

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a light-colored suit jacket over a white shirt, is smiling and holding a glowing lightbulb in his right hand. The background is a warm, textured orange and yellow, with a bright red circular light effect behind the lightbulb. The overall theme is 'Bright Ideas'.

Valley Business FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION
FREE • ISSUE 108 • SEPTEMBER 2017

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Bright Ideas

Sam English,
CIE Partners and Attention Point

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What if?

Two powerful words. Let's start with an idea to solve a problem or bring a solution to a needy market. What if there was a collapsible, portable bicycle helmet instead of the clumsy hard shell kind we've had to carry around for years? What if there was an easy user-friendly kiosk for writing up, printing out, and sending a greeting card right there johnny-on-the-spot? What if there was a "blue tooth" device for garden hoses, so you just carry the nozzle alone to water your plants out in the yard, instead of dragging that blasted kinky hose all around?

Okay, so that last one hasn't been invented yet. Just an idea.

The point is, all great things start with an idea. And all ideas are just imaginations until someone finds the means and resources to produce and deliver to market. That part of the process—from the idea stage to making it to market—is difficult and challenging to say the least.

What if... you read our FRONTcover story to find out more?



Tom Field

“

Poisoning wine was a favorite
method of disposing of a rival

— Page 21



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are coachable — Page 12



Valley Business FRONT

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

Staff

Publisher / Creative Director	Tom Field tfield@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
News Editor	Christine Liana news@vbFRONT.com
Advertising	Dan Dowdy (540) 797-7943 Theresa Passeretti (540) 420-8385 ads@vbFRONT.com (540) 389-9945
Graphic Designer	Nicholas Vaassen nvaassen@berryfield.com
Production	Berryfield, Inc. PO Box 1041 Salem, VA 24153 (540) 389-9945

Departmental Contacts

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

(540) 389-9945
vbFRONT.com
morefront.blogspot.com

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SEPTEMBER



Dan Dowdy



Tom Field



Mike Leigh



Nanette Levin



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

Editorial Advisory Board

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



Christine Liana



Caitlyn Scaggs



Doloris Vest

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 50.

2017 Members

Nancy Agee Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford Claire V (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Carilion (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Finance)
John Garland Garland Properties (Development)
Nancy Gray Hollins University (Education)
Nanci Hardwick Aeroprobe (Tech/Industry)
George Kegley Retired (Seniors)
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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.

“

I never realized that having a mastectomy meant you can't raise your arms to fix your hair

— Page 22

“

The success rate in the financial services industry hovers around 12%

— Page 35

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What's the **BIG** Idea?

Launching Our Next Generation Entrepreneurs

It could just be the Volkswagen effect, says Robert McAden, who leads the Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC). "You know, when you buy a VW and suddenly all you see are people driving VWs."

In this case, maybe it's the Shark Tank effect: More and more entrepreneurs – and resources for them – are cropping up all over the Roanoke and New River valleys.

From a brand-new business accelerator in downtown Roanoke to the venerable Corporate Research Center in Blacksburg, resources for entrepreneurs and investment in new ideas are paying off.

The Trend

McAden explains most entrepreneurs are often more-seasoned workers with a new idea. "They have the experience to address problems they have seen in their

careers and industries," he says. While engineers are still doing a lot of interesting things, he says "now we see someone who wants to solve an old problem with a new idea, using the latest tools but in a different industry." In many ways, they are creating their own work, he adds "for themselves and other people."

Investor Kevin Bloomfield, a



**Kevin
Bloomfield**

It Takes a Start-Up Village >

Executive Summary:
FRONT talks to formidable players in the idea-generation-to-viable-product-to-market game; here's what they said.

By Doloris E. Vest



Robert McAden

successful local entrepreneur who sold his 2006 start-up, NetVentures, in 2014, says a major difference today is that in the past entrepreneurs were left to stumble into business. "Each had to battle on their own to be successful," he says. Nationally entrepreneurship is on a three-year growth trend following the recession and at its highest level in twenty years. But, Bloomfield explains, "it's still difficult to start a new business.

"Today there's an ecosystem for entrepreneurs, a mentoring structure and many more resources to take advantage of. All of the resources we're seeing are laying the groundwork for businesses to flourish."

Generally, there are two types of startups: opportunity and necessity. Some entrepreneurs create businesses when they see an opportunity and other entrepreneurs start a business out of necessity, usually a lack of employment. More than three-quarters of Virginia startups fall in the opportunity category where entrepreneurs were employed when they started their business.

The local trend differs from the stereotypical Silicon Valley-style start up with dreams of being the next Microsoft or Apple. While the largest sectors among new businesses are services and retail, Bloomfield says the local area has a healthy mix of up-and-coming businesses, beyond just the much-touted biomedical industry related to the Virginia Tech/Carilion partnership. "We're seeing groups of software developers, hardware developers who don't get the level of funding or the publicity that are doing quite well," he explains.

Collaboration is more important than ever, according to Christopher Desimone, founder of Star Tank, a local





Chris Desimone

group of accredited investors looking for new ventures through a Shark Tank-like event.

"Extensive collaboration among both public and private entities are spurring entrepreneurial productivity in our region," Desimone says. "I believe this trend is attributable to society's technological advances that have made more information available, as well as easier communication among everyone involved."

Publicity about investor activities like Star Tank, a local version of TV's Shark Tank, helps new businesses by encouraging would-be entrepreneurs to believe they can succeed. Mary Miller, executive director of the Regional Acceleration and Mentoring Program (RAMP) cites the attention the Virginia Tech-Carilion partnership is bringing to the region. "We've passed a tipping point with so many things are happening all at once." She notes the similarity of the origins of the Smartway

Bus which was proposed many years ago to shuttle business people, students and residents between Roanoke and Blacksburg. "No one thought that would work, and now it is a fixture in the region."



Jim Flowers

Miller calls this region "fabulous" in its support for new businesses. "So many business people are incredibly successful and incredibly generous in their willingness to invest and nurture entrepreneurs."

Jim Flowers, executive director for VTKnowledgeWorks stresses a focus on careful business planning to increase the odds of success. Advisors at VTKW give entrepreneurs a road map to figure out every step. "Entrepreneurs make themselves successful by taking advantage of all the resources," says Flowers. "We make referrals to others [entrepreneurs] they should talk to, someone with a rich background in their industry or sector."

Former RBTC chair Sam English, with CIE Partners and Attention Point, describes three times in life when entrepreneurship attracts new talent. "People in the early stages of their career can afford to take the personal and professional risk," he says. Later, during the empty-nest stage of life, many people want to give back to the community and look for ways to do so



RAMP professionals Mary Miller, Carole Tarrant, Samantha Steidle

through building a business. The Kaufmann Foundation reports that historically the prime years for starting a business are between the ages of 25 and 55.

The third kind of entrepreneur English describes is the situational entrepreneur, which occurs when workers don't have a good fit at their employer and go out on their own. This "side hustle" can start at any time in a career and grow into a full-fledged business. Fully one-third of area businesses started in the last two years are home-based.

English also stresses entrepreneurial teams as indispensable to success. "There's really nothing solo about a start-up. Founders often bring different skill sets to the business and then identify other gaps that need filling. When you graduate to the next level [beyond start up] you need even more expertise."

RBTC's McAden says this area boasts many business people who have recognized a problem in their own



Worth watching >

- **VOLATIA** (Roanoke), a network of interpreters and translators in 200 languages providing service 24/7 on-site, over the phone and via video remote.
- **Aeroprobe** (Christiansburg), helps unmanned aircraft designers go faster, fly safer and deliver more power, by providing real-time air and flow data.
- **DialySensors**, (Blacksburg) uses their new technology, chemometric fingerprinting, in a device to manage renal disease with the potential to change both the quality of life and the survival rate for those on dialysis.
- **Pervida** (Blacksburg), producing health water infused with vitamins, antioxidants and punicic acid found in pomegranate seed oil for immune gut health.



company or industry and organized the people to solve it. "They ask themselves: who has the experience to solve this?"

Willing learners are as important as willing mentors, adds RAMP's Miller. "The best entrepreneurs are coachable. That's a term we apply to sports, but it's the mindset that you can be better and want to be better. As the business grows entrepreneurs have bigger responsibilities and become wiser. Coachable business owners are willing to meet with mentors and trust the feedback," she says. Miller says that more than 25 years after starting her first business she still relies on a network of mentors, "a group I wouldn't hesitate to call."

There's no excuse for doing "truly dumb things," says Flowers. "Some people are totally in love with their idea and don't let themselves see the negative signs. So, it's important that they use the myriad of resources not available even five years ago."

The Challenge

While guidance advice and education are abundant for entrepreneurs, "a lack of seed-stage capital remains a challenge for businesses" according to Flowers. "That first \$50,000 to \$250,000 is very hard to come by for new businesses. The only way for many businesses to start is to invest their own money and risk blowing it." Such challenges have led to the long-term overall entrepreneurship rate trending downward in the last forty years, he added.

That's where organizations like RAMP and RBTC come in. "Entrepreneurs need to plug into networking and getting on the radar of those who can help fund their business," says RBTC's McAden.

COVER STORY

Miller agrees that running out of money is one of the two most fatal flaws for any business and especially start-ups and those in early growth. The other is running out of energy. "Both of those are less likely if you have a clearer perspective on where you are."

RAMP is the epitome of the regional approach to encouraging start-ups. In an accelerator – as opposed to an incubator where businesses often launch – organizations review their ideas and assess where they are and where and how they can grow. "We want to build business that last, that stay in the region and create jobs" Miller says.

As a RAMP board member, English notes the organization identifies early stage companies so that the community can help them grow. As a partnership between Virginia Western



Sam English



RAMP Startup Teams



Community College, the City of Roanoke and the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, RAMP propels high-potential startups to expand and create jobs in the STEM-H fields. "RAMP has a good vetting process which moves companies into a boot-camp process that looks at everything they do," English explains.

In her work directing RAMP, Miller cautions entrepreneurs and investors to have realistic expectations with a realistic time frame. Members of RAMP's inaugural cohort—selected for their potential to expand and create jobs—range from Flex Metrics by SoftSolutions, a 15-year-old data management company, to Acomhal Research, whose DialySensor product requires extensive development and testing before release.

The six RAMP companies operate in the historic Gill Memorial Hospital, owned and recently renovated by the City of Roanoke using a \$600,000 grant from the Commonwealth. The location gives this diverse group of businesses from different industries and business development first-hand access to investors, mentors, training and other resources.

Another RAMP primary partner, Virginia Western Community College, provides business education classes and faculty support. "RAMP advances the opportunities for entrepreneurs who may have started at other venues, such as the CoLab in Grandin and the Entrepreneur Center in downtown," says Samantha Steidle, VWCC's innovation officer. "RAMP is focused on accelerating business that are well past the start-up phase."

RBTC administers the RAMP program through an advisory board and develops the accelerator's mentorship and networking initiatives. For its wider membership, RBTC offers programs such as CORE Advance which cultivates emerging leaders in technology companies and initiatives

in talent development and recruitment. RBTC membership ranges from emerging technology firms to the largest employers in the region

If RAMP and RBTC escorts businesses through their young adulthood, CoLab is where they are born and experience an adolescent growth spurt. The 10,000 square-foot collaborative workspace in the Grandin area is less than two miles from the downtown innovation corridor with a second location at The Patrick Henry on Jefferson Street. Other resources include the Small Business Development Center, local economic development officials and business start-up competitions, like the Advancement Foundation's Gauntlet.

McAden hopes for even more support of entrepreneurs in the future. "We have a long way to go for society to fully embrace the entrepreneurial attitude. High school grads are looking to the future, at opportunities beyond the traditional routes that were available for their parents."

Bloomsbury considers entrepreneurship a lifestyle choice in a positive way. "There's risk but you're in control of so many more factors. It gives you control of your own destiny."

Profiles

Card Isle (Blacksburg), Greeting card-creation and printing kiosk, website and app
www.cardisle.com

Adam Donato, David Henry, Stephan Sabo

"Everyone likes getting a card in the mail; we found out very few people enjoy shopping for them," says Adam Donato. Card Isle's creators, who met several years ago in Virginia Tech's iCorp class for entrepreneurs, interviewed more than 700 people to confirm the greeting card sector was ready for innovation to improve the card-buying experience. Card Isle allows customers to combine their chosen design with just the right message or compose their own. Cards can be printed at the kiosks or mailed directly from the app.

Launched in 2014 this ten-employee firm has kiosks stationed around the country, after starting in one grocery store in Blacksburg. Canon USA featured Card Isle as a "Visionary" at the 2017 Consumer Electronics Show and installed kiosks on its corporate campus as part of a program to reduce turnover through improving relationships among employees.

Co-owner Adam Donato credits the company's early success to leveraging the network of resources available. The idea sprouted at Virginia Tech, began growing at Blacksburg's NuSpark incubator and eventually blossomed





Card Isle

at Tech Stars, an international networking and support system for entrepreneurs. Donato says networking and mentors have taught him things he otherwise wouldn't have known, like how to cultivate investors and ultimately ask for funding.

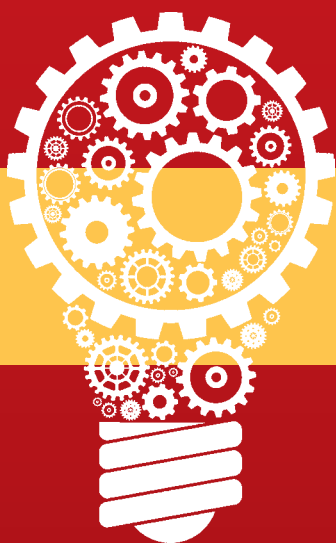
"When you're a scrappy start-up" says Donato, "you have to talk to everyone."

Game Changineers (Blacksburg), Technology to convert plain English into functional computer code
<https://gc.ece.vt.edu>
Michael Hsiao

Which would a kid rather do – parse sentences for correct grammar or design a video game? Game Changineer leverages "duh" into a unique educational tool that does both.

Head "changineer" Michael Hsiao, a Virginia Tech professor, says Changineer teaches programming concepts using English. "Programming becomes more efficient by teaching coding concepts while teaching correct English writing to animate math and science concepts, he explains.

The Changineer game converts simple, logical English sentences and paragraphs into functional, executable code. New users can create meaningful programs in under an hour. Those who master the technology can reduce design time to one-tenth or as much as one one-hundredth of traditional coding time.



COVER STORY

Hsaio explains that while coding and computational thinking are necessary 21st Century skills, few people are proficient because learning to code is a challenge, normally taking tens to hundreds of hours in today's programming languages. Using reading and writing English, rather than learning the ins and outs of a programming language, nearly everyone can begin programming.

Users take English sentences to create their code. If the grammar and usage is incorrect they receive an error message. Once their game is operational they can reach a screen showing them the code they created.

Game Changineer has completed pilots in several local schools and will expand to more localities this fall. The company also has non-educational applications in development.

Frost Glove (Salem), Temperature-sustaining thermal throwing glove

www.frostgearsports.com

Luke Aprile and Zack Zwergel

Frost Glove emerged by necessity for founder Luke Aprile after playing baseball at Hofstra University in New York and then Roanoke College.

Manufactured with proprietary tactile material, the gloves



Luke Aprile, FrostGear Pitch

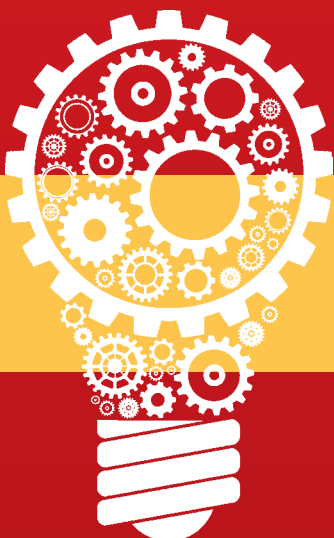
allow players to grip a baseball regardless of how cold and wet the playing conditions on game day. Wearers can throw accurately and comfortably in any weather. Interest from athletes in a variety of sports has led to gloves designed for softball, football and golf.

The first product shipped less than a year ago and already Frost Glove is moving beyond the sports industry: Shield Commander gloves provide warmth and maneuverability of Frost Gloves with the added benefit of cut resistance, an important feature for public safety workers in high-risk situations.

Aprile and his partner Zack Zwergel won \$3,000 in this year's Pitch Competition at Roanoke College and were one of three startups in the college's two-month Innovation Challenge this summer. They garnered second place in the 2017 Gauntlet, a business development program sponsored by area economic development organizations. The program included business plan writing, mentoring, and training, culminating in opportunity to pitch the product to investors.

Park & Diamond bicycle helmet (Blacksburg),
ultraportable, easily stored bike helmet
www.park-and-diamond.com
David Hall and Jordan Klein

David Hall turned a family near-tragedy into innovation that could save lives. In 2014 his sister, not wearing a bike helmet, was severely injured in a hit-and-run accident at



Park & Diamond



the corner of Park & Diamond streets in Blacksburg.


Hall explains that on average, over 85,000 people a year in the United States suffer traumatic brain injuries from cycling accidents with more than \$4 billion dollars in healthcare-related expenses.

Together, Hall and partner Jordon Klein, a fellow engineer, designed a flexible helmet, constructed from athletic fabric, to conform to the rider's head, much like a baseball cap, for a more comfortable, aesthetically pleasing hat.

The helmet collapses and can be rolled up for storage in the bike's water bottle holder or in a backpack or brief case. "The helmet is either with you or on your bike," says Hall. "It's always where you need it when you need it."

"By matching an active lifestyle with a stylish and comfortable design, there is no longer an excuse to not wear a helmet," Hall says.

The 2015 start-up has already won two national entrepreneur competitions – RedBull Launchpad and the eFest at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota – garnering more than \$150,000 in prize moneys to launch them toward their Spring 2018 product launch. Hall said the competitions were vital because they exposed them to so much knowledge about the industry and entrepreneur efforts.

"We will consider our helmet and journey a success when we see riders, who would not have normally worn a helmet, wearing our helmet and knowing we are protecting them" 

Helmet Side View





Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:

Do you have a closet full of clothes – but feel you have nothing to wear? You may be buying clothes that are “almost perfect” but don’t solve your wardrobe problems or make you feel excited to wear them.


Full closet, but nothing to wear >

This may be because:

- You’re buying it simply because it’s your favorite color. Before buying, ask yourself if you would buy that garment in another color.
- It evokes an image you’d like to project but can’t quite manage. For example, if your style is classic but you try a sporty or whimsical look because it’s trendy– then realize it’s not right for you.
- The garment flatters one part of your body, but not the rest, creating an awkward look.
- You’re buying items that are almost right, but need adjustment. Taking it in under the arm or hemming will do wonders, right?

If your closet is full of “almost perfect” clothing, try the following steps:

- Separate out your favorite clothing that always feels right when you wear them.
- Consider why you feel comfortable wearing them. For instance, a v-neck top may make your neck look longer, rather than a high-necked top. Or, you’re a woman with broad hips and you feel best in skirts or pants with a wide leg. For men, you might prefer to wear uncuffed trousers because they make your legs appear longer.
- Examine the rest of your wardrobe. Eliminate all garments you’ll never wear because you’re not comfortable in them.
- Have clothing you can’t toss? Decide why you aren’t wearing it. Does it simply need tailoring to fit correctly? If so, find a tailor and have it altered to fit perfectly. Or, you’d like to wear a garment but need a certain item to wear with it? Shop specifically for that item, creating the outfit you envision.
- Once you eliminate purposeless clothing in your wardrobe, avoid shopping sale racks. Buying odd pieces usually doesn’t complete an outfit but rather creates a new problem to solve – and the clutter continues!

Remember, clothing helps you create the image you desire. The lines of a garment can minimize figure faults and create balance. That’s why we prefer how we look in some garments as opposed to others. Trust your gut. Buy only styles and colors that make you proud of your appearance. 

Comments? Email kssurace@aol.com

The custom of toasting >

As with many customs surrounding hospitality, toasting originated with the Greeks. Poisoning wine was a favorite method of disposing of a rival, so the host would take the first sip of wine to assure the guests of its safety. The Romans, equally fond of poisoning, embraced the Greeks practice of drinking first as a sign of friendship and goodwill. The Romans custom of dripping a piece of burnt toast into wine is the origin of the word and act of “toasting.”


Toasting brings a cheerful note to any occasion, whether it is business, social, formal or informal. Many people feel anxious at the thought of making a toast (think Best Man toasting the Bride and Groom), but the rules are simple and easy to follow. There are three types of toasts: the welcome toast; the host proposes a toast to the guest of honor, and the guest of honor makes a toast.

The Welcome Toast: The host stands and welcomes guests at the beginning of a meal. It is not directed to one person, but is a welcome for everyone.

The Host’s Toast to the Guest of Honor: Stand, hold your glass high, to get the attention of the other guests, but don’t tap it with silverware. Put your glass down, look at the honoree and talk slowly and sincerely about the person. As you finish, make eye contact to include the rest of your guests, pick up your glass, and say something like “Please join me in a toast to” Take a sip and sit down.

The Guest of Honor’s Toast: You, the guest of honor remains seated during the toast. Don’t drink a toast to yourself. That’s like applauding yourself or honoring yourself. Then stand, and respond with a toast to the host. As you finish, make eye contact with the rest of the guests, raise your glass in a toast, take a sip, and sit down. Note: Other guests may offer toasts now if they wish.

Remember:

- You never need to toast with alcohol; water is fine.
- Do stand to propose a toast to the guest of honor.
- Do follow the host’s lead and stand to respond to a toast.
- Don’t read your toast. If it’s too long to remember, shorten it!
- Do keep the toast short and simple. Use the three B’s of toasting: Begin – Be Brief – Be Seated. 

Note: From Modern Manners by Dorothea Johnson (Founder of the Protocol School of Washington) and Liv Tyler.



Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

Executive Summary:
Toasting is a civil demonstration of appreciation; the guidelines are pretty simple.



Battling hair loss >

Executive Summary:

The Hair Restoration Center in Roanoke helps individuals far beyond matters of style.

By Nanette Levin

Jim Shepperd saw a need shortly after moving to Roanoke. Friends were complaining about the long drives to Charlotte or Richmond they were making to fix their receding hairline. Since he had a background as a hair stylist, they turned to him for help between appointments.

He discovered no one in Roanoke offered non-surgical hair replacement and enhancement services, so decided to secure certification for these procedures. He found space at Townside Festival shopping center, paired with a hair extension specialist and opened The Hair Restoration Center of Roanoke in April. This month, he'll be doubling the size of his space to include standard hair salon services.

Shepperd and Tamekah Alnissa work together to offer solutions for both men and women to enhance the thickness of hair, provide hair replacement systems (formerly called toupees) and add hair extensions. The company also offers affordable wigs designed primarily for women undergoing chemotherapy or radiation treatments.

Lending a helping hand or two

Recently, Shepperd's mother-in-law was diagnosed with breast cancer. This involved a mastectomy and continues with radiation treatments. "I never realized that having a mastectomy meant you can't raise your arms to fix your hair," he says. When Shepperd discovered how hair styling brightened her day, he became determined to offer this to other women in Roanoke facing a similar challenge – for free.

Shepperd spent almost 20 years in the hair care industry prior to founding his Roanoke company, so has skills to draw on for primping. He's reached out to Carilion in hopes of offering the free service to their breast cancer patients. He admits he misses the hair styling practice of his past so is excited to get back to it while helping



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It's not just for men anymore

Hair loss is one of those non-discriminatory things women would probably prefer was. Shepperd indicates they see as many women as men frustrated by thinning hair or hair loss.

Some female patients just want to make what they were born with look better with tools to thicken, improve the health or supplement the hair they have. Others

are dealing with morale issues due to health problems. For them, spending a fortune on a wig they hope will be obsolete soon doesn't make sense, but they still want to look good.

Alnissa spends her primary time on women. She's determined to help steer women away from harsh chemical-rich, hair damaging choices through education about better solutions. Hair straighteners are one of her biggest objections. She lives what she preaches by replacing her hair style monthly with extensions braided into her tightly curled, natural, healthy hair.

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She also helps clients find the best solutions for their concerns, which may include Low Light Laser Therapy to thicken hair, scalp therapy to for healthier hair or extensions for prettier hair.


Creating confidence for all ages

"So many people take hair for granted, but when you're losing it, you suddenly realize how much it means," Shepperd explains. "There's equal parts science and art in making thicker, fuller hair and creating solutions that are comfortable and practical for each individual," he says.

Surprisingly, one of the biggest age groups seeking hair restoration services is Millennials, Shepperd claims. He indicates these are children of people who thought shaving their head was cool

and don't want to look like their parents.

Shepperd's a client of his services too. Loath to admit he just turned 50, he was called out on his receding hairline after he opened the business. Since then, he's been playing with different hair systems on his own head and delights in pulling them back to show his handiwork.

Both Alnissa and Shepperd get excited talking about the joy they get when they come to work. It's a rewarding business for them that has extended beyond the office as a friendly relationship. Alnissa is from New Jersey and now discovering the wonders of woods, hiking and nature with Shepperd's prompting. Shepperd has moved around a lot but most recently left Florida. After nine months in Roanoke, he declares this will be his forever home moving forward. 

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Meet Dr. Deming >

If you've spent any time researching or practicing methods for improving the operations of your business, you probably know there are many different philosophies, techniques, and schools of thought. ISO, Lean, Six Sigma, TQM, and PDCA are a few of them. I've practiced, studied or reviewed almost all the primary methods in practice today.

My career for the past 10 years has been dedicated to helping organizations become more successful. During this time, as I've learned and practiced these different philosophies, and worked with numerous improvement professionals, there is one person who's name always gets mentioned...Dr. W. Edwards Deming.

Dr. Deming was arguably the most influential person of the past century in helping organizations improve their management and operations. Nearly all the continuous improvement methods and management system philosophies developed in the past 75 years have some roots from his teachings. Most people have heard of Dr. Deming, but few people know the details of his management principles and his impact in the latter half of the 20th century.

As one of the leading authorities of continuous quality improvement, Dr. Deming is given significant credit for helping Japan turn around their industry following WWII in the 1950s. Although a leading scholar at the time, American industry did not take his teachings seriously. It wasn't until the 1980s, after Japan's industrial transformation, that American corporations began to consult with Deming and apply his philosophy on quality, systems, psychology, and leadership.

As a lifelong teacher, Deming published hundreds of books and articles, and was a frequent lecturer and educator until his death in 1993. Probably the most well-known of his teachings are his "14 Points for Management" which he offered to help companies improve their effectiveness. First published in his book, *Out of the Crisis*, in 1986, these points have a proven track record, and are still as valid today as they were decades ago.

The purpose of my articles in Front is to help you find ways to improve your operations. And I can't think of a better way to do that than introduce you to Deming's 14 points and describe how they can be applied in your organization. With that in mind, in the next 14 issues I will cover one point each month.

Next month: Point #1 – Create constancy of purpose. 

Send your questions or comments to Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com

Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:
Dr. W. Edward Deming's influence in effective organizational management is at the caliber to warrant a serial study, says our FRONT business operations columnist.

Intern or employee? >

Our client slapped the lawsuit papers onto the conference room table. "We had two unpaid student interns working for us last year," he said. "Two of our secretaries were out on temporary leave during our busy season, so we brought on the interns to do repetitive tasks like filing and copying. They only worked for a couple of months, February and March. And now look at this!"

I flipped through the lawsuit documents. The two interns were suing for unpaid minimum wages and overtime. As allowed under Federal law, they were asking for double the amount that they should have received if the wages had been paid properly. Altogether they were demanding more than \$10,000, plus fees for their attorneys.

"On their very first day, I carefully explained to them that the internships were unpaid, but that if they worked hard, then they might be considered for regular secretary jobs," he said. "It was clear from the beginning that they were just working for experience, not for money! Can you please just make this lawsuit go away?"

"I think you'd better try to settle with them as soon as you can," I said. "They have a pretty good case. A court probably would agree that they were employees, not interns."

"You have got to be kidding!" he said. "Everyone has unpaid interns!"

"Well yes, lots of companies have unpaid interns, but a lot of companies do their internships wrong, too," I said. "The basic principle is that an unpaid internship should be principally for the benefit of the intern."

"They did benefit," he said. "I didn't arrange any academic credit for them, but they certainly got work experience!"

"Yes, but the experience was only with repetitive tasks like copying and filing," I said. "It doesn't take long to learn how to do those things, and after an intern has fully learned a task, if you have the intern just keep on doing it, then it only benefits you, not the intern."

"So what good is an internship if the company can't benefit from it?" he said.

"I don't mean to make it sound like you're not allowed to get any benefit at all from an intern's work," I said. "But if an internship provides only minimal or moderate benefit to the intern, then the intern might be considered an employee. That's especially true when the intern is doing things that paid employees also do, or when the intern is offered the chance to later get a paid job doing identical work."



Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

Executive Summary:

An unpaid internship is only legal if it mainly benefits the intern rather than the business. If a business does its unpaid internships wrong, then interns may later be able to argue that they actually should have been treated as employees, and so should have received wages, overtime and other benefits.



If an internship provides only minimal or moderate benefit to the intern, then the intern might be considered an employee. That's especially true when the intern is doing things that paid employees also do, or when the intern is offered the chance to later get a paid job doing identical work.

"But we agreed that they would just be interns, not employees!" he said.

"Well, sometimes an agreement like that can be challenged," I said. "And in any event, you don't have that agreement in writing."

"So what does it mean, if an intern is considered to actually be an employee?" he said.

"If an intern is considered an employee, then the intern is entitled to payment of minimum wages and overtime, and you also are required to pay Social Security and Medicare contributions on those wages, and so forth," I said.

We talked some more, and I described the right way to do an unpaid internship, which essentially involves trying to do as many of the following things as possible:

1. Have a written agreement with the intern that the internship is unpaid.
2. Do not displace paid employees with interns.

WORKPLACE wisdom

By Christine Liana



Q A

I manage a small office. My boss and I work well together, but he has a volatile personality. He's calm and friendly one minute, and explosive and verbally abusive the next. At times he's rude to clients. I have been calm and professional, and tried to discuss how this undermines my work for him. He tells me how valuable I am to his business and how it would suffer if I leave. I feel trapped. The part-time employee hasn't witnessed his behavior because he's civil when she's here. I need a paycheck and jobs are limited here. Should I quit or stay?

Your safety and sanity are most important. Trust your instincts. It's commendable to not be a quitter, but it's also important to recognize a bad situation that won't improve and get away from it. Ask for letters of recommendation from clients or associates. When you decide to leave, provide a concise letter of resignation in a professional tone. If he tries to persuade you stay, you could say that you need a change or that you want to pursue new opportunities with your career. Keep the conversation brief and professional to reduce the chance of conflict with your manipulative, unstable boss. You may need to take a part-time job while you look for your ideal employment. Many jobs are found by word of mouth. Often, one door must close before another (and better one) can open.

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

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

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

3. Give the intern training similar to what the intern would receive in a school.
4. Arrange for the intern to get academic credit for the internship.
5. Conform the duration of the internship to the academic calendar (for example, starting in September and ending in December, etc.).
6. End the internship when the intern's beneficial learning has ended.
7. Do not include any sort of job offer (or even a hint of a possible job offer).
8. Resist any temptation you may have to give the intern a small honorarium or cash gift at the end of the internship (since this could be viewed as acknowledging that the internship was in fact paid, albeit underpaid).

Of these, by far the most effective is number 4, because if the intern gets academic credit then the intern is clearly receiving a major benefit from the internship. However, if this cannot be done, then an employer should try to do as many of these other things as possible.

In the end, we were able to negotiate a settlement with the two interns in which our client paid them less than half of the amount that they originally were asking for — although it was still a lot more than the \$0 that the client had originally thought the interns would cost. We also prepared a simple set of agreements (including nondisclosure and intellectual property ownership agreements) for our client to use with future interns. Most important, now whenever our client thinks of bringing on an intern, he checks with us first to see whether the type of work is really intern-appropriate. ■

Note: *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn't legal advice—you should consult a lawyer when deciding whether to bring on an intern, whether to treat someone as an employee or as an unpaid intern, etc.*



The basic principle is that an unpaid internship should be principally for the benefit of the intern.



If an intern is considered an employee, then the intern is entitled to payment of minimum wages and overtime, and the business also is required to pay Social Security and Medicare contributions on those wages.



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Raised on Centennial Road >

Executive Summary:

Hand cut wood signs are popping up in our region—from a couple in New River Valley and a childhood street.

By Caitlyn Scaggs

Thanks to Joanna and Chip Gaines, stars of the hit HGTV show, “Fixer Upper” the Modern Farmhouse style is arguably more popular than ever. One Blacksburg couple, Neil and Crystal Croy, are supplying the New River and Roanoke Valley with handmade and hand cut wood signs that align with this décor style. Their company is Centennial Road.

Neil inherited a love for working with his hands from his father, or “Pops” as he calls him. Neil said, “He taught me everything I know. He is a wonderful carpenter and an even better man.” Neil’s gratitude and respect for his roots are brought to life in the name of the business. Neil said, “Our business name...pays homage to the street I grew up on. The street where my love for woodworking was born.”

The company’s success has largely been because of their presence at local craft shows and festivals. They also have a strong presence on Facebook and Instagram and as a result of their social media activity, they regularly get requests for custom projects. Custom projects have gone beyond their staple of wooden signs to include shelves, jewelry hangers, and even a custom donut wall for Route 8 Donuts, located in Christiansburg.

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Neil is proud of the way he and his wife partner to run this business as a complimentary team. He shared, "Crystal is an integral part of the business as well. Not only does she help in design and painting but she also handles our social media presence. With her doing

that, I can focus on the woodwork."

No matter where you find them—whether on social media or at a local festival—you can be sure they will be staying true to their roots and the way they were raised on Centennial Road. 



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"We have too much fun in the office together," Mike Shelton admits. He says he enjoys keeping a watchful eye on financial trends and how these effect his clients' money.

Like getting your own team >

Executive Summary:

360 Financial Solutions offers financial planning services, using a collaboration model with other like-minded professionals who specialize.

By Nanette Levin

Youth is underrated.

It used to be people valued financial advisors who were older – particularly when dealing with retirement planning. That makes sense for someone in their 20s. Now Baby Boomers in the financial planning industry are starting to worry about what will become of their clients when they retire.

According to Investment News, the average advisor age is over 50 with 41% being 55 or older. It takes nearly ten weeks to fill open financial positions (according to DHI). "By 2022, the industry is expected to face a shortfall of at least 200,000 advisers, according to consulting firm Moss Adams," says Liz Kinner in Investment News (May 20, 2017).

Mike Shelton, owner of 360 Financial Solutions, thinks he's created an answer for this – at least in the local markets of Roanoke, Lynchburg and Blacksburg where he operates. Bucking industry trends, he launched his own firm four years ago when he was 29 years old after having worked for a Fortune 100 financial firm. Shelton did so as an independent agent rather than as a representative of a larger company. "This seemed like a good move because it offers a lot more flexibility in customizing solutions to client concerns than was possible with a national firm affiliation," Shelton explains.



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Shelton says he has fun collaborating and implementing creative thinking to overcome challenges. He's put together a group of complimentary alliance professionals to help clients with him playing "quarterback." As needs arise with client accounts, Shelton assigns one or more team members to tackle the challenge while keeping everyone communicating throughout the solutions process. Each works out of their own office space separate from 360 Financial Solutions headquarters, but they meet frequently for discussion and collaboration on industry issues, planning decisions and client concerns. Most own the company they work for.

The team includes an attorney, an accountant, two tax preparers, an independent insurance agent and a number of what could be seen as competitive firms he's forged relationships with.

One of the latter is Strategic Financial Advisors, LLC in Stanton, VA, which is owned by Rusty Ashby. "Both Lynne (his partner) and I are in our 60s, but are thinking of retirement. It's hard to find younger people who can come in and work in a commission-like business and survive long enough to be successful," Ashby says.

Ashby's stated challenges in finding a young, successful advisor isn't just a local one. "The success rate in the financial services industry hovers around 12%," according to Financial Samurai.

He's concerned about orphan clients. Ashby explains that often, when a financial adviser retires, accounts are assigned to an agent who doesn't know the customer. Products like annuities offer little incentive for another to support because fees are front-loaded.

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Michael Shelton, CRPC (right) collaborates with part of his alliance team including Jeremy Lassiter (center) who owns Tax Resolution Accounting who provides IRS representation, tax planning, business tax preparation and quick books accounting and James Steele who is an attorney specializing in estate planning and trust accounts.

He wants to ensure his clients aren't neglected when he retires. After a two-year search, Ashby says he's excited to have found Shelton. "He's young, he's enthusiastic, he's got goals and he's already in the business," he says.

When asked what he does, Shelton responds "I help people ensure they don't outlive their money." Most of his clients are 55+ years old. He's also a Dave Ramsey Endorsed Local Provider.


"There aren't many of me in the community, so I'm happy to start the conversation about how I can help these guys with business succession," Shelton states.

When asked about the future, Shelton states he's excited about a current collaboration with a friend who's getting ready to leave a position at Intel as a computer engineer. This involves a software product for financial advisors who are switching from a commission to fee-based business model. "I believe we can create a disruption in our industry with this," Shelton states, then adds, chuckling "there's enough to talk about there for another story."

Then he was off to plan a meeting for the Brambleton Area Business Association, where he serves as the current president. 



Mike Shelton loves his job and rarely strays far from looking at the latest financial news to guide clients on wealth allocation.



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View of downtown Roanoke, VA

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Photo courtesy of Molly Hood, director

Mary's model >

Executive Summary:

Radford and the New River Valley region capitalizes on its favorite prominent historical figure—and she's a fighter.

By Tom Field

According to a white paper published by The Institute of Outdoor Theatre, one of the four business models for outdoor dramatic performances is the "mission-driven" theatre. This includes artistic, community service, educational, religious, and social objectives—along with what the Institute calls the secondary benefit of bringing visitors to the area or developing "a tourist attraction."

Who would have thought a resilient 23-year old pioneer living in Draper's Meadow, Virginia

in 1755 would support a business model today?

Mary Draper Ingles was captured by Shawnee Indians in July 1755 after her home and community were attacked in a massacre where some were killed and others were taken on a trek through Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky, until she escaped and walked back home. She relied only on her memory of the river routes to find her way, a journey through rough terrain and harsh elements on a route that has been measured at nearly 600 miles.

The inspirational story is one of incredible courage and determination, and it has been adopted by the New River Valley as a heroic example of the kind of pioneering spirit it took to build this homeland.

Recently, the story got a lot bigger.

For three decades, Mary Draper Ingles' life was commemorated in various books, songs, movies, and a popular historical reenactment entitled "The Long Way Home." Then, in 2016, an eight-foot bronze statue was erected at the Mary Draper Ingles Cultural Heritage Park and Glencoe Museum & Gallery in Radford. This year, a new version of the old story was brought to stage.

"Walk to Freedom: The Mary Draper Ingles Story" is written by Kathleen Harvey Harshberger and Wesley Alan Young. The outdoor drama is currently directed by Molly



Photo courtesy of Molly Hood, director

Hood and performed at Nesselrod Bed & Breakfast on the New River at its sunken garden amphitheatre, a most fitting venue as the "stage"—with its rustic structure and props and wooded environment—mimics the historical setting itself.

Accompanying the introduction of the new play is a more official statement as the state of Virginia now proclaims the last Saturday in July as Mary Draper Ingles Remembrance Day. At the July 30, 2017 performance, Radford Vice Mayor Dick Harshberger told the audience that a festival is planned for

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2018 around the new annual celebration.

"The play has been well-received," says playwright Kathleen Harvey Harshberger (who also portrayed the lead character in the original play). "It really is a Cinderella story; and it's not just a cultural contribution, it's also positive economic development." Harshberger says re-envisioning the script with Radford University theatre department's Wesley Young was a gratifying process. So many people have contributed to the mission, including members and extended members of the Ingles family. Organizational patrons and support are provided by

Radford University, Radford Visitor's Center, the City of Radford, Nesselrod Bed & Breakfast, and area businesses.

The whole affair of the Mary Draper Ingles story is about the importance of home. As a business model, whether you serve existing or prospective customers, the opportunity for sustainable success is much greater if the experience is similar to the comforts of home. The New River Valley can thank a 23-year old mother, wife, and strong-willed resident for setting an admirable community goal... 262 years ago. 

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Got the t-shirt >

I wear t-shirts. All the time.

I wear the plain thin white underwear type when I sleep. I even wear what is essentially a t-shirt as my business attire (yes, even with a suit, although those t-shirts are the kind that typically cost more than the 80's two-ply white dress shirts I used to wear in corporate America). And in my casual time, I wear the graphic t-shirts; almost exclusively with some business or destination brand.

Around these here parts, I'll often wear a t-shirt with a local business splashed on the front or back; but just as often, I'll wear one with a favorite place I visit. Boston (or a New England pub); Charleston (or a Charleston pub); Sanibel Island (or a Doc Ford's Rum Bar). You get the idea.

But my favorite t-shirt experience? Wearing a t-shirt from my own hometown or home region, while I'm away on vacation, business or pleasure.

That, my friend, is the proof of regional branding working.

No one runs up to you in Harvard Square, pointing at your Boston shirt, ready to strike up a conversation. It's unlikely a citizen of Asheville is going to be amazed by your Wicked Weed Craft Beer shirt. And you're certainly not going to stand out as you walk Broadway at the Beach, wearing your nifty airbrushed Myrtle Beach shirt.

But wear a Parkway Brewing shirt as you belly up to the bar at "The Porch" in Key West? A Mill Mountain Coffee shirt as you stand on a sidewalk in Seattle? A Blue Ridge logo when you're crammed up against a crowd on the DC Metro? A Floyd Fest shirt while standing in line waiting for your seat to be called at a restaurant in Austin?

Watch what happens.

People are interested in Virginia's Blue Ridge. If we sometimes take it for granted how special a place this is because we move along day in and day out by the same sights and sounds and smells... we can claim back pride as we travel to and fro—in a way that's as tangible as the shirt on your back.

It's happened to me in an almost accidental fashion, just by the t-shirt I was wearing. In Key West, in Seattle, in Washington DC, in Austin, and countless other places across these United States.

Heck, I had a guy run all the way across Fanueil Hall market square (Boston) through a crowd of shoppers just to comment on my Awful Arthur's restaurant t-shirt, because that was a frequent hangout of his when he was back in college.


On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
Graphic t-shirts just never seem to lose momentum as the popular choice of attire in casual settings; ever notice what gets worn, and where?

REVIEWS & OPINION

Sure, I hope we carry a lot more from our heritage (or shorter term experiences) living in Virginia's Blue Ridge than sporting a logo or eye-catching graphic on a t-shirt. Characteristics such as our quality of life, appreciation of our environment, and friendly mannerisms count a lot more. But the t-shirt?

That's about as easy as it gets. 

Show Your Colors *(sampling of t-shirts I recommend to wear when traveling)*

2 Witches Winery & Brewing
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Apocalypse Ale Works
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Big Lick Brewing Company
Blue Ridge Parkway
Blue Ridge Vineyard
Brooks Mill Winery
Bull & Bones
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Chaos Mountain Brewing
Chateau Morrisette Winery
Fincastle Winery
Flying Mouse Brewery
Foggy Ridge Cider
Hammer & Forge Brewing
Hickory Hill Vineyards
Hotel Roanoke
Jefferson Center

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Mountain Lake Lodge
National D-Day Memorial
Opera Roanoke
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POO (Peaks of Otter)
Ramulose Ridge Vineyards
Rising Silo Brewery
River Company
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Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs
Salem Red Sox
Sinkland Farms Pumpkin Festival
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Starlight Bicycles
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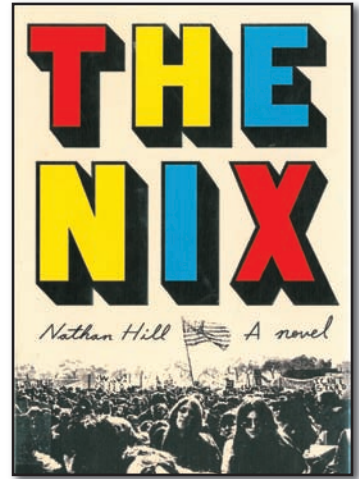
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Books @ the FRONT >

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



Knowing thyself

Guilt... is that, ultimately, the most powerful of all human drives? Characters in Nathan Hill's *The Nix* (Knopf, 2016—printed by Berryville Graphics, Berryville, VA) make a compelling case for it. A captivating story, I'm not sure what I liked better: the character development or the trailing psychoanalysis that accompanies a most colorful plot involving abandonment, abuse of power, video gaming and protest marches. Wow. Except for the one entire chapter that was—I kid you not—a single run-on sentence about the one area I cared the least about (video gaming); this novel entraps you in all the best ways.

The plot (a most creative one) is the kind that could have easily produced stereotypical characters; drawing evil against good, hip against square, and so on—but that's precisely what doesn't happen in *The Nix*, and why this is a remarkable and memorable read. It is street level humanity and a mirror to our most complex societal questions.

—Tom Field

Creature comfort classic

Forty-five years of interest and eighty million purchased copies of *All Creatures Great and Small* together verify that readers love James Herriot's books. I still consider this, his first book, to contain some of the most enjoyable reading of my life.

This reading contains a slice of mid-century English farm life, described through the eyes of a large animal vet. Herriot's animals include

canine, bovine, equine, and yes – fascinating humans.

More than a few years have passed since my first reading of Herriot's glowing account. The shine is still on every story! Herriot's job interview begins the book. From there, you will laugh at Mrs. Pumphrey and her spoiled dog Tricky Woo; cry at the death of a poor man's dog; and smile, charmed by Herriot's hesitant romance of, and then marriage to easy-going Helen Alderson.

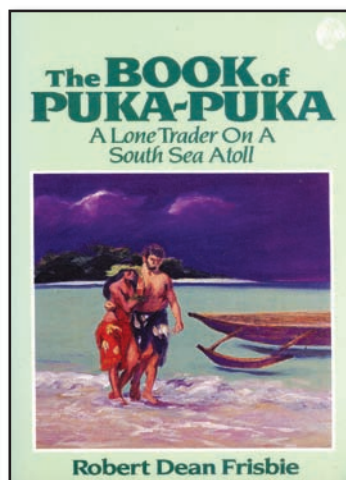
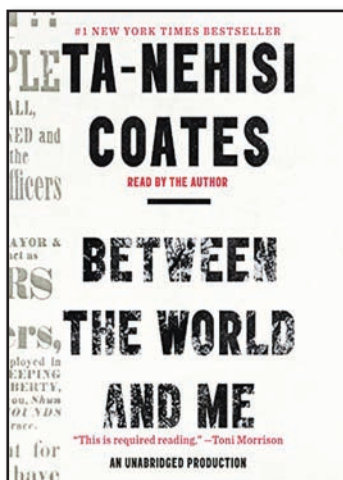
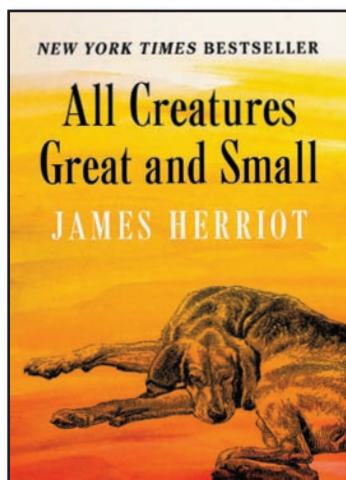
Like few others, this book delightfully pulls the reader into the author's world. Vividly descriptive text, reflecting the wonder of a nature lover brought a friend to say, "The author makes you feel like you're part of the story." Indeed, you can hear, see, and feel every scene.

Each page reflects Herriot's warm love of the connection between humans and their animals. I promise equal delight to animal and non-animal lovers. Surely, a book you'll want to savor slowly, yet which will end all too quickly.

—Robert Turcotte

Young, black perspective

Between the World and Me (Random House; 2015) by Ta-Nehisi Coates was published in 2015 and at the time it was released, the author hit the talk show circuit hard. He was everywhere. The book spent many weeks on the New York Times best seller list and won the National Book Award in 2015. It's a quick read, only 163 pages and an even



better listen, narrated by the author.

It is written as a letter to Coates' 15-year-old son. He talks about growing up in Baltimore, meeting his wife, scrounging out a living in New York and going to school at his version of Mecca, Howard University. But it is much more than a memoir or an essay on growing up black in America. It's a social commentary about race in our country. I don't think his intention is to make white people feel guilty but to get us to think and spend a few minutes in the shoes of a young black male in this country today. I think he wants us to understand what it is like to be fearful every time you see a police officer, to worry about sending your child out the door, or to know what it feels like to be followed when you enter a store.

He doesn't offer any answers for the racism that still exists. It's just his message to his child and it's a powerful message. It should be required reading in our high schools and for most adults.

—Paula Alston

Tropical trope

Have you ever dreamed of escaping to a Polynesian paradise? Robert Dean Frisbie did exactly that. *The Book of Puka-Puka* (Mutual Pub; 1987) is his story.

Frisbie was a World War I veteran, told by doctors to seek warmer climes for health reasons. Finding Tahiti too Westernized, he ended up as the only white man on the remote atoll of Puka-Puka in the South Pacific.

After he was dropped off by a sailboat, there was no contact with the outside world. His extremely non-stressful "job" consisted of running the island store. Such was the bounty of Puka-Puka, with its fish-filled lagoon, taro crops and coconuts; and so few were their needs, that the islanders only worked a few hours a day. Their economy was a grassroots communism, and their Christianity, brought by missionaries, was a wispy veil over their traditional sensuality. They napped during the day and spent the evenings dancing, singing, eating, fishing, swimming and making love.

Paradise was not without flaws. Tuberculosis, and the mosquito-borne scourge of elephantiasis, were endemic, as they were in tropics worldwide. No doctor was available when Frisbie was nearly killed trying to swim across the coral reef.

A man who refused to be chained to a desk, Frisbie went to live among people who had no need for health insurance, a mortgage, car repairs, vacations to Europe, 401-K plans, graduate school, etc. Few of us are willing to trade our security for their freedom. But almost anybody can enjoy *The Book of Puka-Puka*.

—Randolph Walker

(**The reviewers:** Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; Robert Turcotte is a FRONT reader and works in technology; Paula Alston of Christiansburg is the retired library director of Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, and whose family owns Jimmy Johns restaurants in Roanoke and Radford; Randolph Walker has written for FRONT and is a musician and music educator in Roanoke.)



Positively Patriotic >

Warm Hearth Village in Blacksburg presented a patriotic music program on August 9 by the Warm Hearth Singers. With a standing-room only crowd at the Karr Activity Center, the 25-member group of residents performed songs including "America the Beautiful" and "A Salute to the Armed Forces". Don Chalupka, resident of Trolinger apartments, played piano and Donna Gadd, resident of Showalter Center, performed a solo on the flute. Ralph Edwards, sang the Navy hymn, "Eternal Father Strong to Save". David Jones, assistant administrator / activity director at Showalter Center, conducted the ensemble and accompanied them on the piano. A reception was held following the performance.



Helping the Hungry >

Feeding America Southwest Virginia received a grant from the Morgan Stanley Foundation supporting the food bank's fresh produce program for local residents. Founded in 1981, Feeding America Southwest Virginia strives to eliminate hunger in the region by distributing food for the hungry. Approximately \$26.5 million of food and grocery products annually come through a network of over 330 partner food programs in 26 counties and nine cities that provide food or meals to those in need. The local Food Bank is an affiliate member of Feeding America.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Teed Off >

At the July 2017 **Delta Dental State Open of Virginia**, Fielding Brewbaker joined Delta Dental of Virginia, the Virginia State Golf Association, and the Mid-Atlantic PGA Section in celebrating The First Tee of Roanoke Valley. The event included a \$20,000 donation to The First Tee of Roanoke Valley from the Delta Dental State Open of Virginia, and a youth program at Ballyhack Golf Club with Brewbaker and Grace Huffman, a Rockbridge County High School senior. Huffman was one of three local First Tee members selected to play in this year's Pure Insurance Championship tournament at Pebble Beach in September. The First Tee's provides young people of all backgrounds with an opportunity to develop life-enhancing values through golf and character education.



Twice As Nice >

The Cottage, formerly known as The Charity Cottage Thrift Store, held its grand reopening at 301 S. Pollard Street in Vinton in August. The Cottage features **Twice Treasured Consignment Store**, which sells clothing for adults and children, and shabby-chic furniture.



History Comes Alive in Radford >

Starting this year, the Virginia General Assembly designated the last Saturday in July as Mary Draper Ingles Remembrance Day. With last year's dedication of the statue in Radford's Cultural and Heritage Park adjacent to Glencoe Mansion and Museum came the idea for the outdoor drama, "Walk to Freedom: The Mary Draper Ingles Story," at the garden amphitheater on the grounds of Nesselrod Bed & Breakfast. "The Long Way Home" was designated as the official historical outdoor drama of the Commonwealth, and was held annually in Radford from 1971-1999. The play told of Mary's capture, life among the Native Americans, and her escape and journey of hundreds of miles through Appalachia to return to her home in the New River Valley. The next performance is Sunday, September 24, 2017. For ticket information, visit: www.nesselrod.com

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Art in September >

The Market Gallery's next Art By Night is on Friday, September 1, 2017, from 5:30 - 9:00 p.m., featuring artists Martha Rhodes and Nan Mahone Wellborn. The show hangs from August 29 to September 30. The Market Gallery is a regional artists' cooperative, located on Roanoke's downtown market at 23 Salem Avenue. For more information, call 540-342-1177, or visit www.marketgallery.com.



The Market Gallery

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CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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

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

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

Waking up with the peaceful sound of bird chatter while watching the sun rise over the mountains is one of **Nanette Levin's** simple pleasures. Still

considered a foreigner by some local residents (she moved to Roanoke at the end of 2015), Nanette's determined to illuminate local treasures for business and pleasure through her company, Roanoke Revealed. When she's not enjoying nature and writing or creating marketing strategies for clients, she's growing fresh vegetables & herbs, seeing the sights in the area and occasionally hopping on a horse. [nlevin@fulcrumny.com]

Christine Liana is news editor and business writer for Valley Business FRONT. Her background includes banking, insurance, law and local government, in which she's worked with a diverse management and client base. Christine earned a Certificate in Management from Darden Graduate School of Business, University of Virginia. [cliana@vbfront.com]

Caitlyn Scaggs is the founder of Blue Mobius Marketing in Christiansburg. [Caitlyn@Bluemobiusmarketing.com]

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

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

Doloris E. Vest is the owner of Book No Further bookshop which will open at 16 West Marketplace downtown Roanoke in October. She has worked in corporate and professional communications for more than 30 years and directed several business-related nonprofits. [dolorisvest@booknofurther.com]



Nearly all the continuous improvement methods and management system philosophies... have some roots from his teachings — Page 26

FRONT 'N ABOUT



A Beacon of Light in the Community >

Feeding America Southwest Virginia received an extra \$5,000 as a recipient of BB&T's Lighthouse Project Spirit Award. Feeding America Southwest Virginia teamed up with volunteers from BB&T's valley region, helping to prepare and serve summer meals to children through the food bank's new Café to Grow food truck in at locations in Roanoke City. The BB&T Lighthouse Project is a community service where associates work with local nonprofits to help the community. Project ideas are submitted by associates based on the needs of the community. Approved projects receive funding and associates have time away from the office to complete the hands-on outreach. At the end of each year's campaign, six exceptional projects are chosen as Spirit Award recipients for going above and beyond to meet the community's needs. Those chosen receive an extra \$5,000 to further support their efforts in the community. To volunteer, contact Feeding America Southwest Virginia at 540-342-2011 or at www.faswva.org/volunteer.



Jump! >

Completely Unchained—a Van Halen tribute band—played the **Dr Pepper Park** in Roanoke on August 11 to a spirited crowd. Said one reviewer about the acrobatic and mesmerizing performance, "This is the best Van Halen tribute hands down!"

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

Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Caldwell

Lisa A. Caldwell was promoted to mortgage services officer at Bank of Botetourt's Cave Spring branch.

Mountain Lake Real Estate.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Boothe

Brad Boothe, web designer and technical account manager, joined B2C Enterprises.



Lisic



Jacks



Russell



Jobst

LEGAL FRONT



Workman

Sandra Workman, former deputy commonwealth attorney for the City of Salem, has joined Poarch Law in Salem.

EDUCATION FRONT



Walker

Lauren Sells Walker was named director of alumnae relations at Hollins University.



Erickson



O'Rourke

the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities; **Ling Lei Lisic** was appointed associate professor in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems; **Roberta S. Russell** was appointed head of the Department of Business and Information Technology; and **Matthew Erickson** was appointed assistant professor in the Department of Accounting and Information Systems at Pamplin College, Virginia Tech.

of continuing and professional education; **Kim O'Rourke** was named vice president for policy and governance and serves as secretary to the Board of Visitors at Virginia Tech.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Rust

Brian Rust, Realtor® joined Berkshire Hathaway Home- Services Smith



Matheson

Lance Matheson, associate professor of business information technology, received the 2017 Michael P. Malone International Leadership Award from



Johnston

Jane Johnston, program support technician, was recognized for 62 years of service; and **Vickie Martin**, senior fiscal technician, was recognized for 42 years of service

at Virginia Tech.



Ragan

Valerie Ragan, director of the Center for Public and Corporate Veterinary Medicine at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech was awarded the 2017 Public Service Award by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

WELLNESS FRONT



Wray

Mike Wray was elected board president, **Paul**



Economy



Kemp

Economy will serve as president-elect, and **Mimi Kemp** is the treasurer of JDRF Greater Blue Ridge, a global organization funding Type 1 diabetes (T1D) research.

Elizabeth Bowen, MS, speech-language pathologist; **Moriah Chapman**, M.S.,

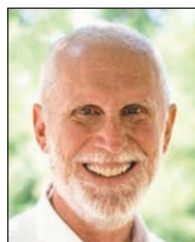
speech-language pathologist; **Alexis Henderson**, occupational therapist; **Kelsey Owens**, M.S., speech-language pathologist, and **Sophie Mench**, doctor of physical therapy, recently joined Professional Therapies, Inc.

MUNICIPAL FRONTS



Carpenter

Joe Carpenter, chair, Radford University; **Michael Harvey**, vice-chair, Montgomery County; **Leon Law**, treasurer, Giles County;



Harvey



Law

Michael Maslaney, member-at-large, Floyd County; **Kevin Sullivan**, past chair, Virginia Tech, were elected by the New River Valley Regional Commission for the upcoming year.

Compiled by Christine Liana



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Show Me the Money

Since 1875, the **Bank of Fincastle** has served the community's banking needs. Having survived economic downturns, it announced in July that it made a profit in the second quarter, its first profitable quarter since the beginning of 2015. The bank completed a \$14.3 million private placement of common stock, issuing 7,718,084 shares at \$1.85 per share to institutional and accredited investors. Net proceeds from the private placement of common stock restored the bank's capital levels to the standards required by federal banking regulations, while providing extra capital for future growth. Net proceeds from the offering are estimated at \$13.3 million and will be reflected in the bank's 3rd quarter financial statements.

Ashley Plantation Gets New Owner

Ashley Plantation, the residential golfing subdivision in Daleville (Botetourt County), will get a new owner for its golf course and surrounding property, including a 70-acre tract, which could be used for residential development. Runk & Pratt Healthcare Enterprises Inc. of Lynchburg plans to purchase the property from the Bank of Fincastle and close the sale in January 2018. The bank took possession of Ashley Plantation Country Club in September 2016 from the developer, Ardith Overbay. Runk & Pratt specializes in senior

living in the Lynchburg and Smith Mountain Lake areas, owns golf courses in Bedford and Pittsylvania counties, and is involved in the events venue and wedding planning business.

Growing Business

B2C Enterprises of Roanoke was chosen as the agency of record for its first client in Florida. The firm will assist Re-Bath of northwest Florida with advertising creation, planning, and placement. The location selected B2C Enterprises after the firm's success with Re-Bath of Southwest Virginia and Re-Bath of Chattanooga, Tennessee. B2C Enterprises is an award-winning advertising, marketing and business development firm.

Corporate Fraud Continues

Wells Fargo must pay a \$4 million settlement with the U.S. Justice Department for illegally repossessing vehicles from military personnel. The scam involved enrolling 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 approximately 25,000 victims may have had their vehicles repossessed. Wells Fargo admitted it enrolled 570,000 customers, while The New York Times reported that approximately 800,000 customers may be affected by the

corporate scam. Last year it was revealed that Wells Fargo instructed its employees to meet sales goals by opening approximately 2 million accounts without customers' knowledge. Employees who protested or blew the whistle were fired. Wells Fargo must pay around \$185 million in fines and an extra \$142 million to customers from the class-action lawsuit.

New Names in JA's Business Hall of Fame

Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia has recognized William J. Lemon of Martin, Hopkins & Lemon, PC, and Susan K. Still, president and CEO of HomeTown Bank as recipients of the 27th annual Southwest Virginia Business Hall of Fame. Joining them are 55 others who have been inducted in the Hall of Fame on the 60th anniversary of Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia.

High-Tech Sale

Luna Innovations of Roanoke sold their high-speed optical receivers business for \$33.5 million to MACOM Technology Solutions, of Lowell, Massachusetts. As a result of this deal, some employees will be transferred to MACOM, but none were reported to be from Luna's Roanoke or Blacksburg offices. Founded in 1990, Luna makes technology used to transmit data through fiber-optic cables, as with Internet service. Luna's main product is equipment that uses

fiber-optic cables to find weaknesses in materials, such as metal. Luna went public in 2006, and after years of financial struggle, this deal should provide a cash infusion. In 2015, Luna merged with Advanced Photonix, Inc. of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

College Grant Helps Community College Students

Lynchburg's **Central Virginia Community College** (CVCC) received a \$150,000 Trade School and Community College Scholarship Grant by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The grant will support scholarships for CVCC students studying machinery, welding, and nuclear technology, and who are interested in working in the nuclear industry. Congress authorized the NRC to provide federal funding opportunities to qualified schools to encourage careers and research in nuclear, mechanical and electrical engineering, health physics, and related fields to meet expected workforce needs.

Still in the Works

Plans are still under development for the former **Shenandoah Life Insurance Company** building. Berkley Hall of North Carolina has a concept plan for an apartment development of two large buildings fronting Brambleton Avenue. Berkley Hall holds a purchase option on 17 acres of the 26-acre site, formerly

occupied by Shenandoah Life Insurance Company, which Carilion Clinic bought in 2015 for \$4.6 million. Opponents of the large development say it would disturb the trails on the land, and organized Save the Woodlands as a countermeasure.

four spots respectively. Rounding out the top 10 spots are WROV-FM, WJJS-FM, WSFF-FM, WYYD-FM, WFIR-FM, and WLNI-FM at #10.

Roanoke in the Top 10

According to the **Fourth Economy Community Index**, an independently conducted analysis, Roanoke County was ranked #9 in the Top 10 Mid-Sized Communities for 2017, and Rockingham County (Harrisonburg), was ranked #3. The selection represents regions that are expected to achieve sustainable economic growth and attract people and investment. Sources of key data for the Fourth

Have an announcement about your business?

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

Survey Says...

According to **Nielsen** ratings service's ratings report from the 2017 spring survey, radio stations in the Roanoke-Lynchburg Metro area consistently rank in the top ten for over six years. 94.9 Star Country (WSLC-FM), ViBE (WVBE-FM), Q99 (WSLQ-FM), and K92 (WXLK-FM) took the top

Economy Community Index included the Census, Bureau of Labor Statistics, CDC, and HUD.

Future Success STEMs From This

Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council and Girl Scouts of the USA recently released new badges in STEM (science, technology,

engineering, and math) and the outdoors, career areas typically filled by males. Through hands-on and age-appropriate activities for girls as young as five, Girl Scouts is answering the lack of exposure that many girls have to STEM. With the introduction of 23 new badges, Girl Scouts can design robots and race cars, go

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AUGUST 18-ON THE BORDER (EAGLES TRIBUTE)

SEPTEMBER 1-McKENZIE'S MILL

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FRONT Notes

on environmentally responsible camping trips, write code, collect data in the great outdoors, try engineering, and more. GSUSA collaborators include the STEM-focused Code.org, GoldieBlox, SciStarter, Society of Women Engineers, WGBH/Design Squad Global, and the Leave no Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

Federal Grant Helps Roanoke County Fire & Rescue

Roanoke County received a \$1,084,206 grant from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under the fiscal year 2016 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Response (SAFER) program. Over three years, this grant will help fund an extra 11 firefighter positions. DHS will fund 75% and Roanoke County will fund 25% in the first two years of the grant. In the third year, DHS will fund 35% and Roanoke County will fund 65%. The SAFER grant will help Roanoke County Fire & Rescue meet

staffing levels to ensure adequate emergency response capabilities. A recruit school scheduled to start in January 2018 will provide training, and the new staff will be assigned to stations starting in May 2018.

Education STEMS From a New Building

Virginia Western Community College began construction on a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) facility, and will be the largest building on campus. Completion of the \$30 million+ project is expected by the spring 2019 semester.

Commercial Building For Sale

LSC Communications is selling its Roanoke County office and manufacturing facility in the Valley Tech Industrial Park at 6450 Technology Drive. Constructed in 1997 by R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co. as a book printing facility, the building has 12,000+ sq.

ft. of offices, plus a cafeteria and break areas. The manufacturing area has 280,899 sq. ft. Situated on 134 acres and with pad-ready facility expansion to more than 500,000 sq. ft., the asking price is \$8.4 million. Poe & Cronk Real Estate Group in Roanoke is representing LSC Communications, which has already vacated the premises.

Roanoke County Data Search Made Easier

Roanoke County released its Open Data Portal for the public, which includes data generated and maintained by the County, including tax parcels. In an easily accessible and easy to read format, the public can research data from eight categories: Boundaries; Community/Schools; Environmental; Infrastructure; Parks, Recreation, and Tourism; Planning & Zoning; Public Safety; and Transportation. To access the portal directly go to <http://data.roanokecountyva.gov> or visit: www.roanokecountyva.gov.

gov, click on "Maps and Apps," then click on the green "Open Data" button.

Virginia Rated a Top State For Business

According to CNBC's annual "**Top States for Business**" rankings, Virginia came in at #7 this year, up from #13 in 2016. CNBC scores all 50 states on more than 60 measures of competitiveness. States receive points based on their rankings in each category, which are then divided into 10 broad categories, weighted based on how often each is used as a selling point in state economic development marketing materials.

.... And Cyber Security

Business Facilities released their 13th annual Rankings Report in July, which tracks the leading states in economic development. This year, Virginia was ranked #4, up from #9 in 2016. The report ranked Virginia #4 in cybersecurity growth potential, #7 for education

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and broadband, #8 for infrastructure, and #10 in offshore energy. Northern Virginia ranked #1 for data center hubs, edging out Silicon Valley due to emerging cybersecurity hubs in Fairfax County.

A Good State to Be In

On July 13th, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 **Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs** revealed a nationwide increase in minority-owned businesses. Virginia

ranked #10 in the U.S. and the District of Columbia, with 21.4% of businesses owned by minorities. Factors include ethnicity, gender, race, and veteran status of employer businesses. The rankings were determined by the percentage of total businesses that are minority-owned. Nationally, minority-owned businesses rose 4.9% in 2015 to 996,248. Women-owned firms increased by 3% from 2014, and one quarter of the one million firms in

2015 is minority-owned. Hawaii ranked #1 and California ranked #2, with 55.9% and 32.6 % of minority-owned businesses.

Moonshine Makes Money

Twin Creeks Distillery of Franklin County moved from their original location on Byrd Lane in Rocky Mount to 8551 Henry Road in Henry, Virginia. The new location provides more space for production,

with adjoining space for a store. Visitors can sample and purchase Twin Creeks products at the Distillery Store and tour the distillery. Twin Creeks is sold at over 70 Virginia ABC stores throughout Virginia. Twin Creeks will continue marketing their products within Virginia, and they seek to expand distribution to North Carolina and Tennessee.

*Compiled by
Christine Liana*

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



2017 EVENT SEASON

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TRIBUTE TO JOURNEY**

SEPTEMBER 24



**Bargains at
THE BRIDGES**

OCTOBER 7



**THE GREAT PUMPKIN
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EAS ENTERPRISES, INC.



The South Roanoke Circle



**BUG MAN
EXTERMINATING**



Holiday Inn



Sarah Obenauer, founder of Make a Mark

Marks made >

Executive Summary:

Make a Mark is a non-profit organization that is designed to offer support services to... well... other non-profit organizations.

By Caitlyn Scaggs

'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' That iconic quote was said by Fred Rogers, a man known for his neighborly outlook on life. While the days of Mr. Rogers may no longer represent our modern reality his words ring more true than ever. When

days feel dark and the state of the world feels sad, look for the helpers. Look for the people mobilized to do good. If you are in the Blacksburg and Roanoke region you can look to the organization, Make a Mark, and find it organizing, gathering, and helping our community—and beyond.

Make a Mark was founded in 2014 by Sarah Obenauer. Obenauer worked for a non-profit organization after graduating from Virginia Tech and experienced first hand the challenges non-profit and humanitarian organizations face. Sarah shared, "I kept hearing from nonprofits that they needed help and kept hearing from creatives that they needed a way to serve using their skills. The connection became clear."

For Obenauer, using creativity to make positive change in the community was the path forward. Refining the idea was a joint effort, with her husband. Obenauer said, "My husband, Alex, and I brainstormed ideas. We loved the creative energy of hack-a-thons that were being held across the country. However, we wanted the work that came out of our event to directly benefit organizations that were making an impact on our community."

The organization she ultimately created centers around an annual "Make a Thon" event. During this event community focused organizations, often non-profits or humanitarian organizations, partner with "makers" to solve practical problems they face. The problem could be a need for a printed brochure describing their organization or the need for a website, as examples. The makers range from

creatives and web developers to marketing professionals and graphic designers. The maker is intentionally placed on a team and paired with an organization such that their skill set is complimented by other makers and is most effectively used.

What began as one annual event in the Blacksburg and Roanoke region has grown substantially. Obenauer is now leading Make A Mark as her full time occupation, has relocated to Chatanooga, TN, and has a total of five Make A Mark events planned up and down the east coast.

Another area of growth is in the consistent training and education provided to non-profit and humanitarian organizations, in addition to the annual Make-A-Thon. Obenauer and her team host a series of non-profit round tables, with the purpose of educating and enlightening leaders. Obenauer said, "Make

Nov. 2, 2017 | Inn at Virginia Tech



Fall Gala



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of The Innovation Blind Spot



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Make-a-Thon event held at Qualtrax in Blacksburg


a Mark has always pushed to support talented people leading life-changing causes with the innovation and creativity they need to thrive.”

Along the way, Obenauer has developed critical partnerships that have supported the momentum. At the last Roanoke–Blacksburg Make a Thon, the School of Visual Arts at Virginia Tech provided key support and will continue to be a strong source of support for future local Make-a-Thons. Future growth at other locations will require similar support, input, and a sense of shared ownership from the communities themselves.

It’s not a one-size-fits all approach to this event and community support. Prior to establishing an event within a new community Obenauer hosts an “open huddle” which is an open forum that allows community members to provide input and suggestions. For example, in April of 2017, over 50 makers and organizations gathered to discuss the needs of the Chattanooga community, and how Make a Mark can help meet those needs. Obenauer stated it is a “listen first”

approach as they explore new locations.

Since inception, Make a Mark has provided over a dozen organizations with over \$100,000 of services and deliverables. When reflecting on the last three years of Make a Mark, and the successes a long the way, Obenauer said, “The initial goal of our first Make-a-Thon was to work hard and give deserving nonprofits something that could push their programs forward. What actually came out of the event was so much more than that. What moved us was the community that was created between the Makers and nonprofits.”

For Obenauer, the momentum of her organization is largely attributable to a clear mission. Obenauer said, “We are constantly driven by our purpose—to help people tell their stories through design, creativity and technology.” Obenauer, and the Make a Mark events, are bringing people and communities together, to make a positive mark on the community both near and far. 

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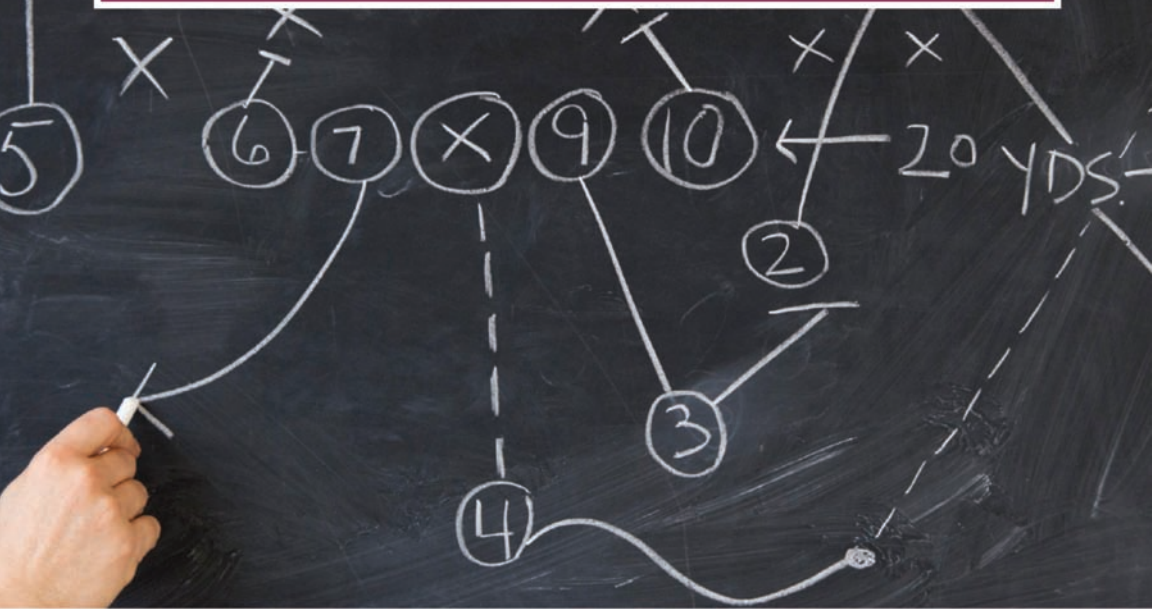


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