

# Valley Business FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE  
BUSINESS JOURNAL**  
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION  
FREE • ISSUE 110 • NOVEMBER 2017

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## Quartoseptcentennials! Colleges Celebrate 175 Years

Pareena Lawrence,  
Hollins University



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"In 1842 Columbus sailed the..." no wait, that was 350 years earlier... Fourteen-Ninety-Two. What happened in 1842? What's so great about that year?

It turns out, 1842 was another great milestone for discovery. Three educational institutions were formed that year in Virginia. Important ones. "Economic engines," in fact, as the president of my alma mater describes them (in this edition's cover story).

Yes, Roanoke College, Hollins University, and Mary Baldwin University (served by our own Roanoke Higher Education Center) all celebrate their 175th in the two-thousand-seventeenth year of our Lord. And what fine products they have turned out! Surely, you know an alumnus (or alumni), alumna (or alumnae) or just alumni (now accepted plural form for both sexes or all genders) from one, two, or all three of these institutions who is a leader or contributor in our community. Surely some of them took Latin so they can help us with that alumn word.

We don't have a catchy little Christopher Columbus type jingle to help you commemorate or remember the historical significance of the year 1842 for our education front. And we sure as heck aren't going to ask you to remember, or spell, or say the word Quartoseptcentennial. Little Latin words are difficult enough.

Let's just keep it at Happy Birthday.



**Tom Field**

“

The notion of an educated  
populace... was gaining momentum

— Page 9

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## Valley Business FRONT

### COVER STORY

#### DEPARTMENTS



## What Happened in 1842?

Three Institutions of Higher Learning  
All Founded In The Same Year

**This little  
light of mine 26**

**Necessities of life 30**

**REAP what you sow 40**

### PERSPECTIVES

Business Dress 24

Etiquette & Protocol 25

Business Operations 34

Legal 35

Workplace Wisdom 36

### REVIEWS & OPINIONS

On Tap from the Pub 45

Reviews 46

### FRONTLINES

FRONT'n About 48

Career FRONT 54

FRONT Notes 58

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“Resist the urge to talk  
about yourself — Page 25

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# NOVEMBER



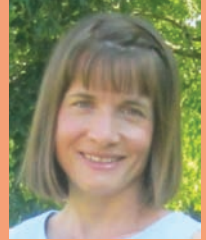
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Kathy Surace

## Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the rotational term.

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



Carissa Mulahn



Theresa Passeretti



Nicholas Vaassen

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 (Finance)  
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**Nancy Gray** Hollins University (Education)  
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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.

“

Resort attire doesn't include tank tops, cut-offs, sweatpants, tube tops, flip-flops, sneakers, baseball caps... anything tight, very short or revealing

— Page 24

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**Mike Maxey,  
Roanoke College**





# What Happened in 1842?

**Three Institutions of Higher Learning  
All Founded In The Same Year**

The year 1842 was a busy time in Virginia. Within a matter of months, three higher education institutions were founded—two in Augusta County and one in Roanoke County. In 2017, they all celebrate their quartoseptcentennial, or 175th anniversary.

What brought about the birthing of three private Virginia colleges 175 years ago? First, let's look at what was happening in the country in 1842 and consider some historical perspective at that point in our nation's history.

There were 26 states in the union. John Tyler was president, with Democrats and Whigs being the dominant political parties. The gold rush in California was taking off. Just 27 years earlier, the U.S. had signed the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812 with Britain, and in 19 years, the country would be torn apart in a deadly civil war. The Town of Salem had been in existence for 36 years, having been granted a charter from the General Assembly in 1806. Roanoke County, with a population around 5,500, was four years old. Big Lick, the first name for the city of Roanoke, would not be established for another ten years and would be chartered in 1874.

Education was on the minds of many forward-thinking Americans. The notion of an educated populace as important to the health and vitality of a still-growing nation was gaining momentum. There were 100 colleges in the country in 1840. By 1850, there were 150; by 1869, the number had increased to 200.

In 1842, colleges and universities were springing up not just in Virginia but also across the country—The Citadel in South Carolina, Villanova in Pennsylvania, Notre Dame in Indiana, and the precursor of Willamette University in Oregon, among the more recognizable names. Clergy and members of religious orders, being generally an educated lot, often took the lead in creating institutions of higher learning.

## Birthing Three Colleges >

**Executive Summary:**  
*Hollins University, Roanoke College, and Mary Baldwin University all hit their 175th Anniversary this year; here's our report on how they have sustained themselves.*

**By Dan Dowdy**

# Mary Baldwin University >

- 1842** Augusta Female Seminary was founded in Staunton
- 1863** Mary Julia Baldwin, a student in the seminary's first class, was named principal
- 1895** The institution's name was changed to Mary Baldwin Seminary
- 1923** Renamed Mary Baldwin College when it became a four-year liberal arts college
- 1971** Phi Beta Kappa chapter started
- 1977** Adult Degree Program starts, a co-ed non-residential undergraduate program for adults
- 1985** Program for the Exceptionally Gifted is inaugurated, an undergraduate residential program for exceptionally gifted young women ages 13-16
- 1992** Master of Arts in Teaching program is launched
- 1995** Inauguration of Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership, the nation's only cadet corps of its kind just for women
- 2001** Master of Letters and Master of Fine Arts in Shakespeare and Performance starts
- 2014** Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences opens with Mary Baldwin's first doctoral students
- 2016** Official institutional name changed to Mary Baldwin University

That's certainly the case in Virginia in 1842. Consider the accomplishments of four men of the cloth at that time:

- Virginia Institute, founded in Augusta County by two Lutheran pastors, moved five years later to Salem and became **Roanoke College**.

**MBU students**



Norm Shafer





Norm Shafer

## MBU, Staunton, VA

- Augusta Female Seminary was founded in Staunton (also in Augusta County) by a Presbyterian minister; it became **Mary Baldwin University**.
- Valley Union Seminary, founded in Roanoke County by a pastor, became **Hollins University**.

The survival of three small, private Virginia colleges from meager origins through turbulent times to present-day 175-year-old institutions is no small feat and is worthy of recognition. There are very few businesses or organizations in this region that can claim that kind of longevity.

## Mary Baldwin University

Located some 90 miles northeast of the Roanoke Valley, Mary Baldwin University has its main campus in Staunton. However, the university has a presence in the Roanoke

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MBU campus

Valley as one of the colleges and universities located in the Roanoke Higher Education Center in downtown Roanoke. MBU also has regional centers in 13 other locations across the commonwealth and a health sciences campus located between Staunton and Waynesboro.

Since its founding in Augusta County in 1842, with Mary Julia Baldwin among its first students, Mary Baldwin has focused on educating women. Today, however, while continuing to maintain a residential college for women in Staunton, Mary Baldwin boasts co-ed programs that offer bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. It moved to university status a year ago.

The primary focus of this story is on the two local institutions. See sidebar about MBU.

## Roanoke College

Roanoke College's original mission, when it was founded as Virginia Institute in 1842 in Mt. Tabor, Virginia (in Augusta County), was to prepare boys for transferring to Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania. The school became Virginia Collegiate Institute in 1845. Sensing a need for a place with a larger population from which to recruit, the institute's leaders moved to Salem in 1847. The state legislature granted the school a collegiate charter in 1853 when it was renamed Roanoke College.

Roanoke College embraced innovation early on. In the latter 1800s, the college focused extensively on recruiting from the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Two among the first group of Koreans to receive college degrees in the U.S.



Education was on the minds of many forward-thinking Americans



Courtesy of Roanoke College

were Roanoke graduates. In 1930, considerably ahead of other Virginia institutions, the college went co-ed.

Roanoke College president Mike Maxey attributes the following milestones/events/strategies as contributing significantly to the college's longevity and viability over the past 175 years:

- The move to Salem from Mt. Tabor, with everything at the time loaded in one covered wagon;
- Opening admissions to women in 1930. Both of these decisions were "bold and courageous" in his words;
- The implementation of strategic planning, begun in the late 1950s and early '60s and continuing to the present—a key factor in the success of the college, in his opinion;



## BUILDING LEGACIES FOR A THRIVING FUTURE

As the design-build construction manager for Roanoke College's Cregger Center, Branch is proud to be associated with a community leader and nationally renowned front-runner in liberal arts education.

*We offer Roanoke College our congratulations on 175 years of successful leadership.*



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Courtesy of Roanoke College

- The college being granted a Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 2003, a symbolic yet substantive recognition of Roanoke College's academic excellence. (Phi Beta Kappa is the oldest and most respected undergraduate honors society in the country, with only 10% of liberal arts colleges having a chapter. Incidentally, Mary Baldwin and Hollins also have Phi Beta Kappa chapters.);
- The college's board of trustees' decision in the 1950s that the college should live within its means and maintain a balanced budget. Roanoke College has successfully adhered to this practice for 60 consecutive years.



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Courtesy of Roanoke College



Courtesy of Roanoke College





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An interesting observation: Maxey, in his **11th** job since coming to the college 32 years ago, is Roanoke College's **11th** president, a position he's held for **11** years. He attributes his exposure to many levels of functioning at the college and, consequently, his knowledge of the college's culture and its DNA as reasons why he was chosen to be president.



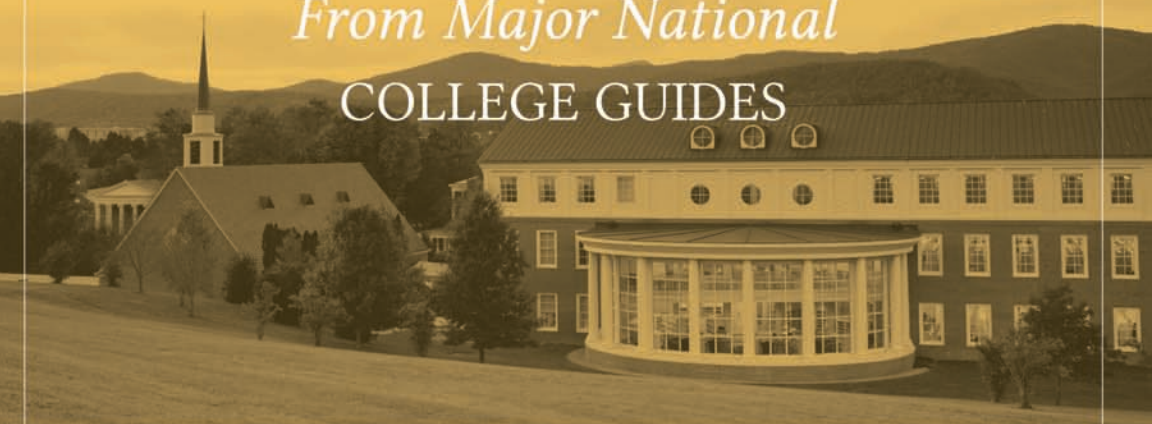
Courtesy of Roanoke College

# HOLLINS UNIVERSITY

## EARNs ACCOLADES

### *From Major National*

## COLLEGE GUIDES



*USA Today* and *College Factual* have named Hollins as the **number one** college in the nation in the category, “English Language and Literature, General – Most Focused.” Their 2017 college rankings also place Hollins among the **top five percent** of the “Most Focused” colleges and universities nationwide in biology and history.

The 2018 edition of *U.S. News Best Colleges* lists Hollins at **number 11** in the category “Best Colleges for Veterans” and the **number 37** “Best Value School” among National Liberal Arts Colleges. Overall, Hollins is ranked number 112 in the National Liberal Arts Colleges classification.

Hollins’ financial health has received an **“A” rating** from *Forbes* magazine.

Hollins is one of just four Virginia colleges to be featured in *Peterson’s Cool Colleges 101*.

*Niche.com* has named Hollins one of the 100 Best Liberal Arts Colleges in the country, and listed it among the **five Best Liberal Arts Colleges in Virginia**.

In its profile of Hollins, *The Princeton Review’s The Best 382 Colleges: 2018 Edition* says Hollins “is a place for unique individuals to thrive, empowering each other and forming a supportive community for women. The alumni network is similarly solid, and many students land jobs and internships through previous graduates.” The publication also ranks Hollins University **11th in the nation** in the category, Best Career Services.

Hollins is one of the top 100 liberal arts colleges in the nation that contribute to the public good, according to *Washington Monthly’s* annual *College Guide and Rankings*. Hollins is **one of only five** Virginia colleges to earn a spot in the top 100.





Courtesy of Hollins University

## Hollins University

Hollins University was founded in Roanoke County in 1842, also by a pastor, as co-ed Valley Union Seminary. In 1851, its president eliminated the male department leading to a status that at the time was still considered an anomaly—an all-women's institution. The seminary changed its name to Hollins Institute in 1855 in recognition of critically important donations by John and Ann Hollins whose financial gifts enabled the struggling institution to survive. It became



Courtesy of Hollins University



Courtesy of Hollins University

““

Running a college  
or university is  
like running any  
other business

Hollins College in 1910 and Hollins University in 1998.

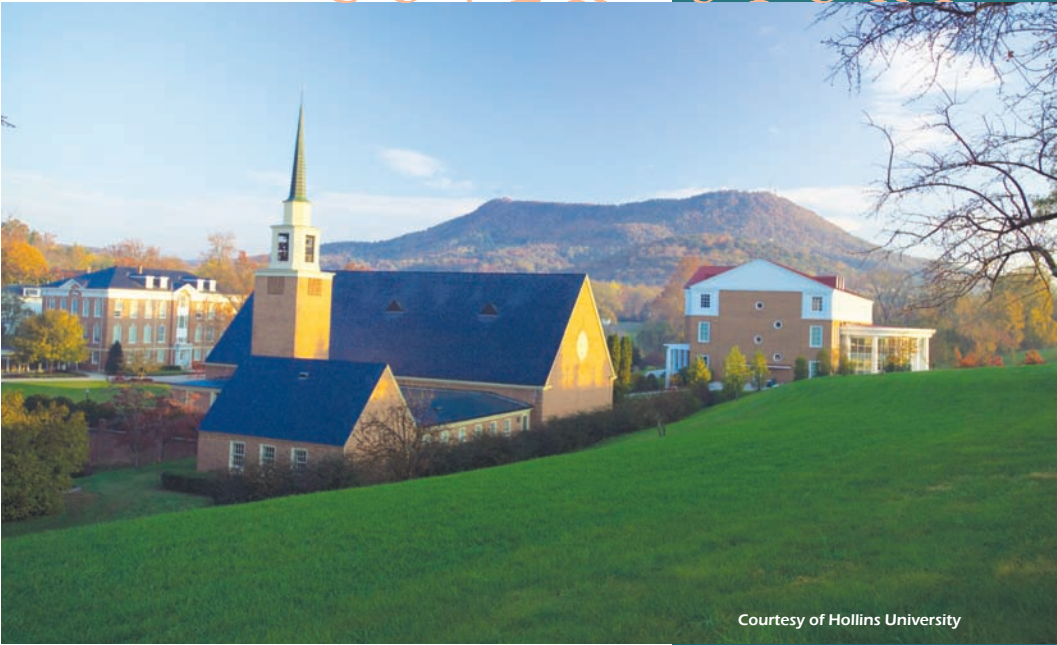
Over the past 175 years, Hollins has remained true to its mission to educate women at the undergraduate level. However, the university has allowed men to enroll in graduate programs since 1958.

Hollins welcomed its 12th president, Pareena Lawrence, in July. Even though she is new to the university, she readily articulates where she has her sights set. She says that Hollins University has the same challenge as most small liberal arts institutions: helping people understand the value of a liberal arts education and the role it plays in preparing students, in her words, “to live lives of purpose and consequence using their talents to meet the needs of the world by providing them with a transformative experience.” One of her primary challenges is helping ensure that Hollins students and graduates understand their purpose in life and that they do things intentionally.

The strategies highlighted by Lawrence that have made Hollins University viable over the years include:

- The university’s good planning, agility, and nimbleness, as exemplified in the way Hollins rolls out new graduate programs;
- Endowment growth over the years—Hollins recently completed a capital campaign that exceeded the campaign’s goal and took the university’s endowment to \$161 million, up 53% over what it was in 2005. This was a notable accomplishment in a time of deep recession;





Courtesy of Hollins University

- Maintaining a beautiful campus which shows that the entire Hollins community pays attention to details in keeping its buildings and grounds in good condition;
- Alumnae engagement (in her opinion probably the biggest factor) that demonstrates the power of Hollins women to network and give back through mentoring, internship opportunities, and financial support of the university and its programs. She calls it a "living legacy" that reflects a level of passion for graduates she has never experienced.

Both presidents share similar opinions about their respective institution's strengths, pointing to the quality of education provided to students from dedicated faculty and solid academic

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Courtesy of Hollins University

programs. Maxey sees Roanoke College's five Fulbright Scholars this fall, an exceptional number, he points out, as indicative of the ability of the college's students to compete with anyone, and a reflection of the strong institutional support afforded them.

Both leaders were on the same page regarding their biggest challenge. They recognize the ongoing effort required to enhance and sometimes contemporize curricula and educational experiences to provide depth and relevance as their institutions help transform students' lives. They want their graduates to be solid, well-educated citizens who can go where they want to go, be who they want to be, and make a difference in their communities and the world.

Running a college or university is like running any other business. An enterprise needs qualified employees, a product or service that meets the needs of its customers, and the resources and ability to deliver that product or service. Payrolls must be met, facilities and equipment need to be maintained, and bills have to be paid.

Both presidents were asked to remove their academic mortar boards, don their CEO hats, and speak to their most important business-related roles in running their institution.

To enable Hollins to continue to be a robust and sustainable university, Lawrence feels that her responsibilities include focusing on enrollments, ensuring that academic programs are adequately preparing graduates for their futures, remaining connected to the local community, and fundraising. She says that Hollins is mission-driven, like most other businesses, with the university having a goal unlike most enterprises: "transforming the lives of our students and the communities they live and work in."




Courtesy of Hollins University



**Presidents Mike Maxey and Pareena Lawrence**

Being the person who sets the tone of the campus and helps everyone understand the college's strategies and initiatives is how Maxey characterizes his primary business-related job. He said he feels the gravity of his CEO role but understands that a college must be run using good, basic business principles to stay true to its mission.

Mike Maxey observed that all three Virginia institutions celebrating their quartoseptcentennial have made significant contributions to the leadership and the economies of their respective regions. He surmised that in aggregate, the collective enrollments of all private institutions in Virginia are equivalent to some of the state's largest public colleges and universities. Private institutions, he concluded, "are important economic engines that are often overlooked."

Hollins University, Roanoke College, and Mary Baldwin University have gone about fulfilling their respective missions in different ways over the past 175 years, often employing innovative tactics and sometimes gutsy, against-the-grain moves. They have succeeded in nurturing and developing graduates whose lives have been enriched by their learning experiences and who have contributed in many ways to the betterment of their employers, their communities, their world, and of course their lives. 

“

[Private higher ed institutions] are important economic engines that are often overlooked





## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

### Executive Summary:

*Just because you might be enjoying a more casual environment at a visit to a resort, you still need to exercise discretion in your choice of apparel.*

## What is resort attire? >

A recent trip to The Greenbrier resort focused my attention on the question of resort attire.

Occasionally professionals may be required to attend a business meeting at a large resort. If you're invited to a 2 or 3-day business-related meeting at a place like The Greenbrier, pack thoughtfully.

You might think that since it's located deep in the West Virginia mountains, casual attire would be acceptable throughout. However, despite its location, it's still a refined and beautiful venue with longstanding traditions and high standards for their staff and their guests.

At an upscale resort, you expect the best in service, ambience and experience. As the Greenbrier states, their dress codes "are an important complement to the standards our guests expect and deserve." They want their guests to be comfortable, but not dress as casually as they would at home.


So, what is resort attire and where and when do we wear it?

Resort attire for men consists of collared sport shirts, sweaters, jackets, dress slacks, or walking shorts with attractive casual shoes. Women can wear nice blouses and tops, sweaters, skirts, dress pants, dressy capris, and jackets. If you prefer denim, pristine denim in a dark shade is acceptable, but never in the main dining room for a formal dinner. Hats are not worn in the dining rooms.

Resort attire doesn't include tank tops, cut-offs, short shorts, sweatpants, tube tops, flip-flops, sneakers or baseball caps. Anything tight, very short, or revealing would defeat the purpose of the dress code.

So in a nutshell:

- Resort attire is encouraged throughout the day at breakfast, lunch and dinner and at less formal restaurants.
- In more upscale restaurants and bars, business casual attire, including a jacket, is required.
- For nightly dinner in the formal main dining room wear your best formal suit or dress.
- Denim is never worn to dinner in the main dining room, on the golf course or on the tennis courts. Dark, pressed, well-maintained denim can be worn with a jacket for a casual dinner if desired. All other denim and sports clothing are for activities – and discouraged for dining.
- For golf, tennis or activities such as horseback riding or swimming, bring clothing appropriate for those activities but wear them discretely in the proper time and locations.

Follow these guidelines and you'll emerge from your business-related weekend with your professional image intact. 



## Listen up! >

I recently heard an interview with Celeste Headlee, author of *We Need to Talk: How to Have Meaningful Conversations*. Ms. Headlee, citing research, maintained that humans are not biologically designed to listen and retain information well. In fact, we retain only 50% of what we hear, and that percentage goes down quickly with each passing day. Ms. Headlee further opines that humans have an attention span of eight seconds, which is one second less than a goldfish! How this is calculated beats me, but there you have it.


We speak at about 200 words a minute, yet we can listen up to 500 words a minute. So unless we maintain focus, and that takes continuing energy, our active brains are wondering, thinking random thoughts, or about what we're going to say next – in other words we're not listening.

Listening has been called the missing half of communication, and one of the least used and undervalued skills of leaders and managers. Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* said "Most of us don't listen with the intent to understand, but with the intent to reply."

Social media, emailing, texting, multi-tasking – all take our attention away from conversational and listening skills. The Pew Research Center found that one third of U.S. teens text 100 times a day. Many people now prefer to text rather than talk. And before we shake our heads and "tut tut," let us adults admit that we are guilty too!

Listening actively is an acquired skill, even an art, and it takes constant practice. Let's start with an introduction. Many of us complain that we can't remember names. That may be due to the fact that our mind is racing ahead to what we're going to say, rather than really listening. So use a trick or two to remember names. Repeat it, such as "Sally, I am pleased to meet you;" or "is that Steven with a "V"?"

As the conversation moves forward, try to balance talking with listening. Remember, most people love to talk about themselves, so if you are shy ask open ended questions, not questions that can be answered with a yes or no. Then listen. Be interested in the other person.

Resist the urge to talk about yourself and your accomplishments. Author John Maxwell said "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." Stephen Hawkins said "People who boast about their I.Q. are losers." Instead, focus on the other person. You will be amazed at what you will learn! 

*No one ever listened his way out of a job*  
—President Calvin Coolidge



## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey  
Harshberger

**Executive Summary:**  
*Listening is so important, we may need to practice or employ some techniques to improve our skills.*



Monica Wilmore

## This little light of mine >

### Executive Summary:

*IT Director Monica Wilmore describes how her 'lightbulb of interest' in IT helped to lead Virginia Business Systems down a dimly lit path to bright, new service offerings.*

By Carissa Mulahn

Monica Wilmore never dreamt of becoming a 'tech guru.' In her early twenties, she worked with children, as a school teacher. As the initial phases of her career took shape, she discovered a lightbulb of interest in the technical aspects of (surprisingly enough) COPIERS!

Her first boss in the industry, Barry Burress, "taught me the basics" and mentored me, Wilmore says. At that time, the copier world's transition into IT functionality was in its infancy. What was once selling and servicing typewriters "eventually turned into analog copiers, which turned into digital copiers, that then morphed in to color technology, and then print production began," Monica says. "While VBS [Virginia Business Systems] has a long history of delving into new technology, in 2006 the tech capacity of a copier system was largely unrecognized." Wilmore explains.

Monica found herself fascinated by that IT capacity; the opportunities inherent in a networked print capability. "Everything I learned was by trial and error," she explained. Day by day, one challenge at a time, she became the expert in the office. More exciting than being known as the 'subject matter expert' on up-and-coming IT, however, was Virginia VP of Sales Rick Lingon and Virginia President Jim Dotter allowing her to go to every training she requested. This supportive atmosphere encouraged and helped her 'lightbulb of interest' in technical interfaces to shine more and more brightly. "I would not be where I am without Barry's mentorship and Rick and Jim's support," Monica states. In return for the support she received from leadership, Monica has expanded the IT & Solutions capabilities of the company tremendously. "I was interested in being an integral part of our customers' business, creating elements for their success." Advancing Virginia Business System's involvement with IT/Solutions created the best version of success customers could hope for.



Monica and VBS employees are open to the idea that VBS's Core Values drive every facet of the company. Chris Stewart, a three year Account Manager, agreed. "We aren't told to," he said. "We are encouraged to find the best possible solution for the customer's need," even if it means multiple discovery sessions and creating buy-in from four or five different departments within a company. This extreme focus on listening to clients led VBS to recognize that a new line of IT solutions would better serve the Western region of Virginia. Once again, the company turned to Monica – which she credits to a highly functioning internal communication model. "Everyone talking regularly and openly to one another is what made the needs of customers in the Western Virginia region clear."

Take for example, a prominent communications company in Floyd, VA (who asked to remain

anonymous) when this company began to explore bolting on intelligent form software to their existing electronic content/document management system, also configured by VBS. VBS happily conducted multiple demonstration and technical discussions prior to a contract, knowing that without a clear understanding of how the products work together, nothing would move forward. Stewart points again to the core values of the company.

"We made absolutely certain we weren't making promises we couldn't keep." His sentiment rings true for the remainder of the new IT product offerings as this part of the state, that allow for more customization and deeper integration of existing software, break/fix technologies, the latest options in electronic signatures, and—a hot topic—recovering from ransomware without paying a ransom.

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**Jim Edwards**




VBS merged with Edwards Business Systems in Pennsylvania in 1993 (retaining the name 'Edwards' in Pennsylvania). The company has 180 employees combined. Interestingly, when owner James Edwards merged the companies, he didn't move the company headquarters, because 'headquarters' was actually the home he grew up in. In fact, the office he uses today was once his childhood bedroom!

Edwards drives a culture that encourages his employees and partners to perform optimally and ethically, ensuring high quality customer service. As a result of this culture, Edwards & Virginia Business Systems require suppliers and partners to sign a leasing code of ethics. This code ensures that customers are treated consistently by suppliers, manufacturers, sales representatives, and other employees supporting them. This style of continuous customer care has led to consistently above average Net Promotor Scores for the company in both states. (94.87 in August of 2017, and 88.6 average for 2017 overall).

Similarly, VBS President Jim Dotter takes time each quarter to meet with manager and technicians alike, covering specific service standards like their four hour guaranteed

response time and five year total satisfaction guarantee. It's no wonder that the addition of cutting-edge IT solutions has amplified VBS's reputation as an industry leader. True to form, both Jim and Monica give credit to the staff that happily supports the company's upward trajectory on the path to more effective, impactful technology. "We have software engineers with ten fold better expertise than I ever could bring to the table," Monica confides. "They know codes in languages I could never understand. But we make sure to bridge the gap between the IT and standard public knowledge. This minimizes the impact of IT changes on our customer's employee morale—an impact leaders often ignore."

Maximizing internal capabilities to improve client capabilities rises as an ongoing theme at VBS; from encouraging Monica's IT leadership, to creating new offerings specific to Western Virginia's client need, to the constant ensuring of top level service through highly satisfied and encouraged employees. Virginia/Edwards Business Systems has created an environment of success for their customers, which is exactly what Monica intended when she took her 'lightbulb of interest' down the IT path over a decade ago. 



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**Hurricane Harvey relief efforts**

## Necessities of life >

### Executive Summary:

*Providing a safe water supply is the not-always-so-simple objective of SERCAP.*

### By Caitlyn Scagg

Would it surprise you to know that there are still people in our community who lack safe drinking water? Would you be shocked to know that some people still do not have indoor restrooms? While some find it hard to believe this is true, Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP), an organization with local roots, is on a mission to make an impact in the areas of water, wastewater, and structurally sound housing.

The story of SERCAP is one that reaches back to 1960, when outreach workers from the Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) agency administered a survey to determine the most

pressing needs of residents in the Roanoke Valley. The results of that survey were unexpected: countless residents were living without access to safe drinking water. It was determined that many residents were sourcing water from contaminated creeks and springs, catching rainwater in buckets, and purchasing water at the general store. Armed with this knowledge, community representatives sprang into action.

This project developed water systems in rural areas while providing community residents the resources needed to address their own water problems—it was not a “handout” model of assistance but rather an equipping and empowering model. This approach was so successful that in 1973 it was recognized by the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity and replicated on a national level.

Today, this program is called the Rural Community Assistance Program and houses a network of six regional non-profit centers. The Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project is one of these centers and

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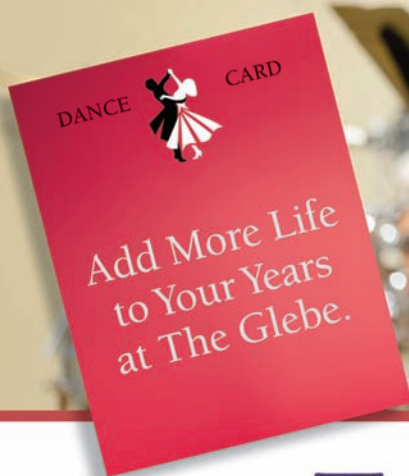
**Water is Life luncheon**

headquartered in Roanoke. The assistance provided by SERCAP to individuals and communities is in the form of technical support, lending, education, and training.

While SERCAP remains true to its original

roots of helping with water and wastewater needs, the organization has also grown to encompass ensuring individuals have structurally sound housing. SERCAP works hard to ensure individuals and communities have the basic necessities of life. 

After 50 years of marriage, Mark and Marty still put their best foot forward.



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# Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

## Executive Summary:

Poor service should never be accepted.

## Adopt the new philosophy >

This month we continue the series on W. Edwards Deming's 14 points for management to follow as covered in his book, *Out of the Crisis*. Each of the points will be discussed in a separate article.

**Point #2** – *"Adopt the new philosophy. We are in a new economic age. Western management must awaken to the challenge, must learn their responsibilities, and take on leadership for change."*

After World War II, the style of management in the US was unchallenged because American goods owned world markets. But competition from other countries, namely Japan, eventually caused the US to lose its dominance.

What is the "new philosophy"? In his book, Deming explains: "We can no longer tolerate commonly accepted levels of mistakes, defects, material not suited for the job, people on the job that do not know what the job is and are afraid to ask, handling damage, antiquated methods of training on the job, inadequate and ineffective supervision, management not rooted in the company, job hopping in management, buses and trains late or even cancelled because a driver failed to show up."

If any organization wants to save and create jobs, and stay in business in the long run, nothing but perfect quality and service should ever be accepted. Nonetheless, every day I see examples of the old philosophy:

- Contractors who do not provide a work estimate when promised.
- "Sorry, our computers are slow today."
- Ordering something off a restaurant menu, later to be told they are out of stock.
- Hotel rooms with slow drains.
- Waiting over 30 minutes past my appointment time for a doctor's visit.
- Cancelled plane flight due to mechanical problems or "no crew".

It only took me five minutes to think of these examples, and each one has happened to me multiple times over the years. Clearly, these issues are accepted, or they wouldn't keep happening. Yet each has impacted who gets my business.

Have any of you ever had an appointment for some type of home repair or service and given a 4-hour window when the technician would arrive? If that seems like good service, consider this example Deming provides in his book about a friend who was given the following instructions in Japan to take a train to a company:

0903 Board the train. Pay no attention to trains at 0858, 0901. 0957 Off.

No further instruction necessary. What do you tolerate? 

## You can't form a 501(c)(3) charity for your personal benefit >

Every couple of months we get a call from someone who thinks that they want to set up a not-for-profit charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. However, most of them actually don't. Here's an example:

**Caller:** "Hello, I'm on the alumni board of the Delta Tau Chi fraternity at [a local turkey-themed land-grant university], and we want to set up a nonprofit 501(c)(3)."

**Me:** "OK, like, to collect tax-deductible donations?"

**Caller:** "Yes, that's right! We want to become a 501(c)(3) so that the fraternity brothers' dues will be tax-deductible. I've been telling them for years that they need to do it, but they keep putting it off."

**Me:** "Hmm, well . . ."

**Caller:** "We also need to do it in order to get grants. We want to get some grants to renovate the fraternity house, which is a historic building, but the grants are only available to 501(c)(3) charities. So we will need the 501(c)(3) to own the fraternity house and then apply for the grants."

**Me:** "And so, will the fraternity house stop being used as a fraternity house? I mean, it won't be open to the public or anything, right?"

**Caller:** "Of course not. The fraternity would keep using the house the same way it's always been used."

**Me:** "OK, I see. I don't think your idea would work, because I don't think your new not-for-profit organization would have a charitable purpose."

**Caller:** "Sure it would! The 501(c)(3) would give some scholarships to local high school students."

**Me:** "But its main purpose would be to own a building used mainly for private fraternity parties?"



## Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

### Executive Summary:

*A not-for-profit tax-exempt charity is not something that you can form for your personal benefit or for the benefit of a private group.*



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In order for a not-for-profit to be a tax-exempt charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, it has to be organized solely for an exempt purpose, which means a purpose that is religious, charitable, scientific, educational, or something similar.

**Caller:** "Well, yes . . ."

**Me:** "OK, in order for a not-for-profit to be a tax-exempt charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, it has to be organized solely for an exempt purpose, which means a purpose that is religious, charitable, scientific, educational, or something similar. I'm afraid that hosting fraternity parties doesn't meet that requirement."

**Caller:** "But lots of not-for-profits hold parties. My country club does, for example."

**Me:** "Yes, but a country club is not a tax-exempt charity under Section 501(c)(3), it's a social club exempt under Section 501(c)(7)."

**Caller:** "What's the difference?"

**Me:** "The main difference is that donations to a 501(c)(3) organization are tax-deductible, but donations to a 501(c)(7) organization are not."

**Caller:** "Ah. Well, yes, we were also hoping to get the fraternity members' dues made tax-deductible. If we had an exempt purpose, then would that work?"

## WORKPLACE wisdom

By Christine Liana



# Q

My associates and I frequently encounter executives who don't keep their word and don't return phone calls, even for scheduled phone meetings! We're all busy, but what's up with not replying? How do we deal with this craziness?

So, you've encountered the reptilia serpentes, a cunning creature who speaks with a forked tongue. It surfaces everywhere, having started in the Garden of Eden by scamming Eve. Once you understand its language, you'll know what (not) to expect.

Here's some actual lies heard from executives and employees in business and non-profits, with a humorous look at the resulting meanings: **I'll get back to you soon.**" Translation: *I don't want to deal with this, so if I ignore you, maybe you'll go away.* **"I'll have to talk to my team and get back to you."** Translation: *Although I'm vice president, I have no intention of replying to you because I'd have to get a consensus for your proposal, and that would make me look like an indecisive wimp.* **"Your call is important to me. Please leave a message and I'll return your call as soon as possible. Have a blessed day."** Translation: *I'll call you when I get around to it. Otherwise, feel free to call back repeatedly and leave messages. I'll still ignore you if I'm avoiding the issue that we discussed. I'm claiming executive privilege. My arrogance is your frustration.*

Rise above this widespread, unprofessional behavior. Take it up the chain of command for an answer. As you manage business responsibilities and make time to return calls, integrity will earn you a quality reputation, which means better business.

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

**Me:** "As I understand it, the main purpose of the dues is to finance social activities for the fraternity members. Is that right?"

**Caller:** "Yes."

**Me:** "Then I'm afraid that that idea wouldn't work either, since no funds donated to a 501(c)(3) charity can be used to benefit a particular private individual."

**Caller:** "But charities give scholarships to private individuals all the time!"

**Me:** "Yes, but recipients of charitable scholarships cannot be identified in advance. Instead the scholarships must be open to the public at large, or else offered to a particular segment of the public, such as disabled children or people of Slobovian heritage or something like that. A charitable benefit can't be provided to people whose identities already are known, like members of a particular fraternity."

**Caller:** "Well, could we at least have the 501(c)(3) own the fraternity house in order to get the renovation grants? Then it could lease the house to the fraternity for, say, \$100 per year, and give the \$100 away as a scholarship for needy children?"

**Me:** "I assume that the actual value of the house rental would be a lot more than \$100 per year?"

**Caller:** "Well, yes . . ."

**Me:** "OK then, the problem is that a 501(c)(3) organization has to be run by an independent board of directors, and the directors have a duty to use the assets of the organization in such a way as to maximize their value to the organization's exempt purpose. So a 501(c)(3) organization can't enter into a sweetheart deal to lease property it owns for just \$100 per year. Instead it would have to charge market rates, and if the fraternity was not able to pay market rates, then the directors of the 501(c)(3) organization would have a legal



A 501(c)(3) organization has to be run by an independent board of directors, and the directors have a duty to use the assets of the organization in such a way as to maximize their value to the organization's exempt purpose. So a 501(c)(3) organization can't enter into a sweetheart deal to lease property it owns for just \$100 per year. Instead it would have to charge market rates.



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obligation to rent the house to someone else who did pay market rates.”

**Caller:** “And then they would have to give all of that money away as scholarships.”

**Me:** “Bingo! Yes, that’s how it’s supposed to work. I’m afraid that Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code wasn’t really written with college fraternities in mind . . . .”

In the end, we assisted the fraternity with reorganizing itself as a corporation and seeking formal tax-exempt status as a Section 501(c)(7) social club. However, the only effect of this tax exemption was to excuse the fraternity from paying income tax. It did not entitle the fraternity to seek charitable grants for real estate renovation, and it did not allow fraternity members or other donors to deduct the amounts of their contributions from their income taxes. But then, that’s not what the law was intended to accomplish in the first place. 

**Note:** *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn’t legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when deciding whether to form a not-for-profit organization, deciding what type of tax exemption to seek, drafting your corporate organizational documents, etc.*



Recipients of charitable scholarships cannot be identified in advance. Instead the scholarships must be open to the public at large, or else offered to a particular segment of the public, such as disabled children.

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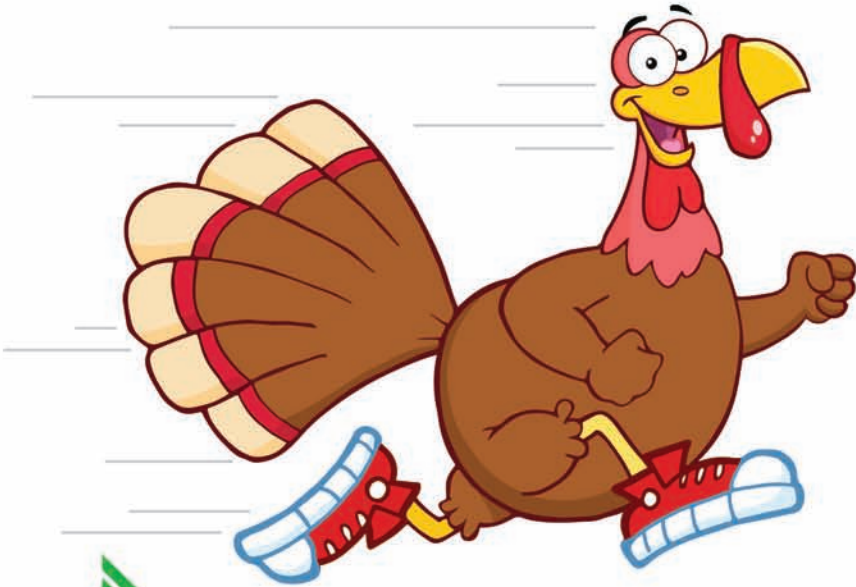


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## REAP what you sow >

### Executive Summary:

*Baseline Solar—in collaboration with the REAP program—is installing solar energy solutions for small business.*

**By Caitlynn Scaggis**

It seems only fitting that a business dedicating to nurturing future generations would choose an energy solution that is beneficial for generations to come. Early Challenges Child Care, located in Christiansburg, Virginia, is now a solar-powered facility. The ability of this business to switch to sustainable energy was facilitated by the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) program and collaboration with local solar energy company, Baseline Solar.

While Jane Jones, owner of Early Challenges, had a dream of going solar, she knew she was going to need support to make it a reality. Through the Solarize Montgomery Program Jones was connected to Baseline Solar, a solar energy solution company based out of Blacksburg, Virginia. Jones explained, “I can honestly say that we would never have been able to pursue the project if it hadn’t been for the guys at Baseline Solar helping us the entire way to make this happen.”

During an initial conversation Baseline Solar informed Jones about the REAP grant, which is specifically designed for small businesses interested in sustainable energy solutions, to include solar energy. Baseline Solar was familiar with the REAP process and had been through it before, their expertise helped guide Jones. Jones said, “All of the technical information was provided by Baseline Solar. I simply had to provide the business information



“I can’t say anything but good things about Richfield . . . The staff was as concerned about Mom as I was.”



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to show we qualify for the grant." It was a collaborative effort that brought Jones' dream of a solar-powered facility to fruition.

Baseline Solar Lead Designer and Installer Patrick Feucht said, "The REAP grant makes solar an affordable solution that works for the bottom line and the environment." He explained that over 50% of project costs can be offset by the 25% REAP grant and a 30% Federal Investment Tax Credit, with the remaining cost depreciated over five years. Beyond the tax savings, businesses powered by solar energy have lower operating costs for years to come. It is a long-term wise decision that thanks to the REAP program, is within reach for more small businesses.

Jones explained that one motivating reason for pursuing a solar solution was to reduce operating expenses, as would be expected. Jones said, "We are constantly looking for ways to keep our operating costs as low as

possible." For Jones though, the benefits of solar were not strictly financial; Jones realized that as a center focused on cultivating curiosity within young minds, solar energy would provide countless teaching opportunities for the children in her facility. Jones shares that both goals of reducing operating costs and invoking interest from the children have been met. "Our savings on the electric bill were immediate and dramatic," she said, "and the interest in the project from the children is ongoing."

The benefits of the REAP program are specific to the business but have deeper reaching implications. Feucht said, "The REAP program is a wonderful initiative because it is good for our environment and supports small businesses in a number of ways. You can work with a local business to do the local installation and then the grant recipient is in a better financial position. It supports local jobs, local energy, and local savings."

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Both Feucht and Jones reflected positively on the application process itself. Jones said, "Following through on the grant process was also much easier than anticipated because the folks at the USDA offices who support the grant are extremely helpful and more than willing to answer any and all questions. The grant payment was also made quickly upon completion of the project." Jones and Feucht share the opinion that the paperwork is manageable and good collaboration between the installation company and the business

makes it a smooth experience for all.

The Early Challenges solar energy project, made possible through local collaborations and the REAP grant, demonstrates that sustainable energy solutions are within reach for small businesses in the New River and Roanoke Valleys. Jones is confident that if she can make solar energy a reality for her small business, other local businesses can follow suit and implement a sustainable energy solution, for generations to come. 

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the outdoors, has a passion for local business and superior customer service and is excited to see the positive growth and momentum in Virginia's Blue Ridge region. [ [tpasseretti@vbFRONT.com](mailto:tpasseretti@vbFRONT.com) ]

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

**Nicholas Vaassen** is a graphic designer with 16 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](mailto:nvaassen@berryfield.com) ]

“

There are still people in our community who lack safe drinking water — Page 30

## College life >

I graduated from Roanoke College in 1988. Only did two years there since I was at Virginia Western Community College for the first part of my college experience. But even as a commuter student, I was pretty active in my "chosen field" of study, earning my Bachelor of Arts in English, complemented by all the areas I remain attached to in my profession today. Namely, an editor and editorial cartoonist for *The Brackety-Ack* (college newspaper), editor, ad sales and layout specialist for *The 1988 Rawenoch* (college yearbook), co-editor for *On Concept's Edge* (college literary magazine) and president of BAR—the Business Associate of Roanoke College (the only non-business major to win that position, and probably the only marketing-slanted person crass enough to adorn half the campus with brightly colored "I Frequent the BAR" t-shirts, which in fact, helped drum up interest and set record attendance in the club).

Outside of my fast paced two-year stint at RC, I was active in the local public relations crowd (PRSA Blue Ridge Chapter was launched a few years later) and the advertising association (AAF was called the Roanoke Advertising Federation at the time) and worked as a freelance writer, designer, producer.

It looks like all these experiences were used to build a rather formidable resume, doesn't it? Well, college is—among other things—the perfect time for trial and error. Particularly if you're in your twenties. Along with my accomplishments in the writing, advertising, marketing, media, creative development and business fields during college, there were goofs. Mess ups. Mistakes. Embarrassments.

On one of my most important writing assignments that I thought was simply brilliant, to my horror, my professor handed back my paper with some rather obvious circles in that nasty red pen of his. I had misspelled the primary subject's name throughout the entire work. (*It's Emily Dickinson with an "i"—not Dickenson, dammit!*). On a side project, I was honored to be asked by the director of resource development (ummm... now, the president) to produce some graphic posters to be displayed at an important event. I produced one poster well enough, but due to a job interview conflict coupled with my poor planning, I couldn't quite finish out the second poster at an acceptable level... so I pretty much dropped them on his porch and ran away in the night. Inexcusable.

But I remember those plusses. And minuses. That's something I certainly learned in college.

So let's raise a glass to higher education. Here's to all night cram study sessions for Dr. Lape's English Seminar class. Here's to running down to Mac and Bob's for that monstrous calzone. Here's to catching that frisbee behind your back in front of the pretty girls out on the quad. And here's to watching your own daughter graduate from the same college you did nearly three decades earlier.

You don't need to frequent the bar to catch that buzz. 



## On Tap from the Pub

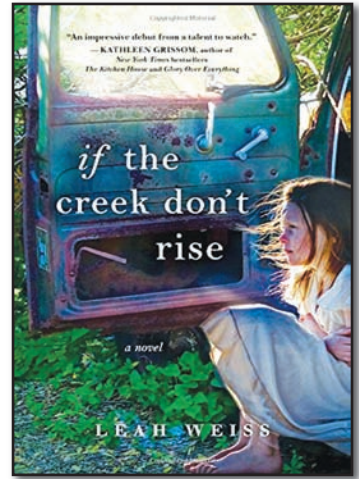
By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:** *FRONT* owner, publisher, editor, and creative director is an alumni of one of our local colleges featured in this edition's cover story.



## Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our contributors and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Readers are invited to submit short reviews of books you've read during the past six months. Our goal is to recommend good books on any topic and in any genre. Send reviews to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com)



### *Appala-cha' 70's style*

If you're someone who likes your books vetted, the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance and others have flagged *If the Creek Don't Rise* by Leah Weiss (Sourcebooks Landmark; 2017) as a gem. The characters who populate a fictional 1970s Appalachian mountain town spring to life in prose that is sharp and elegant but never studied.

Leah Weiss captures character quirks, and speech cadences, with a deftness that does justice to the material that mountain folk deliver to observant authors. Weiss is not only observant but also loving, investing heart in every character. This emotional honesty holds true whether she writes of young, vulnerable battered wife Sadie Blue or the miscreant Billy Barnhill, an odious creature in society's prevailing view but who is, in the end, crafted with compassion.

Novels that shift viewpoint from one person to the next are my least favorite, but Weiss makes it work. She weaves Sadie Blue's story from chapter to chapter, and the story gains dimension as each character sees her differently.

Weiss, who lives in Lynchburg, is that rare first novelist whose work attracts reviews in places like Publishers Weekly ("tender but powerful") and Kirkus Reviews ("a beguiling, compelling read"). I'll add to the high praise a note that *If the Creek Don't Rise* has one of the best lines I've read in a work of fiction lately. Weiss opens the chapter told from the point of view of Prudence Perkins with

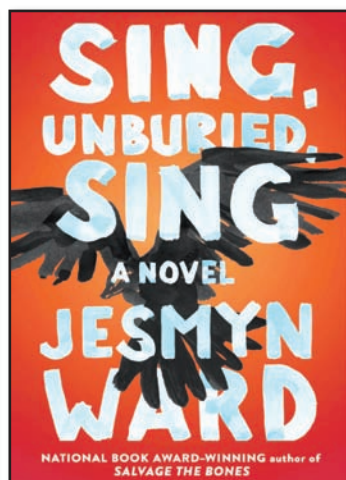
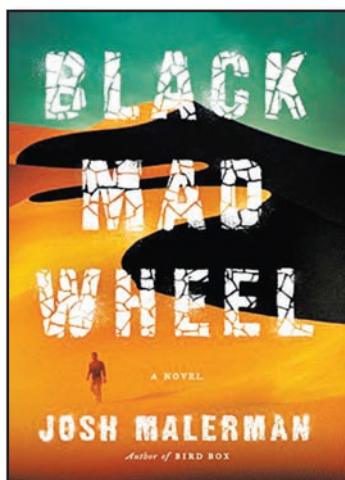
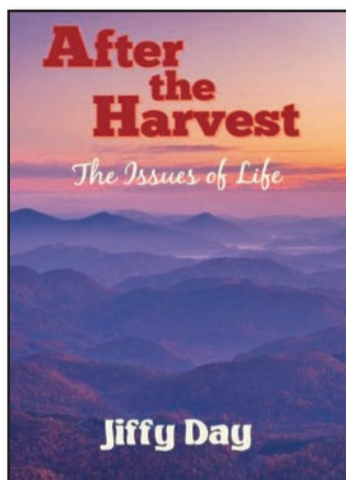
this zinger: "Hell is being born into a family of preachers named Eli." The rest of the book is pure heaven.

—Andrea Brunais

### *The drama of SWVA*

*After the Harvest* (Jiffy Day; 2017) is the second book in a three-book series. After reading *The Growing Season*, I could not wait for this next book in the series to see what happened to Zach and Piper, and James, and the other people we met in the first book. You won't feel like you are reading a story, but that you are friends with the characters. Jiffy's writing pulls you into the story, the life events, the real-life issues of the 60s and 70s in Southwest Virginia. Drugs, drama, and forbidden love dominate this story giving a realistic look at Zach and his friends' lives during this time.

Zach and Piper's love story intertwines throughout this story. If you know anything about Southwest Virginia you will feel like you've come back home. Jiffy's writing ability draws you into his characters' struggles, keeping you from putting the book down. He'll have you laughing, crying, cringing with Zach's run-ins with the law over drugs, and through it all, God's love, redemption, and the value of prayer shine through. *After the Harvest* is about real life, real struggles, and a God who is real. Sarah and James' love story adds to the overall storyline. Zach and James work hard but



come to realize their past doesn't define their future but shapes it.

*Fruit of the Harvest*, the next book in the series, continues Zack, Piper, James and Sarah, and Bobby's stories. Can't wait to read their adventures and see what happens. If you're looking for a real to live look at the drugs, struggles, events of the 60s and 70s in Southwest Virginia intertwined with a sweet love story, you will enjoy Jiffy's series.

—Sally Shupe

## Deep and shallow

*Black Mad Wheel* (Ecco; 2017) by Josh Malerman is one retro part "The Twilight Zone" (American TV series; 1950–1964), one modern part video game (with all its descending levels of play and soldier characters from bygone wars). The fantasy elements are somewhat crudely developed, but the plight of our protagonist keeps you guessing. I would have appreciated more exploration of our characters than the overreliance on a plot that doesn't quite capture the psychological suspense intended. Probably more enjoyed and better suited for a younger audience.

—Tom Field

## Mississippi muck

*Sing, Unburied, Sing* (Scribner; 2017) by Jesmyn Ward tells the story of young Jojo,

his mother Leonie, and the rest of the family (some of them dead, some of them alive, all of them oppressed) living in rural Mississippi. We're drawn in with a language that's as revealing from its multi-layers and colors as any story you've heard—written in an almost oral tradition. It's easy to see the downward spin of folk who seem to have no chance at redemption as the blues and bad news continues to pile on.

Having the characters speak for themselves in alternating chapters works here and will keep you tied to the drama; but I can't help but wonder how the ways the novel might have changed with a singular narrator. At times, the youngest and oldest folk seem to share eloquent insights at similar levels, when there's little chance of that actually happening. In other words, we hear our author's voice through the whole tale. But what a picture she paints. We all know families in poverty stuck in a mucky pool like this, and yet because part of the problem is self-imposed and the other part is imposed-upon, there often seems to be this strain of injustice that continues to prevent improvement. An empathetic read.

—Tom Field

(The reviewers: Andrea Brunais is a freelance writer and author living in Blacksburg; Sally Shupe lives in Newport and is a freelance editor; Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT.)





## Tracking antimicrobials >

A team of **Jefferson College & Health Sciences** biomedical sciences students led by Dr. Jayasimha Rao conducted research that has been published in *The Journal of Global Antimicrobials and Resistance*; the report covers *acinetobacter baumannii* isolates from a period of increased incidents of infections in a Southwest Virginia hospital and examines whether such strains are commonly encountered in a hospital setting.



## Kendig, dig >

The 2017 winners for the **Perry F. Kendig Awards** were announced by Roanoke College and Hollins University; (from left to right) Rachel Sailer (Individual Artist Award on behalf of her late husband, John Sailer); Judy and Joel Tenzer (Individual or Business Supporter Award); Roanoke College President Mike Maxey; Ian Fortier, executive director of the Grandin Theatre Foundation (Arts and Cultural Organization Award); and Hollins University President Pareena Lawrence.

# FRONT 'N ABOUT



Photos submitted by Sunshine Services



## Something to smile about >

The **Town of Troutville** celebrated 2017 World Smile Day® in October. The smiley face was created in 1963 by commercial artist Harvey Ball of Worcester, Massachusetts, and from this came his idea for designating the first Friday in October as World Smile Day® starting in 1999 to promote smiles and kindness throughout the world.



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## Down the street >

**Big Lick Brewing Company** of Roanoke celebrated its relocation and expansion of its new brewery, taproom, and beer garden at West Station on Salem Ave in downtown Roanoke with its official public opening on an unseasonably warm Saturday on Oct. 14.



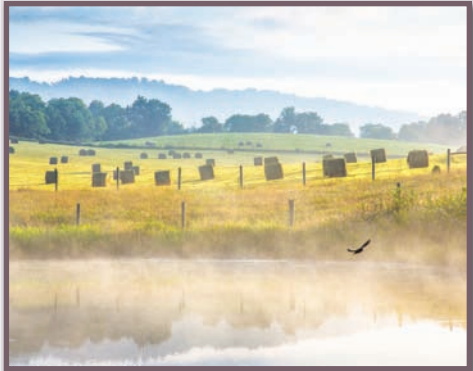
## Catching (a lot of) the rays >

**Carilion New River Valley Medical Center** installed the first of more than 4,100 solar panels in its new complex (located on part of the Childress farm, adjacent to the campus) on Oct. 20. Facility director Scott Blankenship and corporate sustainability officer Sara Wohlford (above) hoist the first of a set of panels that will ultimately generate 17% of the hospital's energy needs, saving about \$1.5 million over the next five years. How "environmental" is the project? Think "solar sheep," says Anthony Smith, CEO of Secure Futures. Clover will be planted with crop growth management and fertilizer provided by sheep, who will also use the shade from the panels as their habitat. This installation marks the largest single tracking solar system (panels are controlled synchronously to capture optimal performance from the sun's path) in the state to date.

# FRONT 'N ABOUT



Photos submitted by Roanoke Regional Airport



## Art in the airport >

The **Roanoke Regional Airport Commission's** latest installment of Art in the Airport is on display on the second floor of the terminal's west side, and features work by local artists Richard Mallory (first two pictures above), Mike Armstrong (third picture), Dianne Gillis-Robinson, and Michael Rhoades. The art may be purchased directly from the artists after January 1, 2018.



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Community College





# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## Look ma, no driver >

Caterpillar demonstrates its autonomous mine truck fleet at the Tinaja Hills Demonstration and Learning Center (AZ); as the company plans to expand the autonomous haul truck system through a partnership with **Torc Robotics**. The product is scheduled to go to market in the first quarter of 2019.



## Pump, pump it up >

Miss Virginia 2017, Cecili Weber, presented a \$1,000 check to Glenvar High School principal Jamie Soltis at the Friday evening football game; the funds were raised by Salem CITGO and Little Oil Company through their recent Spirit Pump initiative.

Valley Business FRONT is FRONT'n About at many events each month. Check the social media links at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com) for more coverage.

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# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



Reeves



Haller

**Marlin Reeves** was hired as market manager of the Hersherberger Retail Center in Roanoke, and **Daniel Haller** was appointed market manager of the Fairlawn Retail Center in Fairlawn, for Member One Federal Credit Union.



Taylor

**Chris Taylor** was appointed vice president of commercial lending at First Bank & Trust Company.

**Candace Dowell-Brower** was promoted to office leader for the Grandin Road location of Pinnacle Financial Partners.

**Forrest Belcher** was



Dowell-Browe



Belcher

appointed as benefits consultant in Scott Benefit Services' Roanoke office.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Davidson

**J. Michael Davidson**, Campbell County director of economic development, received the 2017 Cardinal Award from the Virginia Economic Developers Association, recognizing economic development leadership.



Hague

**Sarah Hague**, GISP, ENP was named director of the Geospatial Solutions division of PILLAR, Inc., roadway operations and maintenance advisors.



Smith

**Lutheria Smith**, SHRM-SCP, was promoted to vice president and director of human resources by Draper Aden Associates in Blacksburg.



Lawless

**Michael D. Lawless**, principal and vice president of Draper Aden Associates, received the Martin Van Couvering Memorial Award from the American Institute of Professional Geologists for exceptional service to the profession of geology and AIPG.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT

**Larry Johnson** was named director of finance at Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, a Hilton Curio hotel.



Johnson

**Ben Burks**, NHA, was hired as executive director at Brandon Oaks retirement center.

## EDUCATION FRONT



Noble



Gilliland



Duma

**Aaron Noble** was appointed associate professor, and **Ellen Gilliland** was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Mining and Minerals Engineering; **Stefan Duma**, a Harry Wyatt Professor of Engineering,

was named Fellow of the Biomedical Engineering Society at Virginia Tech.



Mitra



Douglas



Holt

**Tanushree Mitra** was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science in the College of Engineering; **Scott Douglas** was named

director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden and will teach landscape design and construction classes in the Department of Horticulture; **Matthew Holt**, professor from the University of Alabama, was named head of the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at Virginia Tech.



Hilu

**Khidir Hilu**, professor of biological sciences was conferred the title of professor emeritus; **Deborah Cook**, Verizon professor of business information technology at Pamplin College of



Cook



Erskine

Business was conferred the title of Verizon Professor Emerita; and **Michael Erskine** was named the Jean Ellen Shehan Professor and Director of the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

## WELLNESS FRONT



Tuck

**Dr. Ray Tuck**, president and owner of Tuck Chiropractic Clinic, was named the 2017 Virginia Chiropractor of the Year by the Unified Virginia Chiropractic Association.

**Frank Lucia** was hired as president and chief executive officer for Delta Dental.

**Lynn Atkinson** of Humana, Inc. qualified to receive the Soaring Eagle Award from the Leading Producers



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# Career FRONT



Atkinson

Round Table of the National Association of Health Underwriters.



Blick

**Susan K. Blick**, certified family nurse practitioner, joined Jefferson Surgical Clinic's ear, nose, and throat department.



Sullivan

law in West Virginia.



Lee

**Alicha M. Grubb** was hired for the commercial litigation group, and **Ariel S. Wossene** was hired to handle Qui Tam/Whistleblower matters and support the plaintiff, employment, and litigation practices in the Gentry Locke law firm in Roanoke.



John

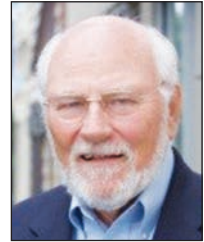


Dunsmore

**Kimberly Dunsmore**, was hired as chair of pediatrics at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.



Hartman



Enoch

**Jenny Lee**, president-elect; **Cheryl Hartman**, vice president; **Lloyd W. Enoch**, treasurer; **John Montgomery**, secretary; **Manly Aylor Jr.**, president, Roanoke Kiwanis Foundation, Inc. were inducted as Kiwanis Club of Roanoke Board of



Schoedel

**Dr. Vishak John**, retina specialist; and **Tad D. Schoedel**, M.D., ophthalmologist and glaucoma specialist, joined Vistar Eye Center.

## LEGAL FRONT

**Daniel R. Sullivan**, business litigation associate at Gentry Locke law firm, was admitted to practice

## CULTURE FRONT



Witt

**Donald Witt**, president;

1983 ••• 2017 ••• tomorrow



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Montgomery

Directors for 2017-2018. In addition, **Terry Apple, Larry Kufel, Sam Lionberger III, Mike Hamlar, Lois Larson, Dave Spangler, Reif Kessler, Mike Leigh, and Robert Thomas** were named as directors serving on the 2017-2018 Board.

## MUNICIPAL FRONTS



Byrd

**Kevin Byrd**, executive director of the New River Valley Regional Commission in Radford, was elected as second vice president of the National Association of Development



Chiazor

Organizations.

**Nneka Chiazor** was hired as vice president of public and government affairs for the Virginia region for Cox Communications.

*Compiled by  
Christine Liana*



We can no longer tolerate commonly accepted levels of mistakes...

— Page 34

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## *Can You Spare a Coat?*

As the weather turns cooler, **The Rescue Mission** is asking for the community's help in collecting new or gently-worn winter coats for men, women, children, and babies. In its annual Happy Coats-giving, last year nearly 900 coats were donated, and the Mission expects more coats are needed this year. The Rescue Mission is accepting coats at its donation center at 421 4th Street SE, Roanoke.

## *BB&T Branches Closing*

On December 1, North Carolina-based **BB&T** bank is closing four branches: 1828 Electric Road, Roanoke; 121 Electric Road, Salem; 40 Main Street, Boones Mill; and 189 Broad Street, Dublin. BB&T stated that it plans to close 140 branches across the southeast to improve efficiency. No layoffs are expected, since affected employees will be transferred to other BB&T branches.

## *Pay Attention, VDOT*

According to a grim report from **TRIP**, a national transportation research group, 20% of Virginia's rural roads are rated in poor condition - the 14th highest in the United States, and 24% are rated in mediocre condition. Combined, that's nearly half the roads in Virginia. The traffic fatality rate on Virginia's rural roads is the 11th highest in the

U.S., nearly five times higher than the fatality rate on all other roads in the Commonwealth.

## *Gearing Up For Production*

**Eldor Corp.**, the Italian automotive parts manufacturer, plans to start assembly line test runs in January 2018 and begin mass production in June 2018 at its new automotive parts factory under construction in Daleville, Botetourt County. Eldor plans to hire 350 workers within the next five years to work in its \$75 million, 250,000-sq. ft. factory in Botetourt Center at Greenfield. Eldor's long-term hiring plans call for another 300 jobs by 2024. Eldor's new plant is the largest expansion of new manufacturing jobs in the Roanoke Valley in at least a decade.

## *Former Equifax CEO Grilled About Negligence*

If you call **Equifax's** Response Line at 1-866-447-7559, you'll hear a recorded message downplaying their massive security breach crisis as an "incident" but Equifax can't escape scrutiny of the public or Congress. Former Equifax CEO Richard Smith, recently "retired" after announcement of the crisis with a total of around \$90.1 million, according to Fortune's calculations based on his securities filings. At the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee hearing in October, Smith testified that while he was in

charge, Equifax had 225 cybersecurity experts from around the world, but despite the Department of Homeland Security's warning about their vulnerable software, hackers accessed Equifax's network while Equifax knew of the problem and failed to fix it. Additionally, the Justice Department opened a criminal investigation concerning Equifax CFO John Gamble and executives Rodolfo Ploder and Joseph Loughran who sold a total of \$1.8 million in company stock shortly after the massive security hack was detected.

## *How's This For Irony?*

After Equifax's massive security breach affecting at least 145.5 million Americans, which Equifax previously knew about but didn't fix, the **Internal Revenue Service** contracted with Equifax for \$7.25 million in no-bid contract in October for verifying taxpayer identities ... to help prevent fraud. After members of Congress voiced their outrage at this insanity, the IRS suspended the contract on October 13. At the time of this report, taxpayers can't create new accounts in the IRS's Secure Access program to securely access IRS services online during the suspension.

## *U.S. 220 Improvement Project in Botetourt County*

Botetourt County's Board of Supervisors

approved **Boxley Materials Company's** rezoning request from agricultural to industrial for 20 acres near Eagle Rock. The project involves a plant to manufacture asphalt for a nine-mile U.S. 220 construction project from rural Eagle Rock to south of Iron Gate. The road safety project involves widening the road shoulders, adding a raised center line to the pavement, building new turn lanes, and adding passing zones. After the project is completed, the plant is to be removed within 90 days and zoning may likely revert to agricultural use. Work is scheduled to begin next year by VDOT, which approved \$64.5 million in April for this project.

## *Wells Fargo CEO Tim Sloan Faces Culpability in Scandal*

Last year **Wells Fargo** CEO John Stumpf was grilled by Congress about Wells Fargo's scamming millions of customers to achieve sales goals. Current CEO Tim Sloan appeared before the Senate Banking Committee in October about his role in the continuing scandals. Wells Fargo admitted to opening up to 3.5 million phony accounts without customers' knowledge, which may have occurred since 2002. Employees who protested or blew the whistle were fired. Wells Fargo had to pay \$185 million in fines and \$142 million in class-action lawsuit. Sloan was reported to be combative

and defensive. Sloan defended the bank's practice of sending its customers to forced arbitration, in which customers must use a third party to resolve disputes instead of filing a class-action lawsuit. Wells Fargo also had to pay a \$4 million settlement with the U.S. Justice Department for illegally repossessing vehicles from military personnel. The bank enrolled auto loan customers in physical damage insurance for their vehicles when they already had sufficient coverage. Thousands of customers were in default because they couldn't afford the extra cost, and thousands of

victims may have had their vehicles repossessed.

## *Look on the Bright Side*

If you want to save money on your electric bill, go solar. **Solar Energy Industries Association** reports that 26,000 Virginia homes were powered by solar as of September, and there's been a 55% decline in solar cost in the past five years. Lynchburg-based New Dominion Solar opened last year and currently serves the residential market. Non-profit Virginia Sun helps Virginia communities to go solar and advocates

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for fair solar policies across the Commonwealth, particularly concerning monopoly companies like Appalachian Power Company.

## *The Big Screen Comes to Botetourt County*

**Harkness Screens** of Fredericksburg is moving into a 100,000

sq. ft. building in the EastPark Commerce Center in Botetourt County, near Bonsack. Harkness designs and manufactures projection screens for cinema, film production, special effects, and live events. In its new Botetourt County location, in which about 50 new jobs are expected for the first phase, Harkness will have five times

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# FRONT Notes

the space of its Fredericksburg facility. Harkness will manufacture coated two- and three-dimensional cinema screens as large as 60' high and 140' wide. The standard screen size for most cinemas is about 25' x 45'. The EastPark building upgrade cost approximately \$3.5 million. Harkness will close its Fredericksburg plant but will open an administrative office there. Some of the displaced employees will be offered new jobs in Botetourt if they are willing to relocate. The Botetourt plant will be the only one in the United States and will serve the U.S. and Latin American market. Founded in 1929, Harkness has manufacturing facilities in the United Kingdom, France, India, and China.

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#### *Kroger Ends Contract With Transport Company*

**Cardinal Logistics Management Corp.** plans to lay off 69 employees effective December 2, 2017.

North Carolina-based Cardinal delivers products to Kroger, whose main warehouse is in Roanoke County. Kroger decided not to renew Cardinal's contract.

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#### *Augusta Health Ends Contract With the Blues*

**August Health** will likely not renew Anthem's BlueCross BlueShield contract at the end of 2017. The hospital maintains that it is underpaid compared to Sentara RMH Medical Center in Harrisonburg and the UVA Medical Center in Charlottesville, and had a dispute with Anthem over rate fairness. Those with Anthem insurance going to Augusta Health will have to pay out-of-network rates.

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#### *Virginia a Top State For Business*

According to **Area Development** magazine, Virginia ranked #11 out of 20 in the 2017 Top States for Doing Business. This year's survey was the first time

since 2010 that Virginia made the list. Of the 12 sub-categories, Virginia ranked in the top 10 of five of them: Cooperative & Responsive State Government (5th); Leading Workforce Development Programs (7th); Competitive Labor Environment (8th); Favorable Regulatory Environment (9th); and Speed of Permitting (9th).

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#### *Ride a Bike in Roanoke*

**Bikeshare by RIDE Solutions** added three new stations to its growing bikeshare network: in Roanoke's Crystal Spring Village, at the Riverside campus of Carilion Clinic / Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, and at Soaring Ridge Craft Brewers on the outskirts of downtown Roanoke. Based on sponsorship, the costs of starting and operating new stations are covered by community-minded local businesses. This recent expansion is through sponsorship by Hometown Bank for the Crystal Spring

neighborhood station, and Soaring Ridge Craft Brewers for their on-site station. RIDE Solutions sponsors the Riverside station. Sponsors have name recognition on the stations, on the bikes, and within the Zagster app, and can receive additional membership benefits. Riders can sign up at [zagster.com/ridesolutions](http://zagster.com/ridesolutions). Bikeshare by RIDE Solutions is a partnership with Zagster, a bikeshare provider out of Cambridge, Massachusetts. RIDE Solutions is operated by the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission with the New River Valley Planning District Commission, Region 2000, and the West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board.

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#### *Lynchburg Steel Sold to New Buyer*

Nashville-based Cooper Steel is purchasing **Lynchburg Steel & Specialty Co.'s** Monroe plant in Amherst County, which closed in August. The new name will be

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Cooper Steel of Virginia. Founded in 1970 by C.V. Anderson Jr., Lynchburg Steel was a family business. In 1996 it was purchased by a Jordanian company, and bought back by the family in 2008. Environmental Protection Agency representatives visited the Monroe plant after a former employee reported the company was disposing of and burning hazardous waste. According to President Doug Anderson, there was no evidence

of this. According to reports, when asked for comments, the EPA deferred to the U.S. Department of Justice, but their representative did not comment.

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#### *New Office for Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance*

The **Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance** has a new office on Lucado Place as of October, relocating from its former location on Memorial Avenue.

The former James River Conference Center was purchased by the Alliance for approximately \$1.1 million when it went up for auction in 2015. The conference center space will be used for events and there will be additional space for tenants.

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#### *Broadband Completion*

The **Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority** completed its \$3.4 million broadband extension in October,

with an additional 25 miles of fiber-optic cable in the region's government-owned network. The new line runs through Roanoke County from the Lewis Gale Medical Center to Electric Road to the South County Library, toward Tanglewood Mall. The RVBA's network now totals 80 miles of fiber through Roanoke and Salem cities, and Roanoke County.

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*Compiled by  
Christine Liana*

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# Advertiser Index

|   |    |   |         |
|---|----|---|---------|
| AAF / Roanoke .....                               | 53 | John T. Morgan Roofing .....                            | 21      |
| Ameriprise Financial .....                        | 53 | Mary Baldwin University .....                           | 11      |
| Aztec Rentals .....                               | 61 | Northwest Hardware .....                                | 38      |
| Bank of the James .....                           | 37 | The Proofing Prof .....                                 | 53      |
| Beliveau Estate .....                             | 20 | RBTC .....  | 35      |
| Berryfield .....                                  | 53 | Richfield .....   | 40      |
| Blue Mobius Marketing .....                       | 3  | Roanoke CoLab .....                                     | 53      |
| Branch Associates .....                           | 14 | Roanoke College .....                                   | 12      |
| Citizens .....                                    | 55 | Roanoke Higher<br>Education Center .....                | 51      |
| Creekmore Law Firm .....                          | 60 | Roanoke Rescue Mission /<br>2nd helpings Catering ..... | 2       |
| Davis H. Elliot Company .....                     | 53 | Roanoke Rescue Mission /<br>Drumstick Dash .....        | 39      |
| Duncan Audi .....                                 | BC | Sir Speedy .....  | 53      |
| Entre Computer Center .....                       | 56 | Spilman Thomas & Battle .....                           | 43      |
| Garland Properties /<br>16 West Marketplace ..... | 29 | Suggestion Mailbox .....                                | 62      |
| Glebe .....                                       | 31 | Wheeler Broadcasting .....                              | 27 & 59 |
| NRV Habitat for<br>Humanity ReStore .....         | 42 | VCOM .....  | 49      |
| Hollins University .....                          | 18 | Virginia Business Systems .....                         | 63      |
| HomeTown Bank .....                               | 53 | Whitebarrel Winery .....                                | 57      |
| Hughes & Associates .....                         | 15 | Woods Rogers .....                                      | 4       |
| MemberOne Federal Credit Union ..                 | 41 |   |         |

“ ”

The office he uses today was once  
his childhood bedroom — Page 28

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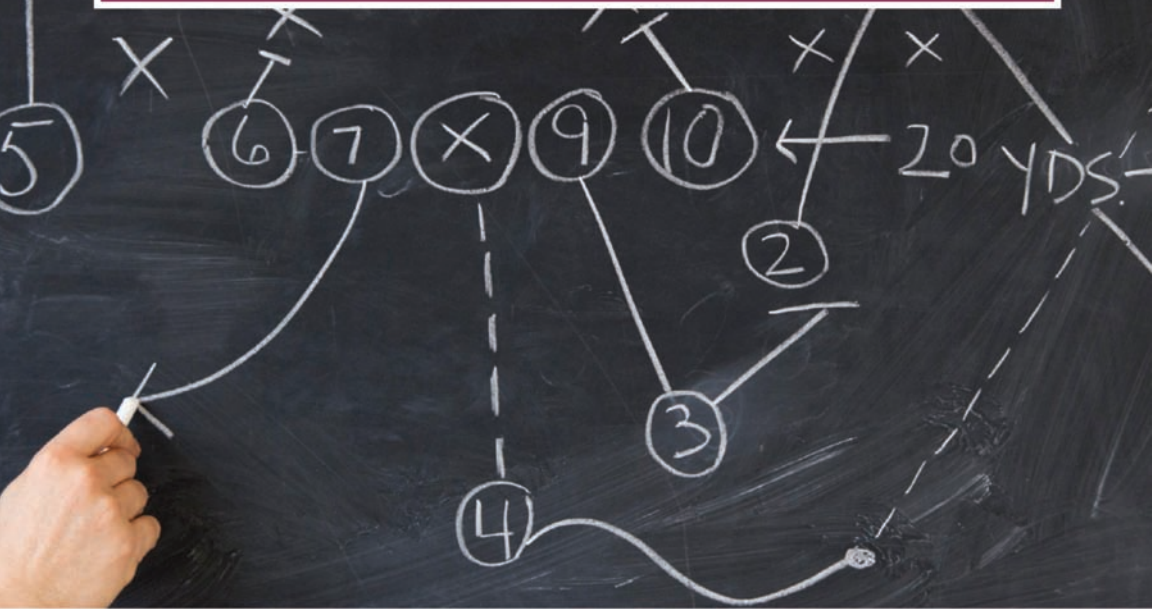
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