local funds were allocated for this project, which started in 2009. Plans include a 10' wide shared use path, a sidewalk, street trees, and a "Welcome to Hollins" sign. The anticipated completion date is June 2018.



Spring Art Show >

The Market Gallery's Art By Night opens on April 7 with a reception from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. Featured are oil paintings by Ross Arkell and Max Mitchell and drawings in pastel by Judy Arkell and oil pastel by Valerie Alessi. The show is from March 28 - April 29. The Market Gallery, a regional artists' cooperative, is located on Roanoke's historic downtown market at 23 Salem Avenue, Roanoke.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Art By Bus >

RIDE Solutions, the Roanoke Arts Commission and the Greater Roanoke Transit Company present the third annual Art by Bus program. Art by Bus promotes the value of public transportation to the community by bringing visual arts, musical performances, and inspired writing onto the bus network. Selected works from the City's public arts collection will be displayed on the exterior of four Valley Metro buses. RIDE Solutions works with local musicians to sponsor a series of short concerts on the Star Line Trolley during the Art by Bus program. Musical performances will feature violinist Erin Hunter and guitarist Joy Trukowski, trumpeters John Stump and Ernie Freeman, saxophonist Justin Pinckney, sets by local duo Another Roadside Attraction, folk guitarist Carla Nelson, and country guitarist Cody Dean.



Pat in Chaos >

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated all over FRONTregion on March 17, including a festive gathering at Chaos Mountain Brewery in Franklin County.

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

Ol' Danny Birthday Boy >

Dan Dowdy, business development director at Valley Business FRONT, celebrated his 70th birthday in March (with publisher Tom Field, family and friends at Hotel Roanoke on March 18).



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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Marick



Sartin

Melody Marick and Dawn Sartin were named settlement processors and closers for the New River Valley at Virginia Title Center, LLC.

Todd Dodson was hired as vice president of operations at Beacon Wealth Consultants, Inc.

LEGAL FRONT

Thomas J. Bondurant, Jr., a partner in the law office of Gentry Locke, received the 2017 E&H Distinguished Achievement Award from Emory & Henry College, granted to an alumnus attaining achievements in a professional or volunteer capacity.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Travis

Donna Travis was awarded 2016 REALTOR® of the Year from the New River Valley Association of Realtors®. Travis is a sales agent with the NRV office of Long & Foster Real Estate.



Brogan

Angela Brogan was hired as real estate loan processor in the Daleville Town Center office of Bank of Botetourt / Virginia Mountain Mortgage.



Mitchell

was appointed assistant dean of advancement for the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech.

EDUCATION FRONT



Cruikshank

Dana Cruikshank has been named communications director for the Office of International Research, Education, and Development; **Elizabeth Mitchell**



Musick

David Musick will be associate dean for faculty affairs effective July 1 at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

CULTURE FRONT

Wendy Delano was named interim director

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ENTRÉ

for the Salem Civic Center, following the retirement of John Saunders.

The Kiwanis Club of Roanoke announced the induction of its Board of Directors for 2016-2017:

F. Anderson Stone, president; **Donald Witt**, president-elect; **Jenny Lee**, vice president; **Lloyd W. Enoch**, treasurer; **John Montgomery**, secretary; **Reginald Wood**, past president; **Manly Aylor, Jr.**, president, Roanoke Kiwanis Foundation, Inc.

The Salem Museum & Historical Society announced new staff and board members for 2017: **Frances Ferguson**, executive director; **Alex Burke**, assistant director. Newly-elected officers are: **Dr. Peggy A. Shifflett**, president; **Dave Robbins**, president-elect; **Dave Foster**, treasurer; **Catharine T. Wright**, recording secretary; **Bill Piper**, past president. The newly

elected Board of Directors are: **Susan Mini**, **Judith Painter**, **Robert Smolka**, **Dr. Garrett Thompson**, **Dr. Nancy Wilson**.

Member One Federal Credit Union's **Frank Carter**, president and CEO, was appointed to the Mill Mountain Theatre's board of directors. **Tim Rowe**, chief risk officer, accepted a board position with the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy. **Kim Braswell**, chief administrative officer, will serve on the board of Downtown Roanoke, Inc. starting in July 2017.

MUNICIPAL FRONTS

Beth Doughty, executive director of

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.



Doughty

the Roanoke Regional Partnership, has again been named as a top 50 economic developer from Consultant Connect.

Dorian Allen was hired as a transportation planner; **Tim Pohlads-Thomas** was hired as the communications and outreach specialist at the Roanoke Regional Commission.

Ariel Lev joined as campaign manager for Bryan Keele, running for Virginia House of Delegates 8th District.

*Compiled by
Christine Liana*

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The Roanoke and
New River Valley
are hugely supportive
of innovation and
entrepreneurship — Page 26



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HomeTown Bank on Nasdaq

HomeTown Bank on Nasdaq

HomeTown Bankshares Corporation (Nasdaq: HMTA), the bank holding company of HomeTown Bank, visited the Nasdaq MarketSite in Times Square in March, where Susan Still, president and chief executive officer rang the opening bell.

Teva Pharmaceuticals Halts Production

Teva Pharmaceuticals announced plans in March to halt the majority of its production in the Lynchburg area by 2020. Teva wants to sell its Forest plant to another firm that would continue operations and keep jobs. If a buyer is not found by 2020, it may result in the

plant closure and layoff of approximately 300 employees. The Adeno antibiotics production line will continue production past 2020 with its current team of 50 employees.

Outdoor Expo in Radford on April 22

Virginia's Outdoor Lovers Expo is coming to the New River Valley, April 22nd. This free, family event will be held at Bisset Park in Radford from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The event includes a 300-foot zip line, paddleboard demonstration pool, outdoor gear raffle and gear swap, local food, brews, and live music staged along the New River. County Connections and RYZ are scheduled to perform on the main

stage. The Kid Zone will have a rock wall and bounce house. Demonstrations include chainsaw carving, outdoor survival tips, and Leave No Trace outdoor ethics awareness. The expo will have 100+ outdoor-related businesses and organizations, including the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Mountain 2 Island Paddleboard, Cabela's, Virginia State Parks, and more.

New Regional Economic Development Council Formed

GO Virginia, a \$28 million state program governed by the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board, was approved by legislature and Gov. McAuliffe in 2016. Money

is to be used for yet-unspecified collaborative projects aimed at job growth. The Board recently approved the membership rosters of nine new regional councils in Virginia that will apply to the Board for public money. GO Virginia initiative named 28 people to form a Roanoke-Blacksburg-Lynchburg economic development council.

Goodbye Carmike Cinema, Hello AMC

AMC Entertainment acquired Carmike Cinemas at Tanglewood Mall in Roanoke and in Salem on Apperson Drive. The theatres will be AMC Classic Roanoke 10 and AMC Classic Salem Valley 8. AMC is the

largest movie theatre chain in the U.S.

Numbers Climbing for Accounting Firm

Brown, Edwards & Company, L.L.P. was named one of the 25 fastest growing firms in the U.S. by Accounting Today.

New Bank Location

Bank of the James opened its new location at 3562 Electric Road in Roanoke, across from North Cross High School. This new office is the bank's first full-service office in the market. The bank will now be able to cash checks; open

personal accounts including checking, savings, and certificates of deposit; make mortgage loans; and offer services, including Treasury services to business customers. The new office allows for walk-in customers and has an ATM on site.

GridPoint Layoffs

GridPoint, an energy management tech company based in Arlington, made organizational changes resulting in the loss of several jobs at its Roanoke facility in Valleypointe business park. Twenty First Century Utilities acquired GridPoint in 2015, and

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.

GridPoint acquired ADMMicro of Roanoke in 2009.

Fly Responsibly

The Roanoke Regional Airport Commission is reminding hobbyists interested in flying drones to take safety measures before operating unmanned aircraft. Drones are not allowed to be flown within a 5-mile

radius of an airport or landing pad. This includes the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport and the landing pad for Carilion Clinic Life-Guard helicopters in South Roanoke. The Federal Aviation Administration's free app, B4UFLY, can help hobbyists identify a safe location to use the drone and provide maps and the capability to plan future flights. B4UFLY is available for free

Thinking of Medical School?

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Roanoke Valley Attracts California Tech Company

RDG Filings, a privately held subsidiary of Research Data Group, Inc. of San Francisco, recently moved their business to the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority's (RVBA) Municipal Internet Service Network. RDG provides software tools and full-service XBRL & Securities and Exchange Commission EDGAR filing services. The RVBA launched in April 2016 and was recognized in September 2016 with the Virginia Governor's Award for Technology. In February 2017, the RVBA began phase two of the build-out for another 25 miles to the current network.

Accreditation Received

Horizon Behavioral Health of Lynchburg has received a three-year accreditation by CARF International. This represents the highest level of accreditation for a behavioral health organization. Horizon underwent a rigorous on-site peer review process that included a team of surveyors from across the country.

Rescue Mission Exercises its Resources

Carilion Wellness Roanoke donated 18 exercise machines that it's replacing with new equipment to the **Rescue Mission of Roanoke** at 402 Fourth Street SE. Some of the equipment

is for the Women and Children's Center, and the rest will be housed in the Men's Shelter for use by Recovery and Tabitha Program participants. Program participants have the opportunity to work through their stress with exercise, promoting healthy lifestyles. Carilion partnered with the YMCA, which will provide assistance with equipment orientation and training. The Rescue Mission is a Christian Crisis Intervention Center. Receiving no government funding of any kind, it's supported by donations of community partners.

Roanoke River Blueway Gets the Green

The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission received \$5,000 from the Virginia Tourism Corporation Marketing Leverage Program grant fund for its Roanoke River Blueway promotional efforts. The Roanoke River Blueway previously received the Governor's Environmental Excellence Award for implementation of the Virginia Outdoors Plan and was recognized as a Virginia Treasure. This grant will develop new promotional materials and an ad campaign for potential visitors to Virginia's Blue Ridge.

Something to Smile About

The Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation awarded grants totaling \$231,500 to 30 tax exempt organizations to improve the oral health of Virginians through education and access to care for the under / uninsured in 2017. The

Roanoke area received \$56,500. Recipients include: Boys & Girls Clubs of SW Virginia, Bradley Free Clinic, CHIP of Roanoke Valley, Community Health Center of the New River Valley, Community Youth Program, Free Clinic of Franklin County, Health Focus of SW Virginia, and the Rescue Mission of Roanoke. The Virginia Health Care Foundation also received Delta Dental's grants, with \$35,000 this year to continue its dental safety net organizations in Virginia communities with limited access to dental care.

Layoffs Announced

FreightCar America Inc. is laying off approximately 168 employees at its Roanoke location between April and May 2017. The company, based in Chicago, blames a reduction in orders for railcars.

New Development

The former **Valleydale Foods** facility in Salem that closed in 2006 was purchased in February for \$1 million. Ed Walker, a Roanoke developer, was part of a group of businesspeople and investors planning to redevelop the property. Specific plans for the property were not yet disclosed.

New Location for Broadband Office

The Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority, previously at the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, moved to a

new office in the Coulter Building at 601 S. Jefferson Street, Suite 110, Roanoke.

A Boost for Buena Vista

Munters Corp. of Sweden plans to invest approximately \$2.5 million to expand and upgrade its manufacturing plant in Buena Vista. Munters produces dehumidification systems, air handling equipment, and other products. Hiring of an estimated 60 workers is planned, with about 40 hired since November 2016.

Doughnut Shop Coming to Electric Road

Duck Donuts of North Carolina plans to open a store at Promenade Park Shopping Center on Electric Road in the coming months.

Orthodontics Office Gets New Name & Makeover

Roanoke Valley Orthodontics, formerly known as McCorkle & Jones Orthodontics, changed its name and renovated its Peters Creek Road location following Dr. McCorkle's retirement. Dr. David Jones hosted a grand re-opening and ribbon-cutting in March. Roanoke Valley Orthodontics also has a location on Starkey Road in Roanoke and in Rocky Mount.

Modern Marketing

360 Valley, the region's first 360° social media and marketing company, has opened in Roanoke. It will help real estate

agents to use social media and show them how to use 360 video on Zillow, Realtor.com, MLS, and other sites. 360 Valley is a spinoff of VPS Studios, a video production company, and TriSvara, a public relations and marketing firm.

served the park for about 25 years. The project was selected in this year's capital maintenance budget. Thanks to a 2016 playground grant from GameTime, Roanoke County saved approximately \$30,000 in the purchase cost for the playground.

Roanoke, Richmond, Hampton Roads, Colonial Heights, Winchester, and northern Virginia. Final closings are expected by mid-April and will result in the loss of approximately 1,500 jobs. This decision was made in an effort to improve liquidity and profitability.

includes plans to raze the former Pizza Den building on the site. Lidl plans to open several other grocery stores across the state, including two others in the Roanoke Valley.

*Pastries at the
Patrick Henry*

New Playground for Garst Mill Park

Garst Mill Park in Roanoke County has a new playground with slides, climbing structures, bridges, and more. The previous equipment

Hhgregg Closing

Hhgregg, Inc., the Indianapolis-based appliance, electronics and furniture retailer plans to close 88 stores nationwide, including its Virginia stores in

Grocery Store Chain Coming to Roanoke

German discount grocer **Lidl** plans to build a new store near the intersection of Williamson Road and Peters Creek Road in Roanoke. Development

Fresh Baked bakery recently celebrated their grand opening at 611 S. Jefferson Street at the Patrick Henry in Roanoke.

*Compiled by
Christine Liana*

Check out additional FRONT Notes from Valley Business FRONT on our facebook site or social media links at www.vbFRONT.com.



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Soft-Skills training for the workplace >

Executive Summary:

Most college graduates lack the basic employability skills for the workforce, according to U.S. employers and manufacturers.

By Christine Liana

Mindy is a recent college graduate with a bachelor's degree. Like her millennial peers, she's smart, opinionated, enthusiastic, and tech-savvy. Mindy has a bright future ahead of her ... except that she's unaware of a dark cloud obscuring it. Like her millennial counterparts, high school and college did

not adequately prepare her for the real world.

Having been born into a high-tech society, Mindy grew up using computers. Her parents hovered over her, giving her frequent attention and constant reinforcement by uttering "good job!" for simply doing what was expected of her. Mindy's high school and college curriculums focused on academics at the expense of teaching real-life skills that would help her succeed in the workplace, such as communication, basic etiquette, and work ethic, which weren't taught at home. As a result, she enters the workforce with over-confidence, a lack of professionalism, and a sense of entitlement ... common complaints among U.S. employers. Although there are notable exceptions to this demographic, Mindy is a composite representing the reality of what today's businesses face as they seek to recruit and retain qualified employees.



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Survey Says

In 2015, Hart Research Associates released their study on behalf of the Association of American Colleges & Universities. The goal was to determine which skills employers believe are most important to succeed in today's economy and how prepared college graduates are in these areas.

400 private sector and non-profit employers who responded included owners, presidents, and CEO's. They reported that at least 25% of their employees have college degrees. The skills they rated as most important included:

- Written and spoken communication
- Teamwork
- Ethical decision-making
- Critical thinking
- Ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings

Most employers said these skills are more important to an individual's success at their

company than the person's undergraduate major.

Fewer than three in ten employers think that college graduates are well prepared. Students who participated in the survey had greater confidence in their readiness in all areas than employers actually saw. The majority of employers believe that improvements are needed at colleges and universities to ensure graduates' success in entry-level workforce positions. And 80% of employers said it would be useful to see an electronic portfolio of student work that demonstrates the candidate's proficiency in the above-mentioned skills, plus knowledge in their field and evidence-based reasoning.

This widespread shortcoming also affects manufacturers. The 2015 Skills Gap Survey by The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte revealed that "overall, less than half of the manufacturing executives surveyed indicate their employees have sufficient basic employability skills (attendance, timeliness,





etc.) and the ability to work well in a team environment."

Start Early

Some schools understand this critical situation. "Workplace readiness skills (soft skills) are the foundation of all Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses in Roanoke City Public Schools. Employers look for these skills and attributes as a way of predicting employee success in the workplace, and we want all of our CTE graduates to be successful," said Kathleen Duncan, principal of Roanoke Technical Education Center and CTE Director of Roanoke City Public Schools.

The CTE program has a Career and Technical Advisory Council that includes local employers, schools, and non-profits, and a foundation with fundraising for scholarships and student needs, such as supplies.

According to Duncan, 21 workplace readiness skills are required in every career and technical education course in the Commonwealth, including:

- Work ethic
- Integrity
- Teamwork
- Self-representation
- Conflict resolution



“


Fewer than three in ten employers think that college graduates are well prepared

- Creativity and resourcefulness
- Effective speaking and listening
- Effective reading and writing
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Understanding workplace organizations and systems
- Job acquisition and advancement
- Time, task, and resource management
- Customer service

In addition, Virginia's Career Readiness Certificate shows that recipients have the core skills in applied math, reading for information, and locating information. Certification is based on assessment tests.

In other states, the National Work Readiness Council issues the Work Readiness Credential assessment, which determines if students can use critical skills (which are similar to those above) to carry out entry-level duties. Businesses from across

industry sectors identified the skills for entry-level workers to succeed in today's workplace and global economy. The Council was developed with businesses, unions, chambers of commerce, education and training professionals, and state workforce investment boards in the founding states of Florida, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Washington, the District of Columbia, and with Junior Achievement Worldwide.

Early and continuing soft-skill education will ensure the success of new job seekers, their employers, and ultimately, our U.S. economy and society. The strength of our nation depends on it. 

Botetourt County's Career & Technical Education division and Roanoke County's Burton Center for Arts & Technology did not respond to requests for comments.



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The 'wow' reactions are like those
you hear when visitors step into
a Disney resort — Page 37

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