



Valley Business

FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION
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Top Multi Restaurateurs

David Preston,
Country Cookin'

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Let's eat out tonight.

That's the easy question. The next question that always follows is the more difficult one:

Where?

Some of us old-timers recall a day when there weren't that many choices. After the fast food options, we had... well, a place for steaks, maybe a barbeque joint, about one choice for seafood, the pizza parlor... and that's about it. Today, we can get just about anything, and the cultural cuisine covers the globe. Mexican, Tex-Mex, Asian, Pan-Asian, Italian, Mediterranean, German, Irish, and more. Of course, there's American fair (and "Americanized" international fair) where the purist is always eager to say, "that might be called Mexican, but it's not authentic Mexican." Nevertheless, unless you're in the mood for Norwegian lutefisk, there's a restaurant ready to serve you right here in this part of Virginia.

Our FRONTcover story on the restaurant side this time, is a specific one. We feature our region's top three "multi" restaurateurs. We excluded national franchises and looked for locally owned businesses that operate six or more restaurants. The aprons were snapped, and out on the floor came Macado's, Country Cookin', and Famous Anthony's.

Your table is ready. Enjoy your stories.



Tom Field

“ ”
Don't get shaggy — Page 16

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Cover photography of David Preston by Tom Field.

Valley Business FRONT

P.O. Box 1041
Salem, VA 24153
(540) 389-9945
www.vbFRONT.com

Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Interim New Editor	Christine Liana news@vbFRONT.com
Advertising	Dan Dowdy ddowdy@vbFRONT.com (540) 797-7943 ads@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

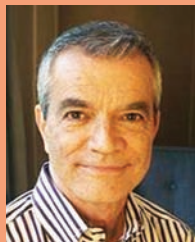
Departmental Contacts

Advertising	ads@vbFRONT.com
Subscriptions	info@vbFRONT.com
News / Releases	news@vbFRONT.com
Admin / Ops	info@vbFRONT.com

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FEBRUARY



Dan Dowdy



Tom Field



Ariel Lev



Christine Liana



Caitlyn Scaggis



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



Keith Finch



Kathleen Harshberger



Mike Leigh



Gene Marrano



Sean Peters



Kathy Surace



He saw six websites sell out
before he could place an order
and sensed an opportunity — Page 29

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.



Infringement
is infringement
regardless of
whether you
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— Page 26

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FRONTList: Top 3 Multi-Restaurateurs

Restaurants come and (often) go in the Roanoke and New River Valleys, subject at times to changing tastes and trends. Then there are those fixtures, eateries that promise a certain level of consistent quality visit after visit. Three Roanoke-based chains with large footprints are in that group. What ties them together are common themes that apply to just about any type of business: pay attention to customers, make course corrections if necessary and develop/retain a capable staff.

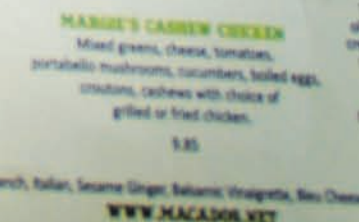
Value proposition

David Preston is president of Country Cookin Restaurants, founded by the late Roger Smith in 1981. The thirteen Country Cookin locations in Virginia (including two in Roanoke and another in Christiansburg) keep Smith's philosophy alive: treat people right, keep the price point low, and serve all-you-can-eat portions of good country food. Patrons can also select entrees to go along with the salad/dessert bar. Seasonal items like barbeque and Hawaiian chicken keep people coming back at certain times of the year to order their favorites.

Preston started working for Country Cookin at the Melrose Avenue location at age 15 and never left. The chain has outlets as far away as Fredericksburg and Warrenton. "[We offer] that country kind of feel," he says, noting made-from-scratch cornbread, pinto beans and salad dressings. "The thing that separates us is that we'll bring you a fresh-cooked entree while you eat your salad." Families with younger kids and older couples are target audiences says Preston. "Getting what you can't get at other places ... value priced – a quick in and out. People want that." Several times a year they review comment cards left by customers to look for clues on any course corrections or menu additions needed.

Executive Summary:
Meet our largest locally-owned regional restaurant "chains" that continue to thrive, despite newer competition.

By Gene Marrano





Like other restaurant chains hurt by the Great Recession of '08, Country Cookin saw a dip in sales as discretionary income became harder to come by, but Preston says they've bounced back, adding that 2016 was "a very good year." Any expansion is done cautiously and carrying little debt is a corporate philosophy. "Being really smart with our finances. A lot of restaurants seem like they really want to be in the real estate business, going around and buying properties."

Country Cookin values the long term employees that runs its restaurants says Preston, with managers averaging ten years or more on the job and many servers also becoming familiar faces. That helps build a sense of community and loyalty from the customer base. About 600 people currently work for Country Cookin system-wide. "Our best marketing people are our employees," notes Preston; "we sell food but we're really in the people business. Do we lift people up? do we make it a good place to work?"

The first question Preston says he asks during weekly reviews with each store is about the work force: "if we're not staffed properly that's all we talk about. How do we keep that good environment? It's all about people. That's it in a nutshell." He calls food service work a "great stepping stone" for any career path, being able to work under pressure while polishing communication skills. What David Preston knows is this: a happy, veteran staff leads to better customer service – and long term patrons for Country Cookin.

Staying relevant

Richard Macher and other family members launched the first Macado's restaurant in 1978, in downtown Roanoke. The chain grew, with locations noted for a décor featuring a nostalgic, antique and cartoonish ambiance. Well-stuffed deli style sandwiches became another hallmark as more Macado's began taking root, often close to college campuses, where its moderately priced menu is a big hit. There are locations near Roanoke College, Virginia Tech and Radford University. Macado's is now a regional brand, with company-owned locations in West Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee as well. There are 19 locations in all, employing about 1100 people. New outlets in Knoxville and South Carolina are on the drawing board.

"Price point is important. Our saying within the corporation is 'Overstuffed and Fun'. Everything is big and [portions] are large," says Macher. "We create that fun atmosphere with

**Richard Macher with
Madison Macher at the
Harrisonburg Macado's**





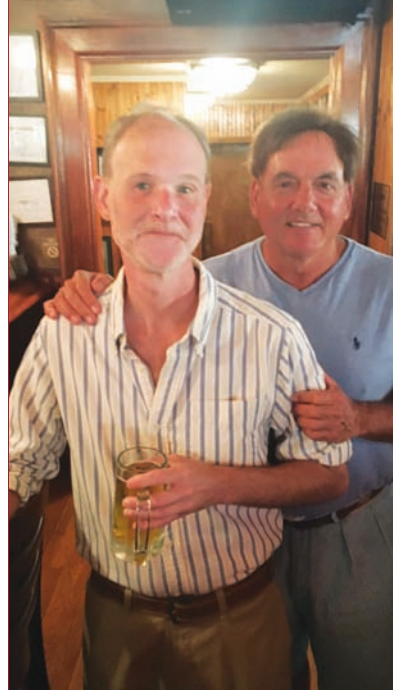
fun people. Your décor, your music, our special promotions.” Case in point, the numerous Macado’s promotional glassware items in circulation: “there’s probably over a million glasses out there with different logos on them – St. Patrick’s Day, Halloween, a summer glass. That whole craziness.” Macher points to one USA Today cover photo where a Macado’s glass can be seen in the background, when the subject was a VMI student. “That’s kind of who we are.”

The almost-40 year old chain is in the midst of what Macher terms “Next Generation” planning, figuring out how to stay relevant in the face of changing tastes and niche restaurants that cater to specific, often ethnic food choices. Witness the proliferation of Mexican food eateries in the Roanoke and New River Valleys over the past several decades for example, or rather, por ejemplo. “Most businesses don’t even exist after these many years, especially an independently owned restaurant. How do we stay relevant for the next thirty years? That’s the question we’re asking ourselves now.” Macher says they are “aggressively pursuing” that challenge. His office staff has worked for over 120 years combined so there is plenty of institutional knowledge as well. Other managers have been with Macado’s for several decades or more. “I couldn’t do it without them – I don’t have the energy,” he jokes, “let them shine, let them teach you.”

With the Roanoke Valley not growing exponentially population-wise, but the number of restaurants doing so, competition (he singles out Texas Roadhouse and Mellow Mushroom as recent examples) for the consumer dollar may be tougher than ever – the same size pie sliced into smaller slivers. “As a local restaurateur you really have to create your niche [and] personality. It keeps you on your toes.”

One example of that determination to change, notes Macher, were renovations at the Salem location, making it “more hip” he says for nearby Roanoke College students and other younger patrons, with a fireplace, couches and a more open, airy feel. Locations are now fitted with more beer taps to take full advantage of the craft and local beer craze that has gripped the region. Macher spoke as he drove to the Lexington store to show off a new menu item, the Eggs Benedict Burger. “I travel to restaurants all over the country to see what’s trending. [But] you still need to be true to yourself.”

Even minor tweaks like switching the lime juice Macado’s uses to make mixed drinks with is part of the equation, as is a move to more local and organic suppliers. So is changing the lighting; where a darkened, quieter Rathskeller atmosphere was once the norm Macher says Generation X and the Millennials prefer a more open, well-lit and noisier restaurant. “Bars are focal points now in restaurants. People want to be part of that.” At the Macado’s in Boone, NC (home to Appalachian State University) more outside seating and



Richard Macher with longtime employee Jay Cole



expansion into the building next door was in order. In Harrisonburg bar tops that light up were installed. He's taken notes at eateries like Lucky in downtown Roanoke and Blue Apron in Salem, praising what they've done right.

Listening to younger hires, dipping their toe into social media outlets like Snapchat in order to expand the customer base is a whole new world for Richard Macher. He points to struggling retail giants like the Macy's department store chain that has failed perhaps to stay relevant. "It's quite a challenge ... it's interesting, isn't it? We're having some fun."

A social club


Famous Anthony's (eight locations, six in the Roanoke Valley, one in Blacksburg and another in Lynchburg) is another local favorite, with breakfast served until noon on weekends being one highlight. The locally-owned chain (Tony Triplette is the president) that debuted in 1986 also operates the Humble Pie pizzeria in Salem. It's a family-run business. Stepdaughter Bonny Viar started as a dishwasher at age 14 and is now Vice President of Operations. Almost 400 employees are in the fold.

Viar says the American Cuisine served at Famous Anthony's "caters to families. Anything you can think of for breakfast ... then for lunch and dinner burgers and sandwiches and spaghetti, some entrees." All-you-can-eat spaghetti nights twice a week are customer favorites. Holding on to patrons

COVER STORY

may be more challenging than it was a decade or so ago says Viar, "but I think it's good because it really pushes you as a business, to really focus on your operations and customer needs. You have to fight for those customers. It forces us to be better at what we do." Fast service and quality, reliable menu choices are the chain's hallmark says Viar. "You can get in and out quickly. We're known for that."

Famous Anthony's does keep an eye on what other, newer restaurants in town are doing but Viar says any changes coming from that reconnaissance are minimal: "the most important thing in business is to know who you are, and to know who your customers are. Stay true to that. If I'm changing anything it comes from our customers." Like adding breakfast at night – now it's a staple on Mondays says Viar.

Like Macher and Preston, Viar says relationships with the people walking through the front door on a regular basis is what keeps Famous Anthony's viable. Staffing is a bit more of an issue these days, especially with younger hires says Viar, but again some employees that have been on the job 10, 15 or 20-plus years are an asset. "We develop such a strong relationship. That's what I hear from customers – it's not just a place to eat, it's a social club, their weekly gathering place. We become part of their family – we're not just a restaurant." That comfortable, family feeling with recognizable faces and long-time menu options are successful traits shared by all three of the locally owned chains highlighted here. 



Bonnie Viar

Famous Anthonys staff





Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

Beards are sported among men in all sorts of professions these days; grooming rules still apply.

Beards in the workplace >

Beards – you’d think there really isn’t much to say about them. Turns out there are a lot of different beard types and many opinions about beard appropriateness.

In previous eras beards—and all facial hair, even mustaches—were forbidden in a professional office. Management dictated how a man’s facial hair could be worn. However, with the casual atmosphere across our nation—and the globe—facial hair has become acceptable in many quarters. We now see beards everywhere — on professional athletes, real estate agents, marketers, computer geeks and even some lawyers, as well as on religious leaders, personal trainers and teachers.


Studies done on the psychology of the beard show that beards have an effect on others and on oneself. As you might expect, a man wearing a beard feels more masculine and assertive, which leads to self-confidence. Some men see it as expressing their individuality. Those around him report feeling the beard signifies aggression in some cases and maturity in others, depending on the beard type.

In regard to employability, studies show interviewees sporting a beard may be perceived by HR as being more artistic or creative, rather than businesslike.

In one study at the University of New South Wales in Australia, researcher Barnaby Dixson and Professor Robert Brooks found that facial hair can impact the “socio-sexual status of a male.” and the “perception of a male’s attractiveness, health, masculinity and parenting abilities.” The researchers say, “Female participants rated those with heavy stubble as more attractive than their full-bearded and clean-shaven counterparts, while men with full beards were interpreted as better parents and more masculine.”

That’s interesting socially, but how does this translate to the workplace? The workplace should be asexual and businesslike, so facial hair shouldn’t be noticeable or distracting. There are no widespread rules for each industry or job; however, government, law and banking are still more conservative with few beards and the occasional mustache.

If you want to grow a beard, consider these guidelines:

- Check your company’s dress code. Respect and follow their policy for personal grooming.
- If facial hair is allowed, avoid bushy beards and curling mustaches that attract attention. Dramatic facial hair isn’t professional unless you’re an actor.
- Shape your beard daily with a crisp outline and no stray hairs. Don’t get shaggy.
- To look professional, stick to a well-groomed, short beard. 

Comments? Email Kathy@peacockimage.com

Hanging on to the mantle of power >


The inauguration of the President of the United States is now history. Many enjoyed the ceremony and the surrounding formality, with lots of titles (honorifics) being thrown around. Let's consider honorifics, which are used to define roles, and as a sign of respect. Think President, Senator, etc. Many of these officials hold on to their titles after they leave office, but is this practice correct?

Author Robert Hickey of *The Protocol School of Washington*® writes "for those who held offices filled by *only one person at a time*—such as president, vice president, secretary of state, and even governor or mayor—it is confusing to the public, and disrespectful to the current office holder, to hang onto the title." Emily Yoffe, columnist for *Slate*, puts it more bluntly, writing "Politicians ... who cling to their old titles are pretentious, incorrect, and un-American." Goodness!

In April 1789, the senate proposed that our first president be called "His Highness, the President of the United States of America, and Protector of their Liberties." This title was refused on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. George Washington, after he returned to private life, chose his previous title "General." John Quincy Adams was President, Senator, Secretary of State, ambassador to many countries, and a member of the House of Representatives. He was known simply as Mr. Adams. When Harry Truman was no longer president, he returned to Independence, Missouri, as Mr. Truman.

Hickey says "People with titles held concurrently by many, such as senators or judges, are not violating tradition by keeping their honorifics." As with most protocol rules, though, there is an exception, and that is for members of the House. One hears of Congressman Rattleson and Congresswoman Rambleson, but those are not official titles. Members of the House of Representatives should be designated by their social title, for example Mr., Ms., Mrs., or Dr. That being said, the State Department's Office of Protocol seems resigned to the current trends, conceding "The titles 'congressman' and 'congresswoman' are becoming more common in social usage, but are not, strictly speaking, correct forms of address."

Hickey advises "... the best rule for any ex-official is, "Who are you at this moment?" Noble advice, indeed. But hanging on to the appearance of power has its advantages, and most find it difficult to surrender their title, especially when it opens doors.

Now that you know the rules, you might enjoy making a game out of seeing who hang on to their honorifics and who modestly moves on! 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
Where do titles go after the person no longer serves in that capacity?



Brad, Jason, Debbie, Paul

Family by design >

Executive Summary:

The Ewing Companies building, home remodel, and custom cabinet business relies on the strength of its family unit and ties to the Blacksburg community.

By Caitlyn Scaggs

From custom cabinets to kitchen remodels, additions to crafting custom decks, The Ewing Companies does it all and does it well. Founded in 1995 by Paul Ewing, the company based in Blacksburg began as a modest home remodel business and has evolved to be regarded as a local leader in high-quality and well-designed home remodel and custom cabinet projects. People come to Ewing Companies when they have a vision for their homes but need



further inspiration and guidance to make their dreams a reality. Their business embodies hard work, dedication to family, and pride in a job well done.

Paul began his professional career in the United States Air Force, where he served 4 years. After that, he attended Concord University in West Virginia, while simultaneously keeping up with his growing family. Paul and his wife Debbie

were raising two young sons while he pursued his bachelor's degree in Business Administration. He was a non-traditional and commuter student juggling many life roles. However, he cites the work ethic he learned from his dad as the driving force that allowed him to persevere and earn his degree. Upon graduation, Paul spent a number of years in corporate America, working for American Water Works Company and Hercules.



When Paul reflects on leaving corporate America to start his own company he explains, "When I look back I realize that it was a brave, perhaps foolish move, but it worked out." He also can't help but mention the community that has been so supportive all along. Paul said, "Blacksburg is a special community." He elaborated that he is still amazed by, "how willing people in the profession, suppliers, bankers, community leaders, and others were to help and assist me along the way."

Paul recognizes that the community has been good to him and therefore, it is an overt focus of the Ewing Companies to give back to the community. You can find the Ewing family supporting the Blacksburg Children's Museum, the Mike Naff Memorial Golf Tournament, the Interfaith Food Pantry and the Blacksburg Rotary club, to name a few areas of involvement. The list of events and organizations they sponsor is lengthy and all motivated by a love for the people that make the community and their business so wonderful. The family is characterized by generosity.

It is impossible to separate the Ewing Family from the Ewing Companies. In a literal sense, the entire family of four is now involved in a full-time capacity with the business. Paul Ewing is the President and active in each job they work on. He goes to prospective clients homes, often with a designer, to establish the vision for projects and subsequent proposals and plans.

Debbie has always been Paul's biggest champion. She is an officer of the company, provides administrative support, and contributes on some projects during the design phase. While not a designer by trade, she has learned a great deal by being involved in the business. She loves to cook and entertain which gives her valuable perspective when seeking to achieve the perfect blend of function and aesthetics when designing spaces. Paul and Debbie's youngest son Jason is the lead construction supervisor and has been with the company since 1998. Jason came up through the construction business and brings both project management and craftsmanship skills to each and every project. If you ask his family about him, be prepared to hear them gush about his ability to manage


DEVELOPMENT FRONT

multiple jobs, have people and materials in the right at the right time, and remain adaptive to ever changing conditions.

In March of 2016, they welcomed their oldest son, Brad, to the team. Although he has always been involved with the Ewing Companies to an extent, he is now all in. His role is primarily focused on business development and management aspects of the business but is also ever growing into other areas, some of which are technical in nature. Brad has great connectivity to the Blacksburg and New River Valley community, as he was a PGA Golf Professional at the Blacksburg Country Club for 10 years. He is rooted in the community in a number of ways and expected to have both an inward and outward facing role.

The strength of the Ewing Companies is found in the fundamental strength of their family unit. As Debbie explained, "We



celebrate each other. I work very hard to make sure our family is together a lot." If you ask Paul why he loves the Ewing Companies business the answer is not a complicated one. It is one that reflects his heart for his family. As Paul stated, "I love it because it's ours." 



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Supplier relations >

I like beer. I would not describe myself as a beer snob, but I do prefer craft beer on tap.

Recently, I went to a restaurant with an extensive list of beer on draft. So, naturally, I ordered a beer with my dinner. A few minutes after placing my order, my server returned to tell me they were out of my selection. Slightly annoyed, I selected another beer off the menu. And again, after a few minutes, the server returned to tell me they were out of my second choice. Now I was frustrated. Two items on their menu were out of stock.


Your supply chain is your lifeline. Regardless of how well your operations run, late incoming shipments or defective supplies can quickly put a crimp on your production. Customer orders could be lost causing profits to drop. The companies that provide you the products and services you need to run your business are critical to your success. So why do so many companies treat their suppliers like adversaries?

Too often I've worked with companies that try to squeeze their suppliers for every dollar, or push back payment terms to 60, 90, or even 120 days. Conversely, many suppliers often attempt to maximize their profits at the expense of their customers. This short-term thinking on both sides creates a guarded relationship where each try to take advantage of the other. Treating your suppliers harshly may result in some cost savings, but the long-term impact will hurt you much more.

Sooner or later, you will need your suppliers to step up for you. And in those situations, your suppliers will have the leverage. How will they treat you?

Companies operating at a high level of operational excellence usually view their suppliers as an extension of their own business. Information is shared, relationships are formed, and trust is built. You and your suppliers rely on each other to be successful, and both of you can be more successful when you work together.

I use a local company for all my printing needs. I could use an online business and save a little money, but instead I choose to pay a little more and build a relationship with my supplier. One day I was in a bind and I needed something printed within 24 hours. Although it was a small order, and I'm a small customer, my print supplier came through for me.

So instead of treating your suppliers as enemies, treat them as allies. Better yet, take a keen interest in their goals and well-being, share with them your own needs and goals, and buy them a beer. If you build a relationship of trust and respect, together you will help each other succeed. Cheers! 

Send your questions or comments to
Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com

Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:

In business, your supply chain is your lifeline; a harmonious relationship will serve you better than an adversarial one.

Healthy hobbies >


It's [still] a New Year, and for most people that means resolutions. As professionals, we often resolve to spend more time cultivating a happier, more joyful life. Whether that means exercising more, spending more time with family or any number of activities, the resolution theme revolves around that fraught work-life balance.

A renewed focus on one's children, pets, family, spouse and home can positively impact one's happiness, but are all outward-facing resolutions. This year, why not take a chance on something that provides an internal impact? It is not selfish to spend time increasing your own quality of life, especially when noting the ripple effect on those closest to you, mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

This past summer, I learned a new craft. I took a deep-dive into the fiber arts and started weaving, a creative pursuit that is a cousin of stitching and knitting. Before picking up this hobby, I prioritized a social life, my job and my close relationships. As the normal human stressors grew over the course of the year, I realized that all of my pastimes were outward-facing. Weaving was something I picked up to carve out some much needed me-time, and it stuck.

I use this anecdote to hopefully illuminate how sudden and random the decision to pick up a hobby might be. They are incredibly personal. I encourage you to explore a new hobby, and to not get discouraged when those of your colleagues do not resonate with you.

Stuck in a rut? Here are some ideas to jumpstart your own personal journey.

- Start a podcast
- Cross-stitching
- Foster a dog or cat
- Fly-fishing
- Birdwatching
- Tinkering / Woodworking
- Learn a new technique in the kitchen
- Journaling 



Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

Executive Summary:
"Outward-facing" goals tend to be more obvious and important to our pursuits, but activities that are primarily private and internal are equally rewarding.



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Part of Rte 419 as viewed from Carlos Brazilian International restaurant

Regional roadwork >

Executive Summary:

Public road developments in our region can (and usually do) affect our business community; here are four current projects we are watching closely.

Special FRONT report

Two proposed corridor improvement initiatives (one in Roanoke City, one in Roanoke County) will make an impact on not only traffic, but the business environment. And two of the most significant major interchange projects (one in Botetourt County, one in Montgomery County) appear promising on the traffic front, and will certainly be followed by business development that is likely to expand in the coming decades. Here's a brief look at all four.

Described as: A "Town Center Plan" for southwest Roanoke County in the Chaparral Drive to Tanglewood Mall -US 220 vicinity (includes Starkey and South Peak). Still in the planning phase. This "market-based" initiative is intended to establish a corridor that essentially serves as Roanoke County's "main street" along with proposed construction of multi-modal traffic and business access, while capitalizing on the 43,000 vehicles per day. Proponents of the development say this stretch of road is underutilized by both commercial and residential applications.

More info: www.roanokecountyva.gov/419study

What it's called: just "Williamson Road Corridor" for now, no fancy name / Roanoke City

Improving the experience?

What it's called: "Reimagine 419" / Roanoke County

Described as: City of Roanoke officials and the consultant has labeled this proposed initiative a "road diet" which involves a reconfiguration of the current undivided four lanes (of the segment closest to downtown / Orange Ave)



Williamson Road Improvements proposal brochure from Roanoke City handed out at public meeting



Courtesy of VDOT

Rendering of bridges crossing Rte 460 at Virginia Tech's Southgate entrance

to a three lane, plus center two-way left-turn lane configuration to improve safety and appearance of this popular and iconic thoroughfare. The project also includes dedicated pedestrian/bike paths (along the road), landscaped islands, bus shelters, and a roundabout. [Very preliminary/Still engaging community input](#). Opponents fear this reworking will cause traffic problems, while proponents say Williamson Road is ready for this new design that has worked elsewhere.

More info: too preliminary; but updates may be available at www.wraba.org

Reducing the bottleneck?

What it's called: "Southgate Connector" / Blacksburg

Described as: A \$50 million re-construction of the intersection of Rte. 460 and the popular Virginia Tech campus entrance at Southgate Drive. Under construction now, this project includes the building of two bridges and improved traffic flow by

removing the traffic signals and replacing with a diverging diamond interchange (and roundabouts on Southgate Drive). It also includes rerouting the popular Huckleberry Trail pedestrian/bicycling path. The primary goal is to keep traffic moving.

More info: virginiadot.org/projects/salem/southgate_connector_-_blacksburg.asp

What it's called: "Exit 150" on I-81 / Botetourt County

Described as: Anybody who frequently travels around Exit 150 is interested in improving the traffic snarls that constantly occur here. This project involved relocating exit/entrance ramps, new road building (called Gateway Crossing), and the construction of a large roundabout that also accommodates the high volume of tractor trailers that use this interchange connecting three major routes (Rte 220 and 220 Alternate; Rte 11, I-81).

More info: virginiadot.org/projects/salem/i-81_exit_150_improvement_project.asp 



FRONT

One of region's busiest interchanges now traffic-free as parts are rerouted during construction of new Exit 150 in Botetourt County



Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

Executive Summary:

You can't play copyrighted movies at a "movie night" without obtaining a license from the owner of the copyright to the movie.

Don't just 'Let it Go'... >

My friend owns a supremely kick-ass video system. He's got a huge projector screen, a professional-grade projector, 3D Blu-Ray, and obscenely expensive cables to link them all together. The only problem is that his wife never lets him invite anyone over to watch it. So when the PTA at our kids' school asked him to set it all up in the gymnasium for their "Frozen" free movie night, he was happy to show it off. But he was a bit uneasy about whether there was maybe a copyright issue.

"The PTA tells me that they don't need permission from Disney to show the movie," he said. "They say that they don't need permission because they're not charging admission. Is that right?"

"No," I said. "If someone infringes copyright, it doesn't matter whether they make any money doing it. Infringement is infringement regardless of whether you charge a price."

"OK, well, the PTA also said that it's not copyright infringement because the Frozen movie night is going to be held at the elementary school," he said. "Is that OK? I mean, schools are exempt from copyright, aren't they?"

"Certain uses of copyrighted material for educational purposes can be non-infringing," I said. "But it has to be truly educational. So for example, I can imagine that a filmmaking class might be entitled to watch parts of 'Frozen' in order to study animation techniques, or a class studying women in film even might be entitled to watch the whole movie in order to critique how it handles gender roles. But the PTA wants to show the movie for pure entertainment purposes. That's not educational. It would be copyright infringement."

"Even with a DVD that the PTA paid for?" he said.

"Yes," I said. "When you buy a DVD, you only get the right to play the movie for your own personal enjoyment. You don't get the right to play it to an audience. To do that, you have to buy a public performance license from the copyright owner."

"Where can we get a performance license?" he asked.

The Swank movie licensing company handles the Disney films, and a lot of other films too," I said. "They'll sell you a single-event license for a PTA movie night, and I bet it would cost the PTA less than two hundred dollars."

"Ouch, I don't know if the PTA can afford that," he said.


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

"Can't we just hope that nobody finds out?"

"If you play the movie on your video system, then you'll be personally liable for copyright infringement too, along with the PTA," I said.

He looked very frustrated for a moment. Then he got a gleam in his eye. "Say, I've got an idea," he said. "How about if I just set up all of my equipment — the screen, the projector, and the Blu-Ray player — and then have someone from the PTA put in the DVD and press the 'Play' button? Then I can't be held personally liable, because I'm not the one actually playing the movie. Right?"

"Actually you would be liable," I said. "It would be what we call 'contributory copyright infringement.' If you know about infringement, and if you make a material contribution to the infringement, then you can be held liable too. For example, in the pre-internet era, department stores were held liable for contributory copyright infringement when they rented space to vendors who sold counterfeit recordings on the department store premises. If you know that the PTA is going to play 'Frozen' without permission from Disney, and if you give them your fancy video system to play it on, then you could be held liable even if you yourself don't actually press the 'Play' button."

My friend was very irritated, but in the end the urge to show off his smokin' video system was too great. He wound up donating a 'Frozen' license to the PTA for its free movie night (cost: \$128) and we and the kids all had a blast, at ultra high definition and also 100% infringement-free. 

Note: *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn't legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when deciding whether you need to purchase a movie license, whether a particular use of a movie for educational purposes is non-infringing, etc.*

“ ”

If someone infringes copyright, it doesn't matter whether they make any money doing it. Infringement is infringement regardless of whether you charge a price.

“ ”

When you buy a DVD, you only get the right to play the movie for your own personal enjoyment. You don't get the right to play it to an audience. To do that, you have to buy a public performance license from the copyright owner.



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Aiming at a new business model >

Executive Summary:
Safeside Tactical in Roanoke has expanded well beyond the conventional "good ol' boys' gun shop."

By Anne Sampson

Safeside Tactical, located at 1201 Shenandoah Avenue, Roanoke, started out of sheer curiosity.

Co-owner Mitch Tyler was watching the 2012 election returns. A sport shooter who had heard the gun-banning hysteria around Barack Obama, he was curious about the effect of Obama's re-election on gun and ammunition sales. He saw six websites sell out before he could place an order and sensed an opportunity.

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View of downtown Roanoke, VA

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"I thought, 'Maybe we ought to ride this wave,'" he says.

By December 2012, Mitch, his brother Matt and their father, J.R. had opened a gun and ammunition store of 650 square feet in Stewartville. By October 2013, they'd moved to 6000 square feet.

And by November 2015, they were on Shenandoah Avenue in the long-empty Noland building, offering retail sales and manufacturing their own line of firearms. They opened the longest indoor range (101 yards) east of the Mississippi in October 2016.

According to Mitch, it's not all about the guns.

"It's a service-driven business," he says. "It just happens to be in firearms."

From the moment the customer enters Safeside, the experience is paramount. Polished stone and metal surfaces line the reception/rental area, where customers watch a safety video, rent a shooting lane, buy ammo or meet an instructor. A window behind the counter looks out onto the 25-yard range, and firearms for rent and sale line the walls and glass cases. A first lesson for an

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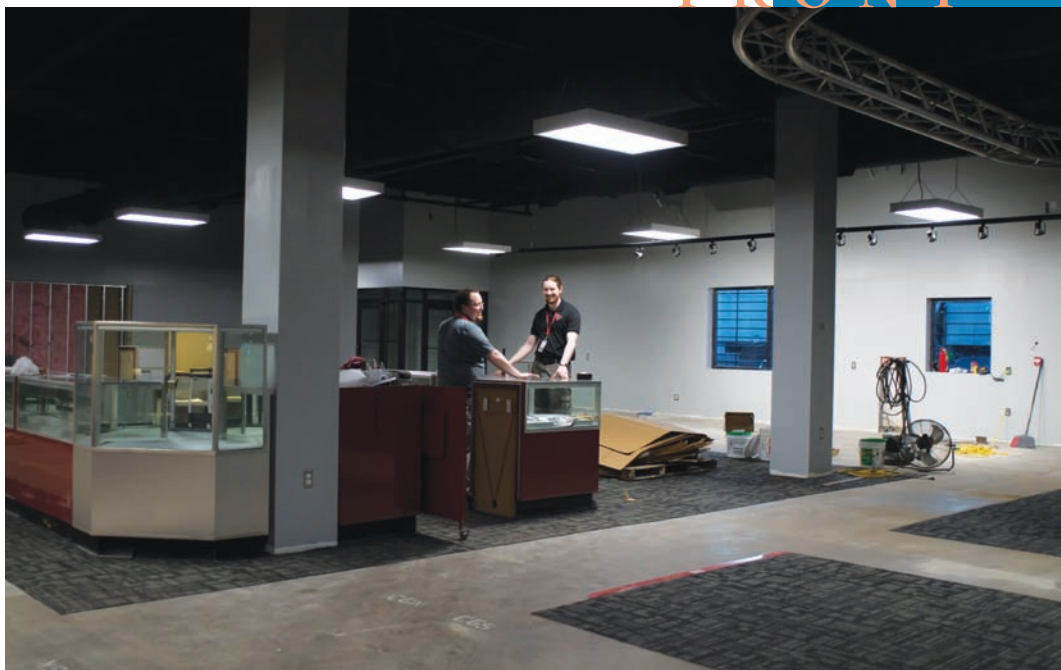
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inexperienced shooter focuses on safety and success.

Safeside also boasts a large new retail area, two gunsmithing shops – one manufactures their line of stock and custom cerakote AR-15 rifles, and one is an old-school repair shop run by Dick Steen – and a club, with lockers, a kitchen and lounge and a private range. The facility is ADA accessible.

They partner with the library to provide gun-safety awareness events, provide firearms and training to local law enforcement and host special events with names like 'Bullets and Brunch.'

"The most dramatic change for us," in four years of dramatic changes, "has been in our customers," says Mitch, who has seen the shift from middle-aged, blue-collar shooters to young professionals and women.

"A few years ago, a woman came with her boyfriend, he looked at the gun, and she might pick it up and say, 'I guess it's ok.' Now, a woman brings her boyfriend, he gets coffee, and she shops for the gun. They're the fastest-growing customer in the industry."

Another change has entailed a mental shift – from customer service to safety.

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"These two have pretty much been at the top," says Mitch, "but we're seeing that sometimes we have to sacrifice customer service for safety."

As an example, he cites practices which alert staff to a customer who is potentially a danger to himself or others, and empower them to be vigilant and even refuse service.


"We'll engage with the customer," he explains, "and watch for cues. If they meet criteria, we'll tell them why they can't shoot that day."

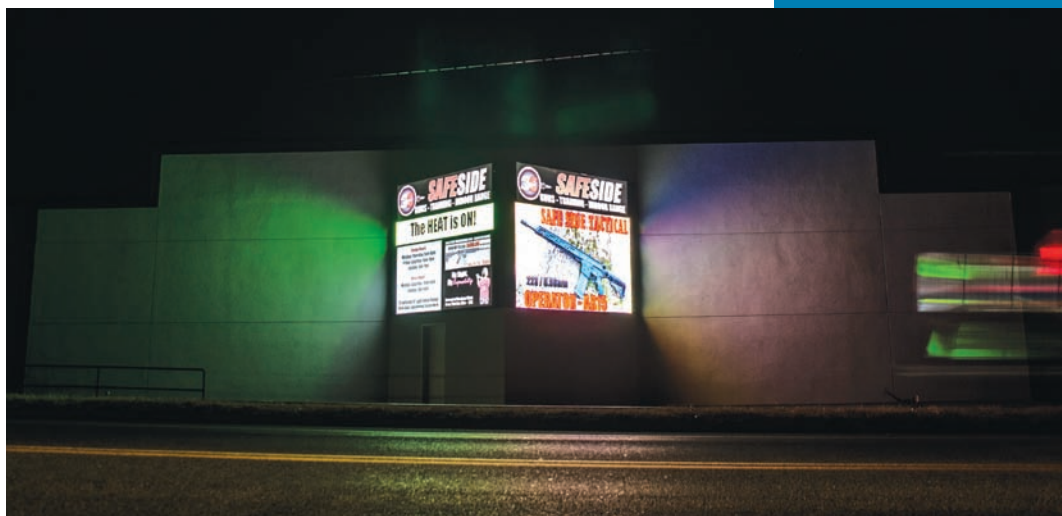
All staff are trained in firearm safety, and many are trained in emergency medical

procedures. One fourth of them are veterans.

Safeside also tries to be a good neighbor. After installation of a large, colorful animated LED sign sparked complaints from a neighbor on the far side of Norfolk Southern property, Mitch started turning off the sign at 11 pm.

The company continues to experiment with marketing – they use Groupon and you can message them on Facebook about lane availability – and to nimbly address challenges as they arise.

"We're building a brand, not a store," says Mitch. "The brand is what's important." 





Tech Tip

By Sean Peters

Executive Summary:

Popular content management website building applications can pose risks.

Beware the open source >

Recently there have been a rash of new website compromises. Attackers are using known vulnerabilities of existing CMS Framework and plugin code. I will use a few technical terms throughout this article and the definitions can be found online at <http://tsi.rocks/vbfront/1/>

Frameworks such as WordPress, Joomla, and Drupal are freely available and are used as the building blocks of many websites. These Frameworks are frequently called a CMS or Content Management System. Frameworks are designed to reduce the programming knowledge needed to build a dynamic and engaging website by creating a common starting point.

A common website vulnerability is due to the Framework or plugin code being exploitable. If the Framework has a section of code that allows an attacker to create an unintended action by sending code to the website, the website can be compromised. This code is typically not something a typical visitor would send.

According to WordPress.com there are approximately 75 million websites that use the WordPress Framework. Why is this important? If a vulnerability is discovered in just one of the websites that uses the WordPress Framework, all the other websites are at risk until the vulnerability is Patched.

A website compromise can have many different consequences. Two of the most common results are website defacement and spam generation. Defacement is intended to harm the reputation of the website by alerting visitors the website is not safe and has been attacked. Defacement can also have a secondary consequence of deleting content from the website.

The second most common option for a website compromise is SPAM generation. The compromise can install additional code, or be programmed with a list of email addresses for sending SPAM messages. The website then continues to send SPAM by the thousands to recipients until it is cleaned and patched.


Once an exploit is discovered, a program is written to search millions of other websites looking for the exploit. Imagine how much spam can be generated by millions of unpatched websites. Spammers are continuously looking for new ways to generate junk mail and this is a pretty easy target.

There are several steps you can take to protect your own website from compromise. Firstly, update the CMS Framework regularly. This can typically be automated for

security and minor releases. Major version releases are never automated and must be completed manually.

Secondly you need to update Plugins. Plugin support and updates can vary widely and is one of the leading causes of compromise. Plugins that have been abandoned and are not being patched should be replaced immediately.

There is an interdependence to be aware of when updating an existing Framework and the Plugins. A newer version of the Framework may not be compatible with a Plugin that has not been updated. Updating the Framework when a Plugin update is not available or has not been installed can break the Plugin's functionality.

Thirdly, if your website is important to your business, contract with a paid backup and security specialist for your particular CMS. Specialists offer tiered products specifically designed to protect your particular CMS. The paid services can automate backups, malware scans, and many other critical functions to help your business website maintain peak performance. 



If a vulnerability is discovered in just one of the websites that uses the WordPress Framework, all the other websites are at risk until the vulnerability is Patched.

WORKPLACE wisdom

By Christine Liana

Q My annual performance review is coming up, and I want to be prepared. Once a year is insufficient, and it's so one-sided. What should I do?

A Keep track of your accomplishments by listing your responsibilities with a sub-list of how you manage each one. Include special accomplishments and positive testimonials from clients and associates. Your list serves as a reference for the review, as a comprehensive job description, as a basis for negotiating a raise, and for keeping your resume current. Listen to constructive criticism. Be proactive and suggest ways to improve your work performance by developing and using your strengths while improving and managing your weaknesses. If you have ideas for improving communication, efficiency, or procedures within the organization, tactfully suggest them. Document your ideas in writing and discuss how the process will be measured. Good ideas have better chances of implementation if they're quantifiable. Smart bosses know that good ideas don't always come from the top down, but from the bottom up. As long as you work with integrity and a good attitude, and meet or exceed your and your boss's realistic expectations, you'll be a star – regardless of the possible subjectivity of the review.

WORKPLACE Wisdom is a new column in FRONT. 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.



Dr. Joshua DeMichele with a patient

Here's a dentist you don't have to be afraid to see

Call it the psychology of dentistry. In addition to expert hands-on treatment—everything from routine cleaning to orthodontics and surgical procedures—Dr. Joshua DeMichele makes it his business to understand what's going on in his patients' heads.

"A lot of people haven't been to the dentist in 15, 20, 30 years because maybe they had a bad experience as a child," says DeMichele, owner of Cave Spring Dental Arts. "Other people just didn't go back to their previous dentist because they were made to feel ashamed about the way their teeth looked or the way they had taken care of their teeth. They walk out of there with their tail between their legs and they never want to go back again.

"For whatever reason, they have a lot of anxiety about going to the dentist. They know they need work, they have obvious issues with their mouth and they want to get it fixed, but their fear prohibits them from doing it."

That's where DeMichele comes in. Many people come to his office—located on Postal Drive near the Cave Spring post office—because they've heard that nervous patients are welcome.

"We are very nonjudgmental about the patient's level of anxiety, and that helps people get through it," DeMichele says. "I have heard this over and over from patients—that we don't make them feel embarrassed about the condition they're presenting. I hear it especially at the end of their treatment after we've gotten to know each other well, going through reconstruction or rehabilitation."

If sedation will help patients relax, DeMichele isn't afraid to use it, in contrast to some other practices. "We offer many different levels of sedation depending on the level of anxiety of the patient and the length of the procedure needing to be performed."

Sedation options include nitrous oxide, administered through a breathing mask, medications such as Valium given orally in pill form, and medications such as Versed delivered through an IV. "With any of these, you'll feel comfortable and relaxed, but you'll still be able to communicate with me if you need to," he says.

Something else that distinguishes DeMichele from other dentists is his comprehensive range of services—everything from filling

cavities to advanced procedures like implant-supported dentures.

"We offer almost all services that dentistry has," DeMichele says. "We'll take people that need complete rehabilitation of their mouth and do every step for them, rather than sending them to a specialist here and a specialist there. We do maintain excellent relationships with the local dental specialists, and we refer to them when we see fit, but more often than not we take care of it here."

A 2003 graduate of SUNY at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine, DeMichele served his residency at the VA Hospital in Buffalo where he was trained in every dental specialty.

"As a general dentist you're licensed to do all aspects of dentistry," he says. "An orthodontist is a dentist who went on to specialize in the alignment of the teeth and jaws; a periodontist limits his or her practice to the gums and bone area; an endodontist specializes in root canals. All of those specialties are contained within general dentistry, and as a general dentist you can shape your practice to include whichever procedural areas you choose, provided you go out and find the proper

training in those areas. With my continual training I'm able to offer almost all of those services."

That includes cosmetic work, which can give patients a completely new self-image. Cosmetic services include at-home whitening systems, Six Month Smiles and Invisalign for correcting misaligned teeth, tooth-colored fillings, crowns, bridges, and veneers.

"When I first met Dr. DeMichele, my teeth and consequently my self-image were in terrible shape from all the years of not going to the dentist—like most people, out of fear," says a patient named Charles. "I have been with him for two years. Now my smile is stunningly gorgeous. I often speak in front of large groups and on video."

DeMichele says there's an element of artistry in creating or restoring a smile—which is why he named his practice Cave Spring Dental Arts. "To me, dentistry is as much of an art as it is a science. We try to achieve the perfect balance."

Dr. DeMichele is accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, call 774-0061.



Cave Spring Dental Arts: "Everything in the office is completely modern and comfortable for the patients," Dr. DeMichele says.

CONTRIBUTORS

Dan Dowdy is the business development director for Valley Business FRONT and owner of The Proofing Prof proofreading services (www.proofingprof.com). His background includes service in the U.S. Air Force and an extensive career in education, including teaching college-level writing competency and business courses, and working for a Fortune 100 company. [ddowdy@vbFRONT.com]

Tom Field is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and owner of Valley Business FRONT magazine. He has written and produced programs and materials for local and international organizations for more than 30 years. [tfield@berryfield.com]

Keith Finch is an attorney with Creekmore Law Firm in Blacksburg [keith@creekmorelaw.com]

Kathleen Harvey Harshberger is a graduate of Radford

University and the Protocol School of Washington. She conducts seminars in business etiquette, international business protocol, and dining skills She has an international clientele in business, government, and higher education. She is a certified Protocol Officer. [harshbergr@aol.com]

Mike Leigh is president of OpX Solutions, LLC, a performance improvement company that helps organizations pursue operational excellence. A retired naval commander and former GE manufacturing manager, he has extensive experience in leadership development and process improvement. [Mike@OpXSolutionsLLC.com]

Ariel Lev is the director of Grandin CoLab. She has a B.S. in communications and broadcasting from Appalachian State University, a M.A. in communications, culture and technology from Georgetown University, lives in Roanoke with

her husband, and enjoys her work with CityWorks (X)po and other business development activities. [akleath@gmail.com]

Christine Liana is a business writer and licensed insurance agent. Her 27-year career includes banking, insurance, law and local government, in which she's worked with a diverse management and client base. Christine earned a Certificate in Management from Darden Graduate School of Business, University of Virginia. [businesstalk@protonmail.com]

Gene Marrano is a long time print, radio and cable television journalist in the Roanoke Valley. He has also written for national publications on occasion over the years. You can hear him weekdays as a reporter/anchor for WFIR 960am/107.3fm in Roanoke. [gmarrano@cox.net]

Sean Peters is the founder and CEO of Tech Squared in Roanoke; he strives to help businesses

leverage technology as an asset to boost productivity and in turn, their profitability. [scpeters@techsquared.com]

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]


Caitlyn Skaggs is the director of communications and marketing for Polymer Solutions in Christiansburg. [caitlyn.scaggs@polymersolutions.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]



He cites the work ethic he learned from his dad as the driving force — Page 19

FRONT NETWORK



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On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:

Your business journal should look for all the pieces that make our collective story—and that results in quite the colorful quilt here in our neck of the woods.

Industry trends >

In case you're a new reader (or an old patron who may have forgotten), our magazine model is one that is designed to cover all our region's industries—or "fronts" as we're inclined to call them. In the Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, and Southwest Virginia region encompassing sixteen counties for our primary news coverage, we have grouped these fronts by the following classifications:

Financial FRONT

(banks, credit unions, investment firms, accounting, insurance, etc.)

Wellness FRONT

(hospitals, clinics, healthcare services, fitness, etc.)

Legal FRONT

(law firms, legal services, compliance matters, etc.)

Development FRONT

(real estate, construction, architecture, etc.)

Education FRONT

(schools, training, professional development, consulting, etc.)

Tech & Industry FRONT

(technology, manufacturing, science, utilities, transportation, distribution, etc.)

Retail / Service FRONT

(merchants, professional services, etc.)

Culture FRONT

(arts, recreation, non-profits and charities, etc.)

Municipal FRONT

(all things governmental)

These nine sectors are the ones to follow, because they represent virtually one-hundred percent of all our businesses and organizations serving this part of Virginia. What makes our editorial challenge most interesting, is that we find stories in all industries that are equally interesting, whether the subject is a major scale operator or the tiniest of small business.

We also enjoy a unique practice in that we eliminated the pre-published editorial calendar (from our inaugural issue forward) that is prevalent among our publishing peers. Why know that's a good way to generate a revenue stream from advertisers within a selected industry for that featured month; but why restrict coverage when good stories are happening in other industries at that same time?

Letters

Milestone memos

Congratulations on your 100th issue! That is an accomplishment to be extremely proud of. Thank you for all you do to advance our business community.

Mike Dame
Carilion Clinic

One hundred! Boy - have you guys got ISSUES! Congratulations for achieving this publishing milestone. Your tenacity, enthusiasm, and talent have brought you where you are today. We wish you continued success!

Mim Young
Gentry Locke


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

We do wonder, sometimes, if some industries are more popular for you as our reader. If you see a story involving healthcare, do you automatically skip over to the next story? If you couldn't give a flip about a museum, do you bypass a culture profile in exchange for a feature on technology? And are you more likely to care about stories related to your occupation; or is the business journal your chance to "get away from work" and discover what's happening in other areas?

We've been told some of you read everything from cover-to-cover; while others are selective. That works for us.

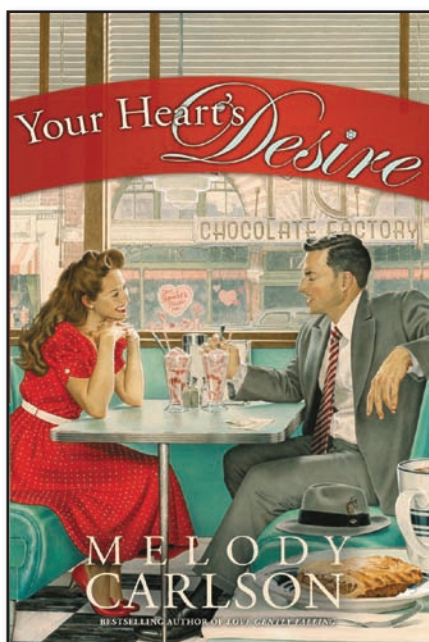
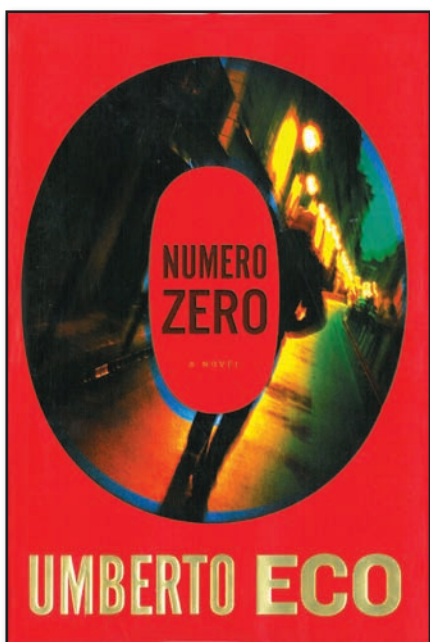
Such content issues comprise the questions that plague both the marketer and the publisher/editor. And that's what makes this whole business a blast for us at FRONT.

I'm just happy the conventional business journal has evolved from "the olden days" when it primarily focused on banks, hospitals, and lawyers... and the occasional commercial real estate deal.

It's a big little world out there; and we appreciate you joining us as we stay in front of it all. 

“

Why do so many treat
their suppliers like
adversaries? — Page 22



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

Digging up dirt

Well here's Umberto Eco's little ditty about a "news" tabloid startup along with a conspiracy sidebar involving Mussolini's demise. *Numero Zero* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; 2015) is a short novel, with hack writers all geared up to spin whatever is needed to sell the agenda, well-equipped to do so from their previous professional failings. "It's not the news that makes the newspaper, but the newspaper that makes the news," we are reminded by the editor of Domani.

There are a few chapters replete with numerous references that read like an index in a social studies textbook, but when contrasted with the newspaper staff storyline, we're able to stick with it. The best part of this novel is the introspection on how easily our news consumption can be tainted, and how effective that process can be in blurring the line between what we should hear and what we want to hear.

—Tom Field

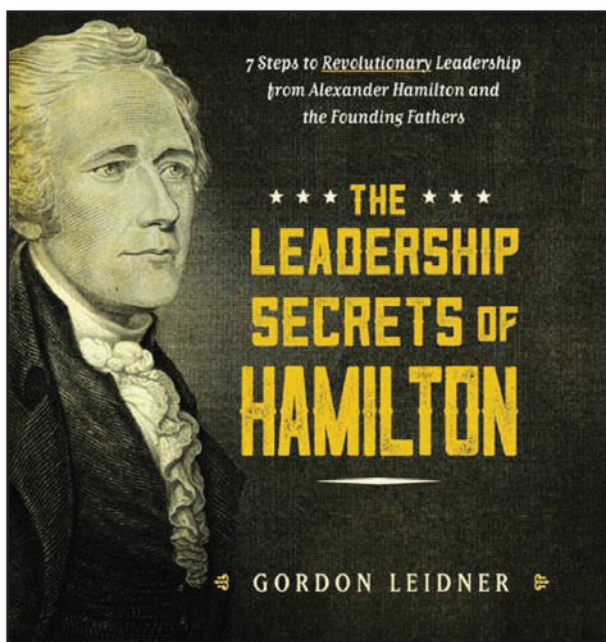
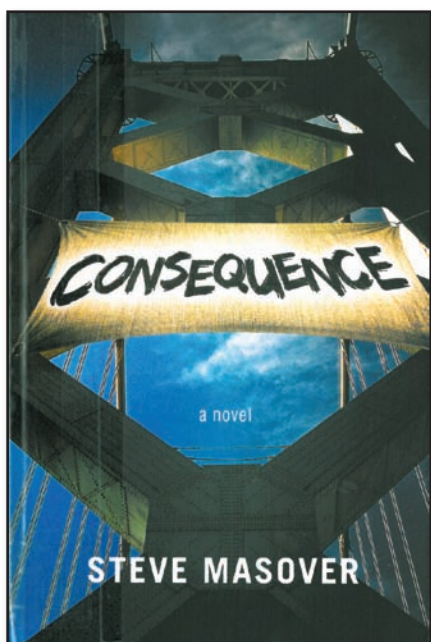
A Valentine's charmer

In *Your Heart's Desire* by Melody Carlson (Center Street: New York, 2016), it's 1945 and war widow Caroline Clark leaves her steady job at a Minnesota leather company and relocates to California with her young son to make a new life. Caroline finds work in the executive office of a chocolate manufacturing company, coming to terms with the death of her husband as she reclaims her life in an unfamiliar environment. This charming, fast-moving novel is right in time for Valentine's day ... along with a big box of chocolates.

—Christine Liana

Hanging with the subversives

Consequence by Steve Masover (Salted Rose Press; 2015) does a good job inviting me into the enclave that is the modern day social activist underground, fictionalized.



It even goes as far as making the venue one of those squeezed in multi-storied houses in a left coast San Francisco city district, complete with all the amenities you need to increase your paranoia from the intrusive feds. The cause? Genetically-altered food supply (even though throughout the whole book and directly from the characters' perspectives we are reminded this isn't the most exciting protest one could choose). But indeed we get a good dose of risk and passion coupled with confusion that would accompany such a mission. With the exception of the conclusion petering off, the story keeps you hooked; and it doesn't patronize to any extent of making one want to go off and join the movement...even for basic companionship, which also falters. There's one chapter (29) that I suspect could have put the author himself on a government watch list, if he had to talk to experts about it or research or Google the descriptive technicalities—but perhaps now I'm being paranoid. Or not.

—Tom Field

Old school advice

Alexander Hamilton has become an unlikely pop culture icon in the 21st century, and now his reach extends into the office. In *The Leadership*

Secrets of Hamilton (Simple Truths; 2017), author and American history expert Gordon Leidner shares seven principles of the Founding Fathers that can be applied to modern leadership challenges, including starting a new company and motivating your workforce.

Each short chapter begins with an historical events demonstrating how Hamilton or another Founding Father used the featured leadership skill, along with three key actions for success that can be employed today.

Anecdotes and quotes from the Founding Fathers also help illustrate the seven key steps to revolutionary leadership, including:

1. Prepare Yourself
2. Exemplify Moral Integrity
3. Go Beyond Self-Interest
4. Establish Clear Goals
5. Respect Your People
6. Convey an Inspiring Vision
7. Be a Mentor

—Liz Kelsch

(**The reviewers:** Liz Kelsch is a book publicist in Chicago; Tom Field is creative director and publisher of the FRONT; Christine Liana is interim news editor and writer for the FRONT.)



Parade with a heart >

Donate Life recognized [organ]donors and recipients by marching alongside them in the Rose Bowl Parade. They also memorialized donors with 'floragraphs,' portraits made from flowers depicting deceased donors. Each of Carilion's hospitals was also able to join the parade by signing vials that held roses on the float. Above, Carilion Roanoke Memorial Team signs a vial that held a rose on the float.



Up a creek ... WITH a paddle >

Botetourt County's Upper James River Water Trail was recognized by Travel and Leisure magazine as a destination for beginner adventure travelers. The Upper James River Water Trail, once a 45-mile stretch of the James River in Botetourt County, has been expanded. Experience the beauty of the Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains along 64 miles of the Upper James River in Botetourt and Rockbridge Counties and 10 miles of the Maury River. 49 miles of the James River in Botetourt and Rockbridge Counties were recommended for Virginia's Scenic River designation under the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Scenic Rivers Program.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Look up! >

Virginia Tech researchers are finding ways to determine the risks of small unmanned aircraft to anyone on the ground. Test dummies are equipped with sensors to measure the impacts of the aircraft flown into them. Testing methods are expected to help the development of safer technology. The lab is known for rating football and hockey helmets to the extent they reduce concussion risks.



Kroger stocks the pantry >

Erik Bowman, manager of the Lakeside Kroger, presents a check in January 2017 for nearly \$20,000 to Pamela Irvine, president and CEO of the Food Bank. The money came from Kroger’s *Bringing Hope to the Table* program, in which Kroger donated \$3 million to local food banks across the country. In addition, Kroger donated approximately 427,000 pounds of perishable food to the Food Bank last year. The food is enough for 355,000 meals valued at approximately \$713,000. The Food Bank has distribution centers in Salem and Abingdon.



Scout’s honor >

Taylen Gearhart, a Senior Girl Scout from Elliston, completed a research project with seniors at Warm Hearth Village retirement center in Blacksburg. Inspired by her great-grandmother’s struggle with dementia, Gearhart’s project involved providing residents with era and genre-specific music to alleviate their stress. Gearhart is a candidate for the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award within Girl Scouting.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Power play >

Roanoke Railyard Dawgs hockey team has been experiencing successful response and attendance in its inaugural season at its Berglund Center home games; tickets for 2017-18 second season are now available.

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

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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Griffin

L. Nicole "Nikki" Griffin has joined as mortgage loan officer at Bank of Botetourt / Virginia Mountain Mortgage.



Rhodes



Robinson



Miller

Paula A. Rhodes has been promoted to vice president of deposit services in the Buchanan Care Center branch; **Amanda L. Robinson** has been promoted to vice president and is a financial advisor in

the Daleville branch; **Mary Ann L. Miller** has been promoted to vice president and is a business relationship and communications officer in the Daleville branch at the Bank of Botetourt.



Hamm



McCarty



Thacker

Lisa Hamm has been promoted to vice president / branch manager at the Hershberger Road branch; **Sabrina McCarty** has been promoted to vice president / branch manager at the Hardy Road – Vinton branch; **Trisha Thacker** has been named branch manager at the Salem branch of BNC Bank.

WELLNESS FRONT

Jennifer Jarvis, R.N. has been named director of nursing for Richfield Recovery & Care Center and The Rehab Center.

been named director of CoLab at Grandin in Roanoke.



Bliss

Sandi Bliss has been named chief advancement officer for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets' advancement team.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Turner

Jada Turner is REALTOR® and Associate Broker at Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Smith Mountain Lake Real Estate.



O'Donnell

EDUCATION FRONT



Diefenderfer

Caren Diefenderfer, professor of mathematics at Hollins University, is one of three U.S. educators named winners of the 2017 Deborah and Franklin Tepper Haimo Award by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA).



Buczynski



Thompson

Thomas O'Donnell has been named assistant professor of particle physics in the Department of Physics at the College of Science; **Matt Buczynski** has been named as an assistant

Brad Stephens has

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.



Olsen



White



Harrison

professor in the School of Neuroscience; **Christopher Thompson** has been named as an assistant professor in the School of Neuroscience; **Michelle Olsen** has been named as an associate professor in the School of Neuroscience; **Robin White** has been named assistant professor of animal and poultry sciences in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; **Anthony "Kwame" Harrison** has been named the Gloria D. Smith Professor of Black Studies; **Susan Whitehead** has been named assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech.



Whitehead

The Virginia Tech College of Science has inducted six new members into its Hall of Distinction: **Roger K. Crouch**, master's degree and Ph.D., physics, 1968 and 1971; the late **James R. Gay**, bachelor's degree, biology, 1935; the late **Charles L. Harowitz**, bachelor's degree, chemistry, 1948; **Jerry L. Hulick**, bachelor's degree, political science from the former College of Arts and Sciences, 1973; the late **Thomas T. "Jeff" Jeffries III**, bachelor's degree, geophysics, 1965; and **A. Carole Pratt**, bachelor's, biology, 1972.

CULTURE FRONT



Sluss

Jill Sluss has been named executive director of the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce.

Jan Garrett has been named President, **Alice Burlinson** has been named Secretary and Communications Coordinator, and **Ann Marie Wood** has been named Treasurer for 2017 at the Roanoke Women's Foundation.



King



Mauck



Willis

King was promoted to captain at the Cave Spring Fire Station; **Robert Mauck** was promoted to lieutenant, serving in the Fire Marshal's Office as a deputy fire marshal; and **Drew Willis** was promoted to lieutenant at the Hollins Station for Roanoke County Fire and Rescue Department.

Compiled by
Christine Liana

MUNICIPAL FRONTS



Altice



Dean

Don Altice was promoted to the rank of battalion chief of emergency medical services; **Christopher Dean** was promoted to the rank of captain at the Fort Lewis Station; **Brandon**

FRONT Notes



RRP Accelerate announcement

Come Fly With Me

American Airlines added a second non-stop daily departure to New York City's LaGuardia Airport from Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport. Flights depart twice daily on weekdays and once daily on Saturday and Sunday.

Job Creation Campaign

The Roanoke Regional Partnership announced a new five-year fund-raising campaign and a plan to

focus on talent attraction among other elements to continue to grow the region's economy. The \$3.3 million private-sector campaign, Accelerate 2022, kicked off in January with the announcement that 47 investors already have contributed \$2.48 million of the \$3.3 million private sector goal. Through 2022, the Partnership is aiming for 3,367 new primary jobs, 3,821 new secondary jobs, \$300 million in investment, and another 12% increase in

per-capita income. The Partnership's focus areas through 2022 are: talent solutions, targeted marketing, leadership and engagement, and asset development & outdoor branding.

A Grocery Store and So Much More

Earth Fare, a specialty natural foods grocery store adhering to Quality Standards, is planned to open in autumn 2017. The 24,000 sq. ft. store

will be next to Carilion Institute for Orthopedics and Neurosciences on Franklin Road. Earth Fare will feature an Heirloom Organic Juice Bar, and Earth Fare's Kitchen will offer a salad bar, hot foods, pizza, and sandwiches for take-out or eating on-site in the 80-seat cafe with free Wi-Fi.

Tune in to Changes

WSNV, SUNNY **93.5 FM** has a new format and is



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now MIX 93.5 FM. The "Valley's Music Place" WVMP 101.5 FM has a new format and will be The Mountain **101.5** and **102.5 FM**.

Freedom First's New Location

Freedom First Credit Union celebrated their grand opening and ribbon-cutting at the new office at 1st and Campbell in downtown Roanoke. It occupies the first floor of Roanoke's State and City Building, the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building in Southwest Virginia and the first historic renovation

project in the nation to be LEED certified.

Workforce-Education Link

Virginia Tech is creating a business engagement center to expand and link its partnerships with leading companies. A director is needed for the center, whose role will be to help companies with their partnership interests, joint research projects, recruiting, and philanthropy.

Attention, Kmart Shoppers:

Sears Holdings announced that its Kmart stores at 1419

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about your business?*

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

Hershberger Road NW in Roanoke and at 1355 West Main Street in Salem will close this spring.

Roanoke Rated #1 for Graduates

GoodCall ranked Roanoke, Virginia, as the #1 Best City For New Grads for 2017. Analyzing data from 589 U.S. cities

and towns, criteria included affordability, relative salary, entry-level jobs, and local amenities.

Academic Challenge

Hollins University celebrates its 175th anniversary this year. With this milestone comes a \$5 million donation, provided

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Qualtrax

the University raises \$10 million by June 30. Currently \$8 million remains to be raised.

Software Solutions

Qualtrax, Inc. of Blacksburg, provider of compliance software, received an infusion of \$3 million from investors. The capital will be used to further build out its global sales and marketing team, focusing on expanding worldwide in its target industries of laboratories, manufacturing, utilities, and others who are under compliance and workforce training pressure.

Founded in 1993, and becoming a stand-alone company in 2016, Qualtrax provides companies and accrediting bodies with a complete compliance management solution to streamline and simplify accreditation, document, and process management; as well as testing, training, and integrations.

Tuck Clinic's New Location

Tuck Chiropractic Clinic opened a new office at 60 Summerfield Court, Roanoke, 24019, serving patients in the Botetourt, Bonsack,

Vinton, and northeast Roanoke communities.

The Road to Success

U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Jay Williams announced the Department's

Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding more than \$1.5 million to the city of Roanoke to make critical roadway infrastructure improvements needed to support new commercial development. According to the grantee, the project is expected to leverage \$95 million in private investment and create

154 new jobs. EDA's investment supports the construction of Blue Hills Drive to serve a proposed brewery and the Heritage Point site in Roanoke. The project will help diversify the local economy for the city and surrounding area.

Consolidation

Branch Civil, Inc. is the result of the consolidation of Branch Highways, Inc., and E.V. Williams, Inc. With offices in Roanoke, Manassas, Virginia Beach, and from Cary, N.C., Branch continues its infrastructure projects of highway and street

construction, military bases, ports, airports, utilities, landfills, and reservoir dams. Private sector work includes office and retail developments and residential subdivisions.

Merger

Prestige Brands merges with **C.B. Fleet** (a.k.a. Fleet Laboratories) this quarter in a \$825 million deal. This is Prestige's eighth acquisition of personal care brands in six years as it divests

itself of weaker brands. Fleet was a family-owned business for 145 years, starting as a pharmacy in Lynchburg before Gryphon Investors bought it in 2014. Fleet's manufacturing facility in Lynchburg will be used in developing new products.

The Power of Giving

Appalachian Power donated a total of \$50,000 to 15 food banks and feeding centers in West Virginia and Virginia

during the recent Christmas season. Appalachian Power and its employees also donated more than \$137,000 to United Way organizations in West Virginia, Virginia and Tennessee in 2016.

The Doctor is INventing

eBroselow, a Blacksburg company, announced that its SafeDose Scan is one of 10 finalists in the Patient Safety Movement Foundation's second

annual Patient Safety Innovation Awards. The award recognizes novel products designed to help reach the Foundation's goal of zero preventable patient deaths by year 2020. Dr. James Broselow, inventor and co-founder of eBroselow, was honored for his work with the Institute for Safe Medication Practices' Lifetime Achievement Award.

Compiled by
Christine Liana

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](http://moreFRONT.com) blog, also available by link at vbFRONT.com.



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FOR LEASE



FRONT

"Unlocking the world's potential" is written on Knack's founder and CEO Guy Halfteck's business card

The fun side of job searches >

Executive Summary:

Knack, the interactive job-seeker's app, falls into eager hands at Virginia Tech.

By Tom Field

Who knew career exploration could be so fun?

Guy Halfteck shuffles his way through an elbow-to-elbow massive crowd of young people at the Pamplin College of Business "2017 Business Horizons Spring Career Fair" at Virginia Tech. The claustrophobic assembly hall is tolerable because this particular gob of students is well-dressed, orderly, and all dolled up as they meet with a plethora of company recruiters and various career and professional development opportunities in an electric tradeshow environment charged with positivity. If exploring your vocational options that could chart the next course of your life isn't enough to get excited about, there

are exhibits like Guy Halfteck's—a bit of a sideline where you can reduce your stress and try out a little self-discovery.

Meet Knack. Yes, it's an app. At first glance, it's an interactive game you can play. Free, and all ready to download on your mobile phone or device from App Store or Google Play. And indeed, within seconds you're creating your profile and playing a game—Bomba Blitz, Meta Maze, or Dashi Dash.

But underneath the fun and graphics is a serious tool, capturing and measuring your cognitive abilities, behavioral traits, personality and characteristics, even your competencies.

"It's using AI [artificial intelligence] to identify potential," says Guy Halfteck, founder and CEO of Knack. He's at today's career fair because Virginia Tech is one of his closest partners, he says. The student population is a perfect-match market, but Halfteck says Knack is for everyone... students, parents, people of any age who seek opportunities. Originally designed for employment opportunities and professional development, the app is also beginning to incorporate educational tracks as well.

"Knack helps give direction in real life opportunities," Halfteck says. "It provides self-discovery, but it also connects to employers and jobs."

That's a significant step from dumping your application off at the HR department.

Halfteck, who has no technical background (his credentials include law school and

Knack in the news >

Knack's games are not purely for entertainment... they measure the users' resourcefulness, numerical reasoning and risk-taking.

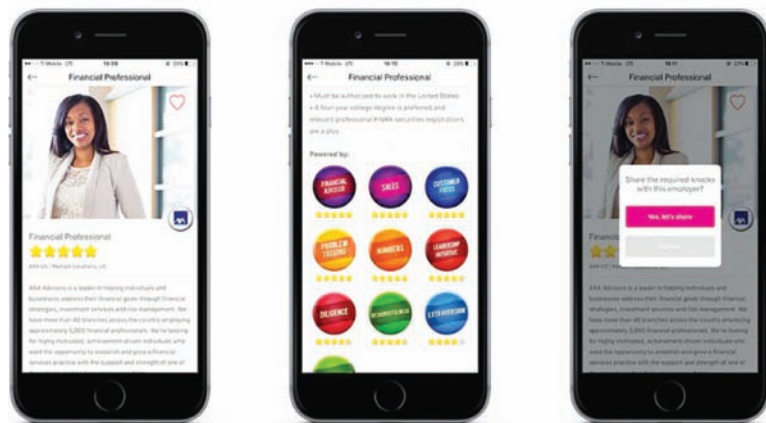
—The Washington Post; May 2016

Knack is joining forces with numerous workforce agencies and community organizations across the country to engage youth to help them discover their "knacks," and match them with career opportunities that realize their potential.

—Forbes; March 2016

Players also come to such games on their own, either through the websites of the app developers or through app stores. Some will play because an app offers them career-aptitude advice and other kinds of evaluations as part of its service. Others play in an effort to get noticed by employers, who pay fees ranging from 99 cents to review a single candidate's gameplay to more than \$15,000 a month for large companies that do a lot of hiring on a regular basis.

—Wall Street Journal; March 2016



Knack

Knack gives users a personal assessment and ranks their skills



FRONT

Knack user Dana Cohen is a Pamplin College of Business New Horizons Scholarship recipient and double marketing-consulting major at Virginia Tech

economics), describes the Knack app as a sophisticated blend of artificial intelligence and game theory. Its analytics include over 100 career profiles; about 50 traits, abilities, competencies; and an intermix of approximately 20 education majors or industries.

The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Washington Post and other media reviews agree, Knack is no child's play. Halfteck explains how the app is colorblind, gender-blind, age-blind, and essentially non-discriminatory. "That's an advantage for employers," he says, because they get an accurate picture of



Knack games capture users' input for analysis and results

Knack

the applicant's fit based on the position or company objectives, resulting in a better candidate pool.

Knack ranks all of these areas that are important for specific job skills.

"I got five stars in marketing!"

That's how Dana Cohen describes her experience with Knack. The Virginia Tech sophomore from Virginia Beach who is double majoring in marketing and management consulting analysis, tried out Knack, and said it was absolutely worthwhile. She says Knack confirmed her choices in her educational pursuits (thankfully) but also pointed to other areas she hadn't considered.

"Before, I was hesitant about what I wanted to do," Cohen says, "but I found out about Knack from a promotion at Pamplin, and I tried it out over Thanksgiving break."

Cohen says she could tell how the app was testing her and ranking her skills; and though it didn't take long at all, she was amazed at the results.

"Dashi Dash was my favorite game. I like how it revealed my strengths and best areas."

Cohen and other students describe Knack as "cool" and agree that there seems to be a level of sophistication embedded in the programming virtually hidden from the fun of simply playing with the app.

Halfteck says he will continue to advance the product. He says the employer-funded venture is being utilized in over 110 countries; he's currently collaborating with India and South Africa; and he has a special regard for social impact—as the app can assist low income areas, refugees, and other underserved communities. 



Career fairs, like this one at Virginia Tech, offer an ideal trial environment for Knack

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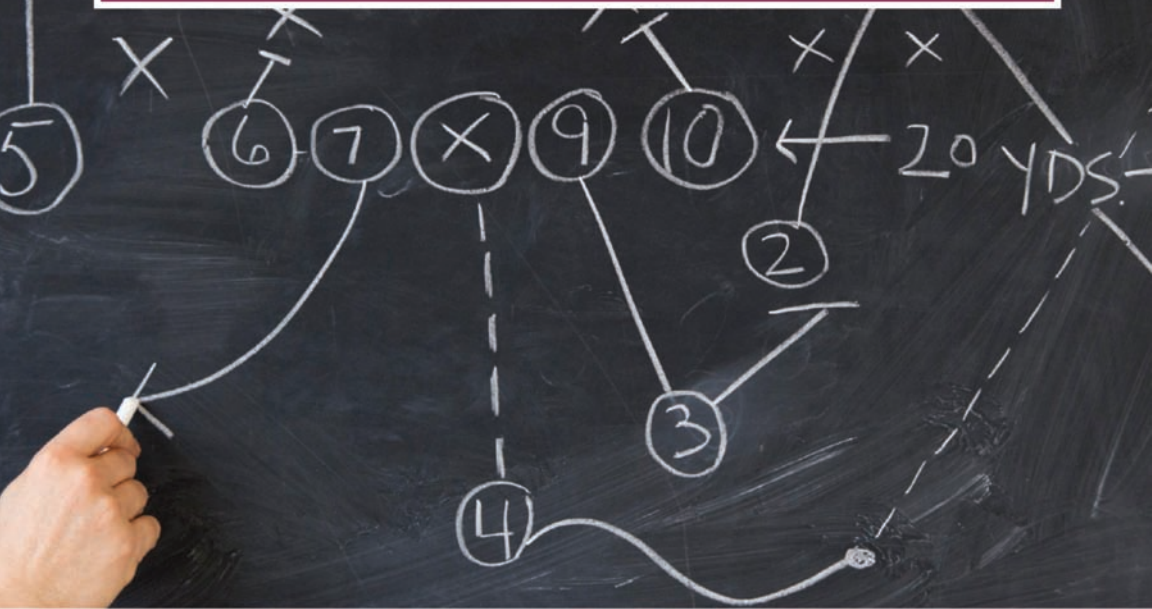
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