



Valley Business FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION
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One Man Industry

Jed Curtis,
Heart & Spade Forge



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The little guy.

More than once (a lot of times, actually) we have presented a small business operator on our FRONTcover. Few business journals do that (unless the little guy is a billionaire or promising one). I've never understood that; as business—to me—is as varied and diverse as any other area. What is interesting is not automatically what produces the greatest revenue; and business shouldn't be defined as economic superiority.

Ask a kid whose father and mother ran the family farm. They survived seasons of poor harvests and still managed to send the kids to college, even though their picture never made it on the front of a magazine. They made business happen.

Yes, we like the money makers. Those turning the wheels of progress. The innovators. The new economy superstars and the entrepreneurs who see the bright lights.

But we don't need to see their income tax returns to feel their passion. And passion is where business gets most interesting. Interesting enough to publish in a business journal.



Tom Field

“There is no principle more important to an organization than respect for people — Page 23

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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



Christine Liana



Anne Sampson



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

““

Seating is a sensitive and logistically important aspect of good entertaining

— Page 17

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 44.

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)
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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.

““

Mom,
I need
an anvil

— Page 9

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Where *Art* Meets **Work**

Jed Curtis's destiny as a blacksmith seems to have been set when he was six.

"We went on some kind of field trip," he recalls, "and we saw a blacksmith. I went home and said, 'Mom, I need an anvil.' I had just gotten glasses and my mom said if I didn't break my glasses for six weeks, she'd get me an anvil."

Needless to say, he did it. He still has the anvil, sitting among his tools at Heart & Spade Forge on Shenandoah Avenue in Northwest Roanoke City, where he focuses on architectural work such as custom railings, gates and tools for the hearth and garden.

Jed executes his own designs, some of them drawn on

The heat is on >

Executive Summary:

A local blacksmith proves there is still a current market for old school techniques.

By Anne Sampson





Black, brown, white, and more >

When many people think of a blacksmith, they picture a brawny guy shoeing horses. Here are a few definitions from the specialized world of working metal:

Farrier: a craftsman who specializes in the care of horses' feet, including placing shoes.

Blacksmith: metal worker who creates objects from iron or steel by forging, using tools to hammer, bend, and cut.

Whitesmith: metal worker who fashions objects out of tin, pewter or other light metals.

Brownsmith: metal worker who specializes in brass and copper.

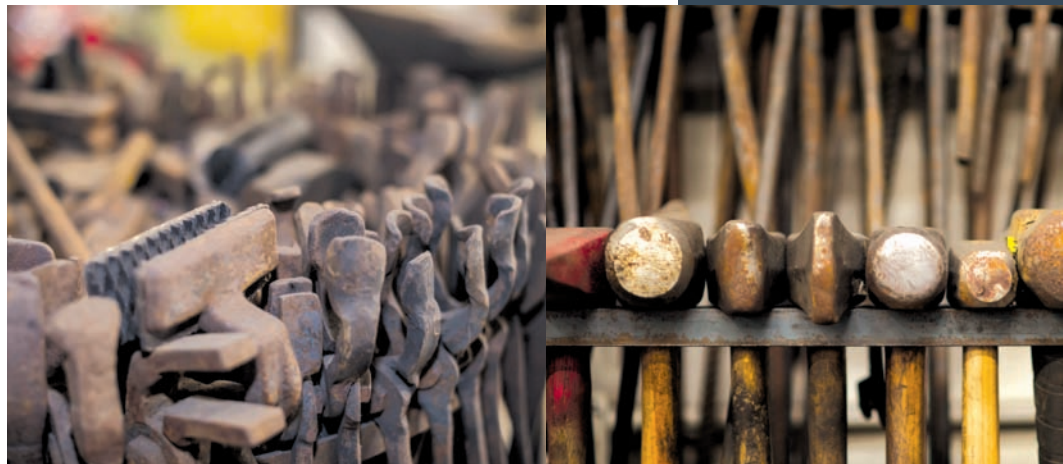
Metallurgy: the science of working with heated metals, compounding alloys and separating metals from their ores.

Sources: Dictionary.com; Wikipedia; various internet research

his grandfather's desk, still stained with ink from that man's work as a printer. Design drawings are found on every flat surface, sometimes directly on the surface itself, beside experiments and finished work in iron and steel.

"I like to experiment with a design aesthetic, with a concern for line and style," he says. "I do everything from start to finish."

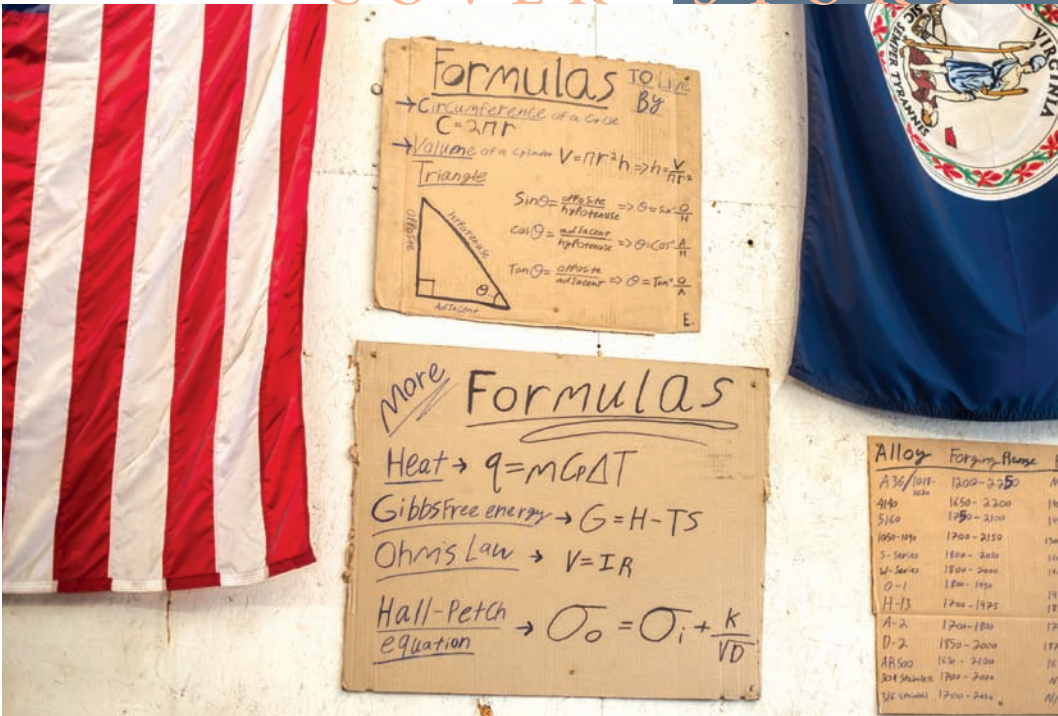
The Waynesboro native taught himself blacksmithing, and studied chemistry at Roanoke College in Salem with an eye to becoming a metallurgist. He taught chemistry for three years at Buffalo Gap High School while forging at night.





photos courtesy of Jed Curtis

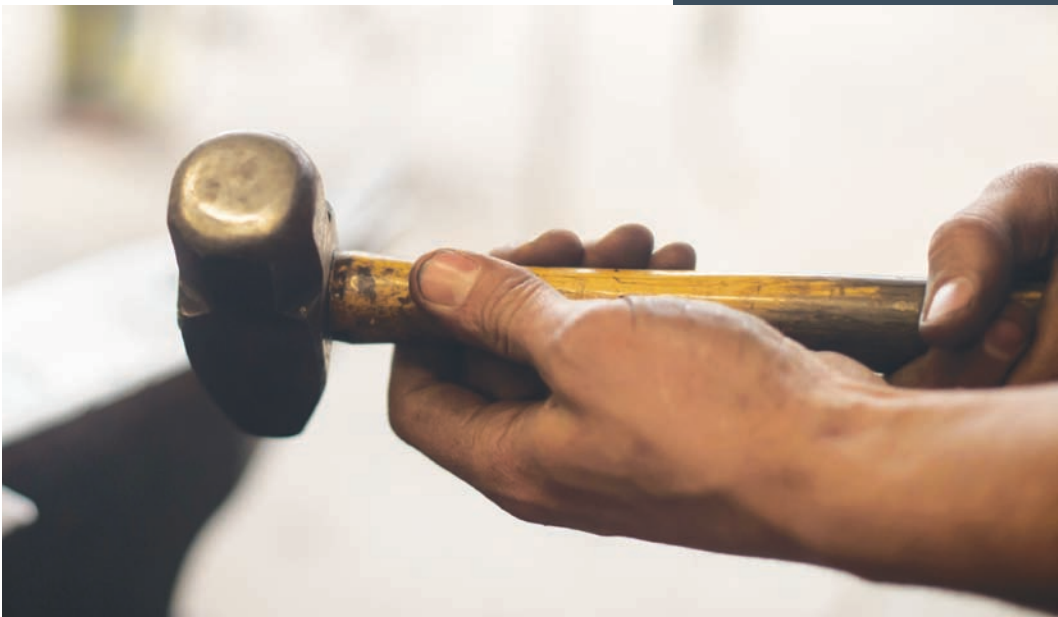
COVER STORY



"Those were 17 hour days," he says.

A tall, lanky 26-year-old, Jed speaks with passion about the history behind his work. For example, "a blacksmith makes his own tools," he says, indicating ranks of differently shaped hammers, tongs and chisels, "or he buys them from another blacksmith," customizing them as needed.

Jed and his fiancée, Charlotte native Hannah Cline, met at Roanoke College, where she majored in communications. She helps him with marketing and social media. They liked the Roanoke area and they worked with Tom Tanner








at the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce, who was "super helpful" with business plan development and resources.

As an experiment and a tribute to local history, Jed designed a numbered, limited edition skillet. He makes them a few at a time, planning to complete 611, in honor of Roanoke's iconic locomotive. They run 8 to 10 inches in diameter, with a long handle and a hammered finish. He seasons them before delivery. Tested in the kitchen at Breadcraft Bakery and Café on Church Avenue, they were pronounced "the best thing we've ever seen for eggs."

In his space near the railroad tracks, in an historically industrial part of the city, Jed sees his work as paying respect to early industry. He uses handmade tools, and the same technology that was used to build locomotives in Roanoke 100 years ago.

"I like to see where the past has gone," he says, "and stand on their shoulders." 



Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
Today's trend in leggings (still) carry this comfort thing a bit too far for the office.

Leggings in the office? Please, No >

To be honest, I was hoping the leggings trend in womenswear would quickly pass and I wouldn't have to address it in a whole column. It hit the fashion market over a year ago and, unfortunately, it's still with us.

I understand that they're comfortable, fun, fashionable and easy to wear. However, for work wear they have a serious downside.

The leggings in fashion now are:

- Too tight and revealing.
- Too bright and distracting.
- Made from fabric that's thin and clingy.
- Unprofessional looking.

They practically shout "casual time" and this may be a news flash, but they don't come close to saying "business casual."


Even when paired with a long, blousy top they often reveal the curve of the buttocks, looking very unprofessional. A long blazer is equally unsuccessful at covering the buttocks and curvy part of the upper thigh. A dress might cover more of the leg making leggings all right for the office, but most women pair long blouses or tunics with their leggings instead.

Legging companies like LuLaRoe, retailers like Nordstrom's, as well as fashion magazines and websites will tell you that leggings are perfect for the office – not so. Remember, their job is to sell clothing and grow their brand, not protect your professional image or brand.

A business office, a professional meeting or any other serious business place is not the place for leggings no matter how good a woman looks in them. If you want to be taken seriously at work, save them for your social outings with friends and family.

Coworkers don't need to know how cute you look in your casual clothes. However, we do look forward to seeing your professional face and attire, along with your arsenal of business skills.

We live in a time when companies must be very careful about how they enforce dress codes and address infractions of those guidelines. Lawsuits are a constant concern. Managers can struggle to find the right words to enforce the dress code while not offending workers. I hate to be crass, but it's difficult to kindly say, "Excuse me, but I can see your butt crack from across the room!"

We understand that leggings are comfortable. But your desire to look and feel comfortable is making the rest of us very uncomfortable. Please help us out and cover up at work. 

Comments – Email Kathy@peacockimage.com

The placement of place cards >


I attended a dinner party recently, where place cards were on the dining table indicating where each guest should sit. Place cards are helpful for people to find their seats, and they also add an elegant touch to a meal, formal or informal. One of the guests, unhappy with her place, removed her card and exchanged it for a more desirable (in her opinion) seat. She later complained that she didn't enjoy the evening because she wasn't included much in the conversation. Oh, my! This "lady" broke an etiquette rule, and suffered the consequences.

The late Elsa Maxwell, who was internationally famous for her dinner parties, said "the most certain route to chaos at a dinner party is not having place cards telling everyone where to go." According to Letitia Baldridge, famous protocol advisor to the Kennedy Administration, and currently a bestselling author on business protocol, "seating is a sensitive and logistically important aspect of good entertaining, whether one is giving a private party or a lunch for four hundred." It's a daunting job to seat a large party, especially when guests don't RSVP properly, and drop on and off the list right up to the last moment. Anyone planning a wedding will immediately know what I mean!

This is where seating charts; door lists (for large events), and place cards come in. The savvy host will draw up a seating chart; make a door list (a list of guests names in alphabetical order, with a table number assigned to each person) and write place cards. Staff or caterers are supplied with the door lists and help the guests find their tables and seats.

It is a breach of etiquette to change a seating arrangement in the hope of making one's place better or more important. Hosts, whether at a private party or a corporate event, spend significant time on, and give considerable thought to, seating their guests. They have sound reasons for their decisions. There is precedent to consider; politics to consider; business alliances to consider. Additionally, the wise host will know who among the guests have little liking for one another – think of family holiday dinners!

Guests, then, should never change seats – no matter the reason. I refer you back to Letitia Baldridge who wrote, in *The Art of Business Entertaining*, "This kind of behavior can only be labeled as despicable" Strong words indeed!

So enjoy your next dinner party no matter where you are seated. You never know what friendship or business opportunity might develop. 



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey
Harshberger

Executive Summary:
The use and abuse of place cards is no trivial matter if you want the best experience at your event.



The 'Tidy' way >

Executive Summary:

If you've been anywhere outside in Virginia's Blue Ridge, you've run across the company with a clean name serving a dirty business—the only one of its kind.

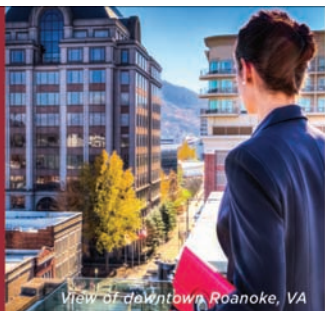
By Ashlyn Davidson

Let's cut to the chase – nothing about portable restrooms or septic tanks is glamorous. However, Alex Phillips, owner of Tidy Services, sees his job as a challenge and opportunity to serve the greater community. No one-day for Phillips and his team looks the same, and they are on a mission to

provide individuals and companies in the Roanoke Valley and New River Valley with pristine service, in addition to educating people on certain topics, such as septic tank maintenance.

Phillips took over Tidy Services, located in Salem, from his parents, who purchased the company in 1992. Throughout high school and college, Phillips worked for his parents when time allowed, and ultimately found himself back in the family business after completing school. Phillips believes in community engagement and customer service, and his experience throughout the years has given him the opportunity to become an expert in all things pertaining to portable restrooms, septic tank maintenance, and the additional services Tidy Services offers.

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Septic Tanks

Septic tanks are often found in rural areas that lack centralized sewage systems. If you're unsure if your home has a septic tank, Phillips explains there are a few ways to tell. "If you have well water, have neighbors with a septic tank, or don't pay utilities you usually have a septic tank," he explained. You can also take a look at your building plan or check your yard for things like lids or manhole covers. And, if all else fails, you can call an inspector who can help you locate the system.

Septic tanks are typically made of fiberglass or concrete, and hold water drained from toilets, sinks and bathtubs long enough for solids to settle in the bottom of the tank and greases and oils to rise to the top. This allows the cleaner water in the middle of the tank to exit into the drain field through pipes,

which then slowly percolates water into the soil, naturally eliminated bacteria and viruses.

If you have a septic tank, maintenance is key. Phillips explained that a septic tank should be inspected and pumped every three to five years, and to ensure this is done by a licensed company, such as Tidy Services. He compared septic tank maintenance to car maintenance, "If you spend a little bit on septic tank maintenance you can avoid costly repairs," Phillips said. Ways to tell if you need to have your septic tank inspected include water back ups in your home, a foul odor around your septic tank, or spongy, green grass. "Properly maintaining your septic tank can keep up the value of your home, keep water around your home safe, and help keep the environment clean," Phillips explained.



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Portable Restrooms

If you have been to an outdoor concert, sporting event, marathon or non-profit event in the New River Valley you have probably seen a portable restroom provided by Tidy Services. After all, they are the only company offering this service in the local market. Capacity isn't an issue for Tidy Services – they even provide maroon and orange portable restrooms for Virginia Tech


football games to get fans in the Hokie spirit. However, not all portable restrooms are created equal. Tidy Services can provide portable restrooms for all types of events and people – Barack Obama, George Bush and Brad Paisley have even rented their own personal units. Tidy Services has portable restrooms specific for long-term use locations, such as construction sites, as well as handicap accessible units. If you are looking for the full-package experience when it comes to



portable restrooms, you can even rent a restroom trailer – perfect for weddings and special events. Some of these units are even equipped with air condition.

Additional Services

In addition to septic tank maintenance and portable restrooms, Tidy Services offers roll off dumpsters and grease traps. Even though the world of portable restrooms

and septic tanks isn't for those with a weak stomach, Phillips and his team truly enjoy the opportunity to meet and assist individuals who reside in the Roanoke, New River Valley and surrounding areas. "It's not for everyone; you have to be able to stomach the odor and sight of the waste," Phillips said. So while the smell may not be for everyone, those on the Tidy team exhibit a hard work ethic, desire to serve, and love for the community they get to call home. 





Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:
How important is maintaining respect for all stakeholders with your business? It's the most important thing.

Respect for people >

Have you ever considered the different way employees are referred to? I've heard associates, partners, resources, warm bodies, and human capital, to name a few.

And when you talk about your customers, do you whine about their incessant demands, or listen to them with care when they are dissatisfied?

And how do your team members treat each other? Is there an "I win, you lose" culture, or does the attitude "What can I do for you?" prevail?

Your attitude and actions toward employees, customers, and suppliers are an indication of your Respect for People. Respect for People is a critical principle that all organizations should strive for if they want to pursue operational excellence. We would all like to think that we respect those we work with, but consider these subtle ways we don't:

- When a mistake happens, the first question asked is "Who did it?"
- When you demand 60- or 90-day payment terms to suppliers.
- When an employee doesn't have safe and proper tools to do the job.
- When a team member raises an issue, or asks for information from management, and no one replies.
- When a client uses your customer feedback process to ask a question and no one responds.

Now consider these options:

- Ask "How did the mistake happen?" and "How can we improve the process?"

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- Negotiate with each supplier to determine acceptable terms for both parties.
- Ensure each employee has a clearly understood process, has been properly trained, works in a safe environment, and has all the tools, equipment and information to do the job.
- When any customer, team member, or supplier makes a request or raises an issue, have the courtesy to respond in a timely manner.

I've found that small businesses usually do well with this principle, enabling them to grow and have long-term success. But as organizations grow, this principle is often ignored as the organization becomes more "corporate" and short-term gains take priority. This is a key reason why organizations eventually struggle or fail.

There is no principle more important to an organization than respect for people, and no priority should be given to any activity that violates it. Think otherwise? Let me hear from you. 

Send your questions or comments to Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com



Your attitude and actions toward employees, customers, and suppliers are an indication of your Respect for People.

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all photos: by Robin

Kimberly Billings, director of operations and Waynette Anderson

Back stage, front stage, all over >

Executive Summary:

Waynette Anderson's Sponsor Hounds events management and marketing company served as catalyst to "a happening scene" at the foot of Star City's Mill Mountain known as Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges.

By Robin Scott

FRONT got an insider for this job. We identified the contract photographer for Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges and begged her to give us the behind the scenes scoop on the concert and festival circuit at this venue that's growing in popularity. Here's her perspective, in words and pictures.

I've been a photographer for Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges going on three years. In the time I have photographed the events there, I find one thing that stands head and shoulders above the crowd, and that is Waynette's fortitude, strength, hard work, and love for what she does. She

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The Mid-Atlantic Cajun Festival

has a genuine love for Dr Pepper Park, and even more so, a love of community.

The outdoor entertainment venue offers a gorgeous and unique view of the Roanoke River and the Mill Mountain Star. It is also the only outdoor venue where dogs are ALWAYS welcome!

Dr Pepper Park donates to a number of area non-profits through their volunteer program. Last year, (2016), they donated well over \$12,000.00. One hundred percent of the money that Dr Pepper Park needs to remain operational comes from the support of local, regional, and national sponsors. One of the many unique things

Let's Party! >

Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges hosts concerts and festivals. Here's a list of current bookings, but visit www.drpepperpark.com and LIKE/Follow Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges on Facebook or call 204-2414 for updated information.

JUNE 9 Rumours Fleetwood Mac Tribute

JUNE 23 . . . Fuel Award-Winning American Rock

JULY 4 Red NOT Chili Peppers Red Hot Chili Peppers Tribute

JULY 14 Mostley Crue Motley Crue Tribute

AUG 11 Completely Unchained Van Halen Tribute

SEP 8 Trial By Fire Journey Tribute

OCT 13 The Wildflowers Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers Tribute

AUG 26 Roanoke Wing Fest

OCT 7 The Great Pumpkin Smash



One of many guests enjoying the music

about Dr Pepper Park is that they are privately owned on private property. They do not receive any financial support from the State of Virginia or the City of Roanoke.

Waynette, who owns Sponsor Hounds and

River Rock Entertainment, has been in business for over 10 years. She began her career in the fine jewelry industry managing retail stores for 13 years. She then worked in radio and semi-professional sports for 10 years. While working for the radio



Waynette handing out free t-shirts

A group of seven chili peppers are arranged on a dark, textured wooden surface. Six of the peppers are green, and one is bright red. They are positioned diagonally across the frame, with the red pepper standing out prominently in the center-left. The lighting creates highlights on the glossy skin of the peppers.

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Pandora's Box, A Tribute to Aerosmith

station, she realized that her true passion lied in her desire to create and promote events. With the encouragement of her husband, she took a leap of faith and established, Sponsor Hounds, Inc.

Waynette's motivations are being able to do what she truly loves to do every day, and

happiness is her daily goal. Every day that she is able to run Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges, she wakes up happy! The smiles on the faces of the guests that attend are her greatest reward. Come out this year and visit Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges! The concerts are as wonderful as the people who attend them! Let's make 2017 the best year yet! 



Rumours, a Tribute to Fleetwood Mac



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Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

Executive Summary:
*To be protectable,
a business name
has to be distinctive.*

A name with distinction >

Our client called me because he was getting ready to re-brand his restaurant. "OK, we decided on the name," he said. "We want to call it the GOLD STAR GRILL. Please register that trademark for us."

I ran a quick check with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. "Sorry, that's no good," I said. "Someone else already has a registration for GOLD STAR GRILL for use with restaurants. So the trademark examiner definitely would reject your application. You'll have to pick something else. Why don't you all get together and brainstorm a list of names, and then we can tell you which ones look like they can be registered?"

He agreed and signed off. Then he called me back a couple of hours later. "Since GOLD STAR GRILL isn't available, we want to go with GOLD STAR BAR AND LOUNGE," he said.

I answered immediately. "Sorry, that can't be registered either," I said.

"Are you sure?" he said. "Did you check already?"

"No, but for trademark purposes, there's no difference between this idea and your last idea," I said. "The general principle is that if a name is likely to confuse the public, then the newer user of the name loses to the older user of the name. And to figure out if a name confuses the public, you look at (1) how similar the products or services are and (2) how similar the names are."

"Here, we've already got a company using the name GOLD STAR GRILL," I said. Since both you and the GOLD STAR GRILL company are providing restaurant and bar services, point (1) is against you."

"As for point (2), in determining how similar names are, you look only at the distinctive parts of the name, and not at the parts that just describe what you do. So for example in GOLD STAR GRILL the word GOLD STAR is the only

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

distinctive part, since GRILL just describes what any restaurant does (i.e., it has a grill). Similarly, in your proposed name GOLD STAR BAR AND LOUNGE, the words BAR and LOUNGE just describe what any restaurant does. So for trademark purposes, the words BAR and LOUNGE and GRILL are all ignored."

"So if you ignore BAR and LOUNGE, then our name for trademark purposes is GOLD STAR?" he said.

"Right, and since you also ignore GRILL, the other guy's name for trademark purposes also is GOLD STAR," I said. "So the names are the same, and since he already has a registration, you lose."

"Got it," he said. "We'll go back to the drawing board."

"Why don't you send me a bunch of different names, and we'll vet them all for you?" I asked.

"OK!" he said.

He called again the next day. "OK, we've decided on

“ ”

The general principle is that if a name is likely to confuse the public, then the newer user of the name loses to the older user of the name. And to figure out if a name confuses the public, you look at (1) how similar the products or services are and (2) how similar the names are.

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BIG LICK GOLD STAR RESTAURANT," he said.

"I hate to break it to you, but that won't work either," I said. "BIG LICK is just another name for Roanoke, which means that it's just a descriptive term. It's not distinctive."



In determining how similar names are, you look only at the distinctive parts of the name, and not at the parts that just describe what you do.

"Lots of businesses use place names in their business names," he said.

"Yes, but the place names themselves aren't protectable," I said. "Terms like BIG LICK or NEW RIVER VALLEY are the names of geographic places where the business is located. This makes those terms descriptive. Just like BAR or LOUNGE or GRILL they only describe the business, and so for trademark registration purposes they are ignored."

"Why are they ignored?" he said.

"Because when the government gives a business a registered trademark, it's essentially allowing that business to monopolize that name," I said. "If a business could monopolize the name of the place where it does business, then other businesses

WORKPLACE *wisdom*

By Christine Liana



QA non-profit organization asked me to do grant work for them. After meeting with their representative, I did preliminary research at his request that resulted in several hours' worth of my time, which I sent to him with my contract, both at his request. He said they'd pay me a percentage of the grant if one was awarded. I informed him that payment should be made separately and not from the grant, and my fee was reasonable. He didn't inform me of their decision until I called to ask, and he sounded evasive. They didn't hire me for the project. I suspect they took my legwork and delegated it internally to do the work for free. What should I do next time?

Your scam meter should be on full alert after this experience. You're correct: according to the Grant Professionals Association, payment should not be made from the grant, and grant writers are paid for their work regardless if a grant is awarded. Unless you told this outfit that you're working as a volunteer, it looks like they sent you on a fool's errand and stole your work. Next time, clarify when payment for the work begins, get it writing, and get paid at least a deposit before you release any portion of your work to anyone – no matter how nice they seem at first.

Got a question or an issue you're dealing with at work?
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P E R S P E C T I V E S

wouldn't be able to tell customers their location."
"So we can't protect any geographic terms?" he said.


"Not necessarily," I said. "If a business uses a geographic term for a place where the business isn't located, then it can be distinctive. So for example, MERIDIAN BAR AND GRILL would be considered distinctive in Roanoke, Virginia, but not in Meridian, Mississippi."

"So can we not use GOLD STAR at all?" he said.

"You might be able to," I said. "In order to use GOLD STAR as part of a name that could be registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, you would have to combine it with other words that are truly distinctive. A distinctive word is a word that does not describe the business but instead either suggests a characteristic of the business without describing it (like using ON THE ROCKS or TIPSY instead of BAR or LOUNGE) or else is entirely unrelated to the business (like using ROSE or NIGHTINGALE or TRANSCENDENTAL, none of which have anything to do with bars or restaurants)."

"So TRANSCENDENTAL GOLD STAR RESTAURANT would work?" he said.

"It might," I said.

In the end, they got together and brainstormed a long list of names, which we reviewed one by one. They settled on a distinctive name that we're now in the process of registering with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. It was frustrating for our client to have to give up on the name that they had wanted, but in the end they were glad that they had checked with us before spending a lot of time and money building up a brand that they didn't own. 

Note: *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn't legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when evaluating a potential trademark or business name, applying to register a trademark, etc.*



Terms like BIG LICK or NEW RIVER VALLEY are the names of geographic places where the business is located. This makes those terms descriptive, and so for trademark registration purposes they are ignored.



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Whitt Babcock, Coach Fuente, Chief Wilson, Chief Sisson, Coach Williams

Community College embraces two-way effort >

Executive Summary:

New River Community College's ACCE program dispenses "community currency" as a practical means to accomplish its goals.

By Caitlyn Scaggs

Hope is something we can all use more. Hope is something that motivates us, encourages us, and gives us reason to press on. Hope is also something that students in Montgomery County now have because access to community college has been made available to all.

While the Presidential Suite at Lane Stadium is often filled with Virginia Tech (VT) Football fans, on May 8, 2017 it was filled with community leaders, community members, and representatives from various Virginia Tech athletic programs. This group gathered to hear about a major positive change within Montgomery County. Everyone came together to hear about the New River Community College (NRCC) program Access to Community College Education (ACCE).

ACCE first began in Giles County and was then

implemented in the City of Radford and Floyd County. In the coming academic year it will also be implemented in Montgomery County, thanks to public funding from various municipalities in Montgomery County. This program ensures that all students can graduate high school and attend community college, regardless of financial need.

The community gathering was well attended and included appearances from VT Athletic Director Whitt Babcock, VT Men's Basketball Coach Buzz Williams, VT Football Coach Justin Fuente, and local government officials. Various leaders and champions of the ACCE program spoke about what the program is and why it is so significant to our community.

Blacksburg Police Chief Anthony Wilson is a huge proponent of this program. He first became involved because of his desire to support the growth of police officers from within the community. That program, called Books to Badges, was the early beginnings of ACCE in Montgomery County. Chief Wilson partnered with Angie Covey, the Executive Director of the New River Community College Education Foundation, to make this a reality. Chief Wilson shared that his vision was always about much more than home grown police officers. His vision was about community building.

The seriousness of Chief Wilson's message could not be overlooked. Chief Wilson shared, "as a community that has experience


horrendous violence the answer is in reinventing community and reinventing the village.” His involvement in local tragedies has made him crave a solution that is lasting and truly brings about positive transformation and permanent restoration. Chief Wilson sees that solution as coming together in a united and supportive way, ensuring that members of the community do not “slip through the cracks” after high school graduation.

Although the most salient benefit of ACCE is ensuring education, the benefits do not stop there. Students enrolled in ACCE are expected to give back with “community currency.” Specifically, each year ACCE students are required to give 80 hours of their time in community service. Chief Wilson shared this teaches students that the community will support them and “do their part,” but they must also do theirs. It creates feelings of inclusiveness and ownership.

After Chief Wilson shared the heart of the ACCE program Covey discussed the logistics of this program. “This is a complete community project,” said Covey. She also emphasized financial need is not required. Angie shared that when finances are part of the criteria it creates “invisible barriers.” Students are still required to fill out FAFSA forms but not in order to qualify. Rather, the FAFSA form

ensures that if a student qualifies for financial aid it will be used first and then ACCE will close the funding gap.

While ACCE will be new to Montgomery County it has been in Giles County for two years, which means the effects are already being felt. Not only has the first class of ACCE students already graduated but Covey shared, “Kids are saying, ‘I’m going to finish high school and do that ACCE Program at New River.’” There is a change in attitude and ambition because now education beyond high school is within reach for all. Additionally, high school students have fresh resolve to maintain their GPA, as a 2.5 is required for ACCE participation. Covey said, “We are finding it is making a difference in their academic performance.”

Two ACCE students stood up and addressed the crowd, one of which was Austin Johnson. He shared how ACCE has given him opportunity and a sense of belonging within the community. He also faced the audience and said, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart for caring about the students in your community.” Thanks to access to education Austin, and students like Austin, are full of opportunity, excitement, and future possibilities—they are full of hope. 



Coach Buzz Williams with Two ACCE Students



Chief Wilson Speaking



Bank of the James in Roanoke

Bank of the James is a relatively new player in the Roanoke banking community. Its origins began in Lynchburg where it was established in 1999. Though Bank of the James has its deepest roots in the Region 2000 market (essentially the Lynchburg MSA), it recognized early on the need for a strong performing local bank in several of Lynchburg's key surrounding markets. Since 1999, the bank has expanded to include operations in 13 Virginia locations.

As a community bank, Bank of the James focuses on relationships. Its leaders believe that getting to know the bank's customers enables it to deliver services tailored to the unique needs of the residents and businesses in the communities it serves. Each of the bank's 13 branches is fully managed and directed by professionals from those respective communities who understand the ethos and aspirations of their constituents. This understanding allows loans and mortgages to be approved locally.

What began in Roanoke in 2013 as a mortgage loan office expanded in February 2016 to a full-service presence in the Roanoke Valley. Asset growth has been significant, as evidenced by

an increase exceeding \$12 million in the past nine months.

Housed in a pleasant office on Electric Road in Southwest Roanoke County, Bank of the James has three banking professionals to serve the needs of their growing clientele. The full array of banking services includes personal banking products (checking and savings, certificates of deposit, customer check cashing and personal loans), online and mobile banking services, and retail lending including home equity lines of credit. The bank also offers a full suite of commercial banking, treasury management, and home mortgage products from this location. Clients who need investment services, insurance services, and employee benefits can also be serviced locally.

In the words of Bradford Harris, Roanoke Market President, "We are large enough to offer all the products and services of a large bank, but we deliver them using a community banking model." Harris goes on to explain that he feels Bank of the James hires the best people in the markets it serves. "We understand the markets we are in, and our employees are entrenched in their local

markets. Our employees' familiarity with their individual markets enables us to craft customized solutions that meet our clients' financial needs. We view ourselves as partners with the businesses and people we serve." He believes it's important to small business owners that they get not only competitive pricing but also decision-making by people who understand the market and the unique market-driven factors that can be adequately and accurately assessed only by individuals with full market awareness.

Harris firmly believes that the success of Bank of the James is based on its focus on service. "Nothing is more frustrating to customers", he states, "than a bank that doesn't respond in a timely manner. We pride ourselves on prompt and accurate service." Harris went on to say, "we always want customers to know where we are in the process."

The makeup of the Roanoke staff affirms the bank's philosophy of hiring local talent. All three have deep banking roots in the Roanoke Valley. [An interesting side note: two of the three who comprise the Roanoke contingent are named Brad Harris. No kidding! One is Bradford K. Harris, the other is J. Bradley Harris.] Bradford Harris's 18 years of commercial lending and relationship management experience is primarily Roanoke-based. Bradley Harris, Mortgage Lender, has a ten-year background in lending, most of which has been in the Roanoke area. Desiree Kalafut, Assistant Vice President and Consumer Lender/Branch Manager, also has 18

years of Roanoke area banking experience.

Technology and innovation are hallmarks of Bank of the James. According to its 2016 Message to Shareholders, the bank boasts a robust offering of products and services using the latest technology to provide a seamless, convenient, and secure banking environment from the home, the office, or on-the-go. Clients can easily customize their mobile and online banking experience to suit their specific banking requirements on their chosen devices. The bank's flair for innovation can be recognized in its newest Charlottesville office which provides interactive digital displays and touch screen banking, complete with Wi-Fi, a coffee bar, a digital community board, and an outdoor patio—all intended to bring some fun to the business of banking.

In the spirit of serving its respective communities, Bank of the James strongly believes in giving back to the communities which it serves through sponsorships, giving, and volunteering. The bank's employees freely give of their time to a wide range of community organizations by serving on local boards, participating in arts programs and health and human services endeavors, volunteering with charities, mentoring, and sponsoring high school scholarships.

Bank of the James in Roanoke operates its full-service office at 3562 Electric Road (in Promenade Park) from 9:00-5:00 Monday-Thursday, and 9:00-6:00 on Fridays. An on-site ATM as well as mobile and online banking provide 24-hour service.



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A church's public space >

Executive Summary:

Call it a ministry—or just consider it a service—this Blacksburg church offers a convenient community meeting spot.


By Caitlyn Scaggs

Blacksburg is unique. A small town feel with big town amenities. It's a close-knit community that affords people of differing nationalities, viewpoints, skills, and loves to interact with freedom and respect. For Northstar Church, it only made sense to establish an event venue in downtown Blacksburg, to be present within the community they care so deeply about. They have done so by establishing the meeting and event center, The Reserve.

Located on Draper Street, this center was created in space that was a series of bars and dance clubs in past iterations. With some elbow grease, fresh paint, and a lot of volunteer hours the space has been transformed into a light, airy, open venue for community use. Lead Pastor Jeff Noble explained, "We are eager to be more visible to the community, enjoy a space in the heart of Blacksburg's dining

and social center and to facilitate connections with our neighbors."

Some of the church's functions, like youth group and college meetings, will utilize this space. However, the purpose transcends those internal to Northstar Church. Noble said, "The space is strategically designed for meetings, study, fun and events. Whether you're a college student needing a place for coffee, WIFI and study or a leadership team needing a spot to getaway for planning, the Reserve is a center for informal and formal relationships and organizational use."

The location in downtown Blacksburg pairs a fun and fresh atmosphere with functional meeting space. It is available for event use and has walk-in hours during the day. "We hope to invite people into a larger sense of community through the Reserve," shared Noble. 





On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Main Street and Suburbia Malls may be exiting for good for the most part... but the possibility of survival (and thriving) could still exist if some basic marketing principles are applied.

Saving brick and mortar >

No wonder.

That's what I thought on my most recent trip to the mall. It's a large anchor retail department store; and every second I was in there it was as if the square footage itself was screaming out "online shopping is killing us!"

For one thing, the real estate was about the only thing that could scream, since it was a ghost town. Not only were there practically zero customers, there were practically zero sales associates.

Has it really gotten this bad, I wondered?

Yes. No need to hesitate on that answer.

I eventually did make a purchase (on my own—no one around to help). And with hardly any prompting when I finally found a clerk at register, she confirmed it. "This internet is putting us out of business."

No wonder.

You would think there would be some distinctions between the online virtual sales experience and the brick-and-mortar reality sales experience. There are. But not enough for Mr. and Ms. Customer to notice. And increasingly, the online stores are winning the battle for market share.

Not that there's anything wrong with either choice; but if the Main Street and Suburbia Mall retail store is going to survive, good grief... at least change your game plan. Ya' can't keep doin' it the same ol' way, folks... that how online beat you in the first place. Online had a very quick meeting (maybe ten minutes) and wrote up a note on Google docs (no white board here) the following master plan: What can we do to get people to buy online? Online didn't even have to think about brick-and-mortar that much. Online just knew the plan would work if it could accomplish one thing: make it easy. Once the pitch for convenience was made and accepted, then online moved to pricing.

But back to my last trip to the mall. Here are a few things brick-and-mortar could do, coming from my simplest perspective as a consumer. (I'm sure their studies have demonstrated these same ideas; but for some reason they are not being embraced.)

Gift Wrapping

"We don't do that anymore, except at holidays... and then we usually have volunteers from nonprofits who do it as a fundraiser," I was told. Really? Even online offers gift wrapping service. Some people choose your store because they don't want to wait for shipping. Why? Maybe they're on the way to

the event or it's coming up soon, and they think, hey, I can get this wrapped, too... knock it all out.

Discount Warehouse

Do you know what does work when it comes to advantages of a physical store versus a virtual one? One experience is the "warehouse" setup. Shoppers love a bargain; and if they take the time to stop and walk in your store, they'll absolutely dig through your bargain inventory over searching all over the internet for merchandise they're not even sure they were looking for in the first place. Even high end stores and boutiques can employ this technique—wide open floor space with a deliberate bin configuration or tables, racks, shelves for the same quality merchandise that just happens to be significantly discounted.

Creative Staffing

You can't have an empty or understaffed store. Sorry, but just because the internet has blown you out of the water when it comes to labor; you can't just get rid of sales associates. Find a way to still have people on the floor, and all of the customers on Main Street and at Suburbia Mall will notice the difference. Before you say "We can't!" consider changing your compensation and performance plans for existing employees; flex scheduling; internships; contractors; co-training programs; incentives; or something as crazy as exchanging in-store gift certificates or credit for volunteers to help you cover your service needs. Anything to keep real people in front of your real prospects.

Special Events

Some of you are doing this one already. Great. You get it. But think beyond "our special sale" mentality; and consider add-on or collaborative programming. Tie something in with something else that is happening simultaneously in the community. Instead of protecting your fortress so much, reach out to other merchants in the mall or down the street, and do everything you can to produce momentum to the area's foot traffic. Consider the multi-networking model and recreational or cultural experiences from the popularity of Paint Nite (where girls just wanna have fun) to community affairs (from local artists/performers to public safety initiatives) to charitable affairs to educational pursuits (demonstrations, teaching, presentations) to celebrity endorsements. In other words, add entertainment or a whole level of experiential service to your store's visit. Online does this too, but you can do it in ways online can't.

No New Taxes

Brick-and-mortar owner-operators won't like hearing this one from me. Marketplace Fairness initiatives (where there is a movement from merchants and other stakeholders to ensure online transactions are taxed locally, the same as physical stores) are not going to save you. Whether you support such tax reformation or not, basing any portion of your strategic or financial operations on it is rather ill-advised. People aren't



You would think there would be some distinctions between the online virtual sales experience and the brick-and-mortar reality sales experience. There are. But not enough for Mr. and Ms. Customer to notice. And increasingly, the online stores are winning the battle for market share.

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His involvement in local tragedies has made him crave a solution — Page 37

buying online to avoid paying sales tax; and shifting the burden for all online retailers to collect and manage local sales taxes is going to favor the larger online operators who can quickly adapt and comply (Amazon, for example, already collects sales tax for Virginia; most people are unaware of that.) But if you do fight for the Marketplace Fairness Act, I hope you'll include the caveat to reduce all retail sales taxes (for all sellers across the board) since advocates have claimed the unfairness represents gazillions of dollars and missed revenue for the state.

Friendly Return Policies

Brick-and-mortar should beat the pants off online in this area. It is very rare an online retailer will offer a full refund that includes the return shipping or restocking. I had a local retail store manager tell me that he suffers the loss when a customer returns an item to his store that was purchased online. That's a simple fix that should happen at the corporate level. On the street level, a store should manage returns and exchanges with policies that keep that customer coming back.

Customer Loyalty & Reward Programs

Online is a master at this one. But more brick-and-mortar shops should offer rewards that are distinctive to the individual store. One could argue that all loyalty and rewards should be extended to a customer no matter where he purchases product; but a Main Street or Suburbia Mall could still add on incentives at the local level that are unique and recognize the real-time presence of Mr. and Ms. Hometown Consumer. Coming up with how that looks and works is all part of the buzz and excitement of shopping locally... or could be.

Capitalize On Face-To-Face

What advantage is there really to being there in person when it comes to shopping? Have you really thought about that? Think about this in the simplest terms. An online form—or even a telemarketer or customer

service chat rep really only works off your demographics, your consumer profile, and the data they have collected on you. You might be asked if you're having a good day. Going beyond that, consumers get suspicious or nervous about their privacy. But everyone from the clerk to the sales associate to the custodian to the manager at a store is right there in front of the consumer. The staff can comment on your outfit, hand you a coupon right on the spot, speak to your children, help you find something, hand you a drink, or let you sample something. More physical stores, shops, and boutiques should capitalize on the advantage of having that customer right on the premises.


Combo Deals

Again, online does this. But online partnerships and collaborations aren't usually specific to the local market so much. Something as simple as having coupons for the restaurant next door or parking validation or package-pricing for related merchandisers can make a world of difference. Would you consider buying your kayak at an outdoor shop if they included a buy-one-get-one ticket for a local river excursion? Offer combinations and promote the heck out of them.

Online, Too

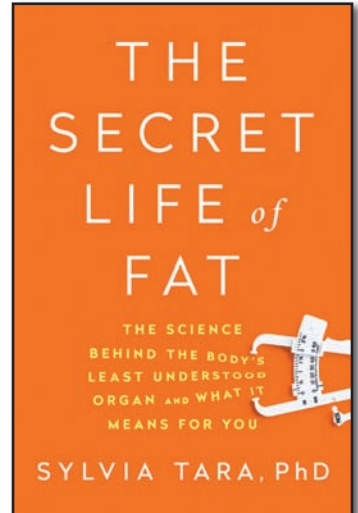
Play the game. If you're not online, get there. The internet has already crossed the threshold for shopping preference; so your store should be accessible and available there as well. But rather than make all of your transaction points the same, consider why a shopper stops by your store instead of clicking online. Realize that Mr. and Ms. Consumer have a choice; and you have some reasons to make whichever choice they make—the better one.

Whether they call, go online, or drop by—do something obvious that confirms they made the right choice.

They shouldn't wonder if the experience would have been better elsewhere. 

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



The Skinny on Fat

Fat—we obsess about it and we spend billions a year trying to combat it, but do we really understand what makes us fat? In *The Secret Life of Fat: The Science Behind the Body's Least Understood Organ and What It Means for You*, (W.W. Norton & Co., 2017), Sylvia Tara, PhD, explains that fat plays an important role in life. It's an organ and produces many hormones that our body need. One, called leptin, is crucial for brain health, strong bones, and reproduction. How your body handles and stores fat is due to many factors, such as energy level, eating patterns, hormones, genetics and heritage. Tara cites many experiments, years of study and stories from researchers to help us understand the complexities of fat. Will this help me shed the ten pounds I've been trying to lose since I was 20? Nope, now I just talk to those 10 pounds but it was an interesting read and certainly non-technical for this liberal arts major.

—Paula Alston

Empowering

We feel personal power in the inspired creativity that surrounds an exciting project, notably near a tight deadline. After the time crunch passes, the feeling of control usually fades. Author Robert Greene mentors us that the elusive feeling is called mastery, and then reveals how to consistently capture, hold on to, and to apply the power.

Greene's 20,000 hours of study and writing in the subject reveal deep insight which immerse the reader to discover your calling, find your hidden force, and hold the keys to the six steps to mastery. Sensitive story-telling connects the reader's awareness between concept and understanding, delivering a lasting connection to the author's life-changing ideas. Well selected, well told stories illustrate relevant historical successes that include familiar names like Charles Darwin and Henry Ford, along with the lesser-known Zora Neale Hurston, Hakuin Zenji, and others.

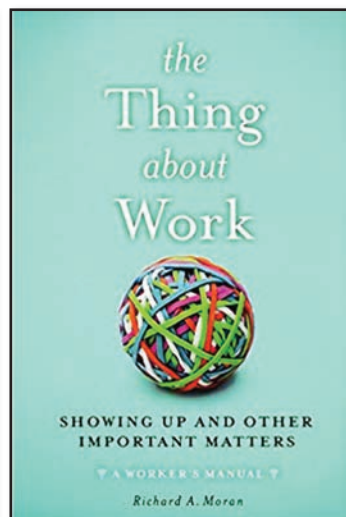
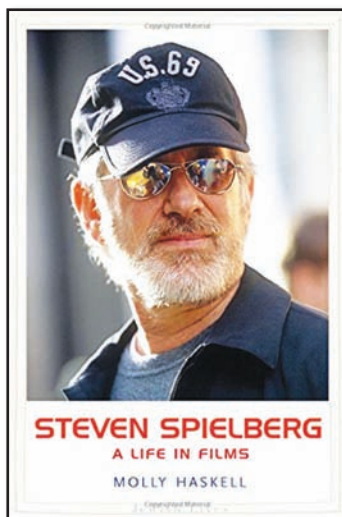
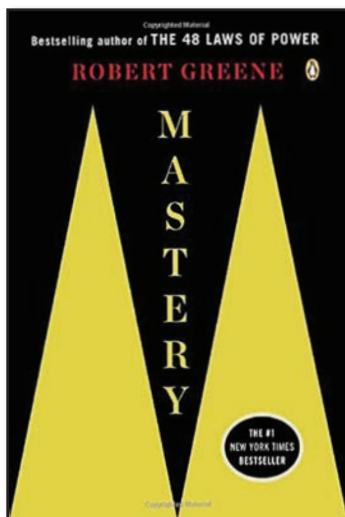
As I read the last words of this book and closed the back cover, *Mastery* (Penguin; 2013) earned immediate addition to the small collection of life-changing books displayed atop my bedroom bookcase. Not a breezy vacation read, yet highly approachable, the 352 page book achieved a #1 rank in the New York Times best sellers list. With a copyright of 2013, this book still ranks at #79 on Amazon's Motivation and Self-Improvement best sellers list. For good reason. *Mastery* is a well-researched, well-thought book that lives up to its name.

—Robert Turcotte

Lights, camera, action... cut

Sorry. I just can't.

I would be breaking a rule here by publishing my first book review that I did not read in its entirety, but perhaps there's a lesson. I picked up Molly Haskell's *Steven Spielberg:*



A Life in Films (Yale University Press; 2017) simply because this man is a business and creative treasure whom I admire, and this book was a brand new release.

The lesson? Don't bother with the effort of writing a biography as a book if all you're going to do is compile like Wikipedia. I just couldn't finish it. You don't have to lose your voice even if all you are doing is describing someone or providing an introduction. Maybe it got better in the second half, but I left midway, even though there was no intermission. Quite suitable for a fourth grader writing a book report, though.

—Tom Field

Business buzzwords—not

Look up "business buzzwords" or "business clichés" and you'll find article after article about these irritating, overused phrases. In a world drowning in buzzwords, tweets, and hashtags, spouting mindless clichés in the workplace may seem harmless. But Richard Moran says using too many professional platitudes could be more problematic than you thought. "Not only can business clichés be annoying to others who hear them day in and day out, they are the language of laziness," says Richard Moran, author of *The Thing About Work: Showing Up and Other Important Matters* (Routledge, 2016). "When you use them, you effectively fail to focus your thoughts and really identify what you're trying to communicate and accomplish." Accessible for all working

generations and speaking from the most traditional of suited workplaces to the domains (and domain names) of Zuckerberg hoodies and office dogs, his newest book offers tips for what not to say in your day-to-day. For instance:

"It is what it is" is the sound of defeat. The subtext of "it is what it is" is: "I give up." That negativity enforces the kind of thinking that kills projects and how coworkers understand your attitude.

The only thing that happens at the "end of the day" is, well, the end of the day. Referencing the elusive "end of the day" is common in politics, academics, and especially business. *Really?* and BUT often exude snark, bad attitude, or are just plain irritating.

"I don't know; what do you want to do?" is a known verbal con-job. When nobody knows what exactly they want to do, it's likely the group will settle on a decision nobody in the group wanted at all. It's best to stop these indecisive circles in their tracks with an assertive, "I don't want to do that."

—Dottie DeHart

(**The reviewers:** Paula Alston is a FRONT reader; Robert Turcotte is with Entre Computer; an involved, lifelong Roanoke resident who believes that our community is what we make it; Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; Dottie DeHart is a publicist.)



Gauntlet scene >

The Advancement Foundation's 3rd Annual Gauntlet Business Competition Awards Ceremony was held at Vinton War Memorial on May 11, recognizing entrepreneurial pursuits of 84 individuals representing 54 businesses in Roanoke and Botetourt.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Scholarships from KI >

Kiwanis Club of Roanoke awarded \$10,500 in career and technical education scholarships; including two "Super Achievers" **Nick St Pierre** of Burton Center for Arts & Technology and **Nyama Yarmah** of Patrick Henry High School / ROTEC who each received \$1,500.



TechNite Awards >

The **Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council's** (RBTC) TechNite awards banquet was held at Hotel Roanoke on April 21. Awards and recipients were: Regional Go-to-Geek: Thomas Weeks, Virginia Tech Cyber Range; STEM Educator: Nick Cornwell, Montgomery County Public Schools and Hannah Weiss, Science Museum of Western Virginia; Entrepreneur: Baraka Kosongo, Volatia Language Network Inc.; Innovator: Josep Bassaganya-Riera, BioTherapeutics; Regional Leadership: Greg Feldmann, Skyline Capital Strategies; Rising Star: Qualtrax, Inc.; Ruby Award: Sam English, Attention Point. The RBTC is a non-profit group of businesses and over 250 organizations that promote growth of the region's technology sector.



Helping the Animals >

Foundation for Roanoke Valley awarded a grant of \$25,000 to **Angels of Assisi** to purchase an X-ray machine for its facility. With this machine, Angels of Assisi can offer full-service veterinary care at a low cost to the community. The Foundation also awarded grants of \$3,700 each to Mountain View Humane and Franklin County Humane Society Planned Pethood & Adoption Center to support their spay/neuter programs. The grant comes from the Foundation's Phalia M. and Guy M. Kinder Fund, which supports agencies and organizations that effectively prevent cruelty to animals, support the research and medical advancement for curing diseases in animals, support the professional education of animal caretakers, and programs promoting the positive relationship between humans and animals.



Service to Others >

Member One Federal Credit Union executive team helped serve the Lynchburg community by volunteering at Lynchburg Daily Bread, a non-profit organization by serving meals to 92 guests to support Daily Bread's mission of providing a healthy and hot meal to the hungry in the community. This support was preceded by a donation of \$1,000 to Lynchburg Daily Bread as part 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.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Taking Shelter the Environmental Way >

Shelter Alternatives, Inc. of Blacksburg received awards on April 20 at Viridiant's Sustainable Leadership Awards in Richmond, for homes built in 2016 in the New River Valley. Their award for *Single Family New Construction Project of the Year* was for a home in Craig County, whose owners lost their previous home in a fire on the site. Shelter also received honors for designing and building the top three High Performance EarthCraft Homes in Virginia. Viridiant is a non-profit organization supporting sustainable building processes through education, consultation, and certification. Operated by Viridiant in Virginia, D.C., and Maryland, EarthCraft is comprised of green building certification programs addressing climate, energy, and water issues for the southeastern U.S. and has operated in Virginia since 2006.



Special Playground Coming to Botetourt County >

The **Addy Grace Foundation** received a \$50,000 grant from the **Foundation for Roanoke Valley** to build a playground in Botetourt County for special-needs children and adults. The playground will be located at the future YMCA in Daleville. The Foundation for Roanoke Valley currently administers 320 named endowment funds established by individuals and families for the perpetual benefit of communities.



High School Students Help the Community >

Students in the Building Trades class at **Roanoke Technical Education Center (ROTEC)** built picnic tables, park benches, a utility storage bin, and a sign for Goodwill GoodGuides® Garden. On April 25, the class delivered them to the Garden, located at 3902 Shenandoah Ave, Roanoke. For information about reserving a space in this community garden, contact Jaleesa Young at jyoung@goodwillvalleys.com or (540) 529.4871.



Ready to serve >

American National Bank held its grand opening for the new Roanoke office on Ogden Road on May 19.



Brent Treash, Emory & Henry College

Emory & Henry's Ampersand Day >

Emory & Henry College hosted its second Ampersand Day on April 21. The student projects presented at Ampersand Day showed work that includes undergraduate research, creative endeavors, internships, and entrepreneurial projects. The event included a collaboration between the United Way of southwest Virginia and the school's Mass Communications Department.



Foundation for Roanoke Valley

Scholarships Awarded >

Foundation for Roanoke Valley awarded more than \$100,000 in educational scholarships during its annual scholarship dinner at the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center on May 11. Over a thousand scholarship applications were received, and the Foundation administered 50 endowed scholarship funds. The Foundation's largest scholarship of at least \$10,000 is the "Holland Scholar Award," given annually to an outstanding graduating senior from the Roanoke Valley showing exceptional promise in his or her future college career. For 2017, the \$10,000 scholarship was presented to Barika Mirza, a senior at Glenvar High School. Mirza will attend Virginia Commonwealth University in the fall.

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

Career FRONT

WELLNESS FRONT



King

Dr. Anna Occhiuzzi-Flynn has joined Tuck Chiropractic Clinic in Botetourt County.



Crouch

Mandy Crouch, RN, BSN, was hired as director of nursing at Warm Hearth at Home in Blacksburg.



Nussbaum



Trestman

Michael S. Nussbaum, M.D., F.A.C.S., joined Carilion Clinic and Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine as chair of surgery; and

Robert Lee Trestman, Ph.D., M.D., joined as chair of psychiatry.



Shannon

Rhonda Shannon was promoted to vice president of finance, and **Keith Perry** was promoted to senior vice president and is chief information officer at Carilion.



Agee



Hartley

Nancy Howell Agee, Carilion Clinic president and CEO, was named to Modern Healthcare magazine's "Top 25 Women in Healthcare" for 2017; **Tracey Criss, M.D.**, was named to the inaugural class of the Carol Emmott Fellowship for Women Leaders in Health; **Hetzal Hartley, M.D.**, medical director for occupational medicine, was appointed by Gov. McAuliffe to

the medical advisory board for the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles; **Joseph Moskal, M.D.**, chair of Carilion's orthopaedics department, was recognized with an Achievement Award by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT

Roger Journell, a Class A machinist from Pearisburg, achieved 60 years employment at GE Power in Salem.



Nanda

Anoop Nanda was named president of Virginia Transformer Corp., the nation's second-largest provider of custom-engineered power electrical transformers.

and **Melanie F. Wheeler** was appointed senior vice president and board member at the Branch Group.

Harmony Tripp-Kiser, leasing consultant at the Reserve for CMG Leasing, Inc., was awarded the Virginia Apartment Management Association 2017 Leasing Professional of the Year Spotlight Award in April.



Rowan



McKee

Missy Rowan and **Erica McKee** have joined Lichtenstein Rowan, REALTORS®.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Wheeler

Bob Wills was hired as chief financial officer

RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

Anna Goltz of Feeding America Southwest Virginia was elected to serve as secretary, and Denise Hayes of the Roanoke Valley SPCA was elected to serve as treasurer on the board of the Virginia Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

EDUCATION FRONT



Freeman

Larry Freeman, associate professor of biomedical sciences and pathobiology at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech, was conferred the title of associate professor emeritus by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.



VandeVord

Pamela VandeVord, the N. Waldo Harrison Professor and interim head of the Department of Biomedical

Engineering and Mechanics at Virginia Tech, was elected to the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (AIMBE) College of Fellows.



Blythe



Havens

Richard Blythe was named dean of the Virginia Tech College of Architecture and



Wolfe



Grove

Urban Studies; **Luisa Havens** was named vice provost for enrollment management effective August 1; **Mary Leigh Wolfe**, head of the Department of Biological Systems Engineering, was elected 2017-2018 president-elect of ABET; **Ben Grove** was named assistant



Case



Barlow

director in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Global Programs and Virginia Cooperative Extension; **Jennifer Case** was appointed head of the Department of Engineering; **Marya Barlow** was named director of communications for the College of Architecture and

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Career FRONT



Shushok



Morris



Moga



Hansen



Wood

Urban Studies; **Frank Shushok** was named to the 2017-2018 list of American Council on

Education fellows; and **Elizabeth Hansen** was named director of data administration for the Facilities Department; and **Liza Morris** was named associate director of architectural planning in the Facilities Department's Office of University Planning at Virginia Tech.

Nancy M. Moga of Covington and **Charles T. Wood** of Richmond were named as Alumni

Distinguished Service Award recipients for 2017 at Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech's service recognition program acknowledged the following employees: 60 years: **Jane E. Johnston**, Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering; 50 years: **Walter F. O'Brien**, Department of Mechanical Engineering; 45 years: **Richard C. Cole**, School of Performing Arts; **Elizabeth L. Coleman**, Augusta County Virginia Cooperative Extension; **Ann K. Craig**, Institute for Critical Technology



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and Applied Science; **Betty F. Higginbotham**, Department of Statistics; **David G. Kingston**, Department of Chemistry; **Victoria T. Kok**, University Libraries; **Steven E. Lowe**, Department of Biochemistry; **Joseph C. Pitt**, Department of Philosophy; **Sandra W. Smith**, Office of the President.



Williams

MUNICIPAL FRONT

Shari Henry was appointed director of library services for Roanoke County.

*Compiled by
Christine Liana*

CULTURE FRONT

Nikki Williams was appointed as CEO of the Virginia Skyline Council.

“They are privately owned on private property”

— Page 26

First Fridays

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FRONT Notes

Goodbye Kroger Senior Discount

May 23rd was the last day at **Kroger** for senior citizens to get their 5% discount on Tuesdays. Kroger's Mid-Atlantic division announced that it's lowering the prices on approximately 3,000 items in stores in Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, so that all shoppers can benefit.

Record Tourism for Southwest Virginia

Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge tourism reached record numbers in 2016, according to STR, Inc. Hotel room revenues increased to over \$101 million. Thanks to investments from the Counties of Botetourt, Roanoke and Franklin; and the Cities of Roanoke and Salem; plus the support of over 1,250 businesses.

The Best of the Brunch

The Regency Room at Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center was recently named one of the

100 best restaurants for brunch in America by online reservation-booking platform OpenTable. The criteria must achieve a minimum overall score and number of qualifying reviews.

Insurance Office Building Purchase

Metis Holdings, recently purchased the former Allstate Insurance building on Electric Road in Roanoke for \$4 million. Planning to occupy up to 75,000 of the 165,000 sq. ft. building next year. Metis provides insurance, risk management, and related services. Its clients include Virginia Assoc. of Counties (VACORP).

JES Foundation Repair Comes to Salem

JES Foundation Repair opened a branch at 1401 Southside Drive in Salem. The family business specializes in residential and commercial foundation repair, crawl space encapsulation, basement waterproofing, and concrete leveling. In Virginia since 1993, JES Foundation Repair

merged with Evergreen Basement Systems in 2015. Jesse Waltz, P.E., president, co-founded JES with his wife Stella. JES Companies operates out of Virginia Beach, Chester, and Manassas, and added offices in Appomattox, Virginia; Whiteland, Indiana; and Columbia, South Carolina. JES was named to Fortune 5000 Fastest Growing Companies and Virginia Chamber of Commerce Fantastic 50.

Emergency Project

Bedford Memorial Hospital's emergency department will increase by 1,800 sq. ft. totaling approximately 7,500 sq. ft. The \$4 million expansion project is expected to start in June 2017 and open in March 2018. From the expansion, additional staff will be hired. In preparation for the work, temporary emergency quarters will be located to the hospital's second floor on May 18. A barrier will be in the parking lot on Whitfield Drive separating the EMS drop-off and walk-in patients. Since 2001, Centra and Carilion Clinic run the hospital

as part of a 50-50 partnership. Centra paid Carilion about \$12 million and assumed ownership July 1, 2014. In May 2016, Centra announced it would reopen Bedford Hospice House.

BWXT Receives Chancellor's Award

BWXT Technologies, Inc. (BWXT) of Lynchburg received the Chancellor's Award for Leadership in Philanthropy on April 18 at the Country Club of Virginia, hosted by Glenn DuBoise, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System. BWXT was nominated for the award by Central Virginia Community College (CVCC) of Lynchburg. This event, in its 12th year, honors leading philanthropists from each of Virginia's 23 community colleges. Besides annual fund gifts used primarily for scholarships, BWXT contributed to CVCC capital and endowment funding campaigns, and was a big contributor to the college's successful World Class Workforce Campaign, which provided the equipment for the college's new

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advanced manufacturing center in 2004. In 2007, BWXT helped CVCC acquire equipment and instructors for its machining quality control program. The CVCC Educational Foundation was established in 1981 and is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

Sheetz Hiring

Pennsylvania-based **Sheetz** convenience stores plans to hire approximately 3,400 employees companywide, including nearly 600 in Virginia. Nationwide jobs include corporate, distribution, transportation, food production, and store

jobs. The Pennsylvania-based company operates 550 stores in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, and North Carolina.

Save Southwest Virginia

Stephen Moret, head of the **Virginia Economic Development Partnership**, shared the future he sees for the largely rural, often-overlooked corner of the state. At the Southwest Virginia Economic Forum at UVA's College at Wise, Moret recently proposed several ways to revitalize southwest Virginia and increase jobs in the coal fields region. Citing troubling statistics

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showing southwest Virginia may lose 1,000 residents each year for the next decade, Moret said the region needs to add 250 new jobs each year besides the new jobs already coming in just to stay stable. Southside and southwest Virginia face other struggles due to the decline of the coal and manufacturing industries.

Moret's plan for growth and new jobs include: increasing workforce development training to match business needs; alter Virginia's tax structure to reduce taxes on technologically advanced manufacturing businesses; offer higher incentives to companies willing to relocate or expand in rural Virginia; and spending money to



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FRONT Notes

market rural Virginia, which the Commonwealth isn't doing.

A Smokin' Deal

The Tobacco Commission granted the **Virginia Cooperative Extension** \$104,000 for a "SOVA Agribusiness Information Technology Program," which is expected to increase productivity on farms through information technology. The program plans to work with approximately 80 farms from the tobacco region, and is expected to reimburse 33% of up to \$1,200 per producer for items including laptop computers, financial and agricultural software, and website development. For more information on the SOVA Agribusiness IT Program, contact Ashley Nauta at (434) 432-7770 or aswolfe@vt.edu.

Parker Design Acquisition

Civil engineering firm **Parker Design Group, Inc.** acquired **Stone Engineering, Inc.** of Rocky Mount. Stone Engineering serves Franklin County, Bedford, Henry, Roanoke, Pittsylvania, and Patrick counties. Parker Design serves Roanoke Valley, New River Valley, Smith Mountain Lake, and the Richmond area. The

acquisition will include more areas like Rocky Mount, Danville, Martinsville, and a portion of North Carolina.

Ramping Up Business

Six high-potential startups were selected to serve in the inaugural cohort at the **Regional Acceleration and Mentoring Program (RAMP)**, a business accelerator program launched June 1. The companies were chosen for their ability to expand and create jobs within the STEM-H field. Achomal Research Inc., Altede, Autonomous Flight Technologies, Inc., DESA, and Volatia will locate on the third floor of the Gill Memorial Building. Flex Metrics by SoftSolutions will be the anchor tenant on the first floor.

Grant Applications Due June 23

Roanoke County Parks, Recreation, and Tourism is accepting grant applications for fiscal year 2017-2018 Capital Improvement Incentive Fund (CIIF). This year, up to \$25,000 in matching funds will be awarded to park improvement projects. Approved grants may receive up to 50% of the cost of a project, up to \$5,000. Past CIIF funded projects include trail construction, provision of lighting or

fencing for sports fields, landscape improvements, playground expansion, and restroom construction. Grant applications will be accepted through an online form only, at www.RoanokeCountyParks.com/CIIF and are due June 23. Since the CIIF program began in 1994, Roanoke County awarded approximately \$1.2 million for park improvements, resulting in a total infrastructure investment of over \$4.2 million, thanks to the help of citizens and community partners.

How to Best Spend Transportation Money

Transportation for America (T4America), through the support of the Kresge Foundation, will assist the Roanoke Valley Transportation Planning Organization (RVTPO) with measuring and assessing transportation spending to bring the greatest return for citizens. The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission on behalf of the RVTPO is one of six recipients of a technical assistance program from T4America.

Nicer Than Shark Tank

The Advancement Foundation's third annual GAUNTLET Business Competition awards ceremony was held in

May at the Vinton War Memorial. Entrepreneurs opening or expanding businesses in Botetourt County or Roanoke County competed for over \$200,000 in cash, prizes, and in-kind products and services, donated by the Foundation and local businesses. Over 200 community and business leaders served as advisers and supported this program. GAUNTLET participants completed the 12-week business program, submitted their business plans, and presented to a panel of judges. The program is funded by the Governor's Building Collaborative Communities grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development.

New River Valley Awards

The **New River Valley Regional Commission** board of directors hosted a dinner ceremony in May at Doe Creek Farm in Pembroke recognizing their award recipients. Over 100 local government elected officials, state and federal representatives, and planning commission chairs attended. Floyd entrepreneur Woody Crenshaw received the Citizen of the Valley award. Bill Shelton, director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development received

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the Friend of the Valley award. Chris McKlarney, Giles County Administrator, received the Champion of the Valley award.

Farmers' Market on Wheels

Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP), a Roanoke-based non-profit, recently launched Mobile Market, a 16' box truck providing fresh, healthy, local food to residents of Roanoke neighborhoods who may otherwise lack access to fresh produce. Students

from James Madison University's Industrial Design program helped design and retrofit the truck. Mobile Market's third season started May 16 and runs through the end of October, making ten weekly stops throughout Roanoke. LEAP works with local farmers, businesses, partner organizations, and the community to create healthy communities. LEAP programs include LEAP Community Markets (West End and Grandin Village), LEAP Mobile Market, Healthy Food Incentive Programs

(SNAP Double Value, Fresh Foods Rx, Medicaid Incentive), and The Kitchen. For more information about the Mobile Market, visit: <http://leapforlocalfood.org/markets/leap-mobile-market/>

Spending Dough for the Bread

Wholesome Harvest Baking, a subsidiary of Grupo Bimbo, is investing \$22.1 million to upgrade equipment and add a production line for artisan bread at its Roanoke

operation. Wholesome Harvest Baking was started over 100 years ago and began operating in Roanoke in 1996. The company produces frozen bread for retailers and in-store bakeries, operating seven bakeries in North America and employing about 1,000 workers. It was acquired in 2014 by Mexican baking company Grupo Bimbo, operating in 22 countries across four continents.

*Compiled by
Christine Liana*

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I was hoping the leggings trend...would quickly pass

— Page 16

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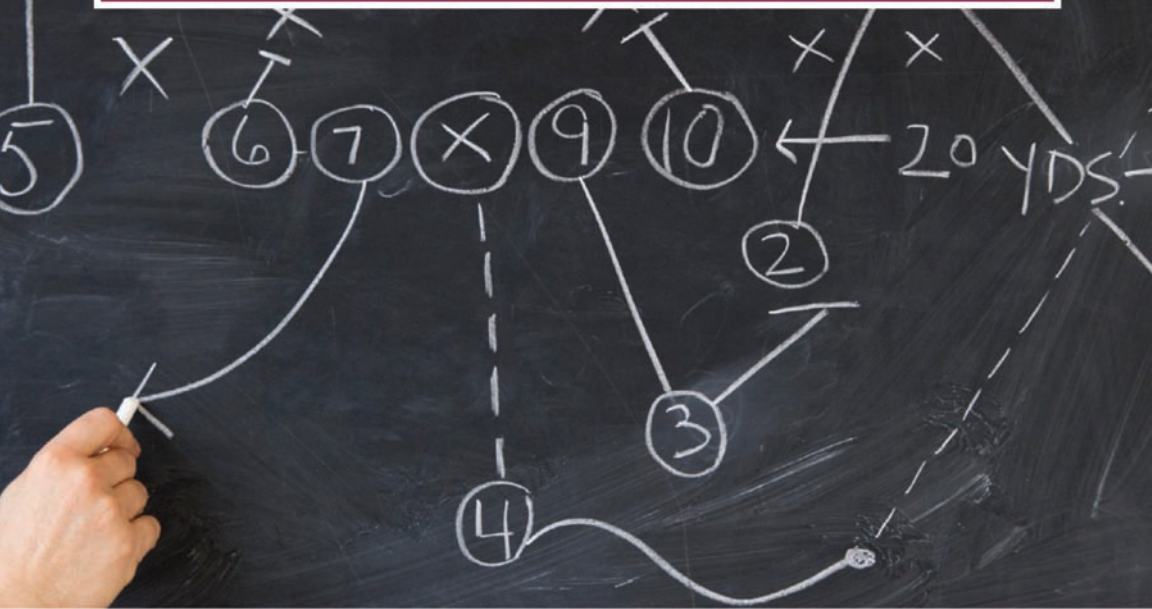


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