

# Valley Business FRONT

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

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# Look Here

Lillian Hardiman,  
Fashionista Roanoke, Inc.

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

Design a dress. Learn about genetics. Publish books. Erect a sign.

The occupations people engage in Virginia's Blue Ridge region never cease to amaze us. We cover them each and every month because they're interesting and we want to know what's going on. Sometimes, the stories inspire us or give us ideas. What should I do differently? What should I do next?

We've heard from patrons before how everything in a particular edition of the journal was noteworthy. But chances are slim you can apply something from every story. Maybe it will happen, but I'm not banking on one of you to, let's say... install a new sign on Mill Mountain that "reads" your genetic makeup and publishes that data with a headline and image of you wearing a snazzy outfit that you can buy at a local merchant... all from checking out this edition of FRONT.

It could happen.

But we're happy if you pick and choose. Care about what's going on in our community. Look forward to what's coming next.



**Tom Field**



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**vbFRONT.com**

“  
I'd write adventures  
inspired by my love of  
Nancy Drew — Page 23

# 8 The Look. From Here.



On the Cover: Lillian Hardiman models outfit by  
310 Rosemont photographed by Steve Curtiss.



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APRIL



Bruce Bryan



Dan Dowdy



Garland Gravely



Lesa Hanlin



Dan Smith



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



Tom Field



Keith Finch



Rachael Garrity



Mike Leigh



Nanette Levin



Michael Shelton

“

If you're an average American,  
you have \$137,063 of debt — Page 21

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

## 2019 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)  
**John D. Long** National D-Day Memorial (Culture)  
**Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)  
**Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)  
**Mary Miller** ACI (Tech/Industry)  
**Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)

You will note that the Board is comprised of experts in many different business / industry “fronts.” This is intentional, as we are reporting on all the areas that affect our regional economy and are important to you. In keeping with our policy of being “the voice of business in the valleys” we ask each reader to join us as an editorial partner by calling or e-mailing us your ideas. You know more than we know about your business—or you certainly should—and that inside knowledge shared with our readers will make us all better at what we do.

“

All the recipes  
were different  
from each other...  
that was the  
point — Page 32

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**Model:** Belkis Rodriguez  
**Outfit:** Design by April Via-Ward / Vixxen

all photos: Steve Curtiss

# The Look. From Here.

Like a quick moving reality television show on a fashion channel, FRONT turned over this special pictorial project to two professionals with one rather simple mission: show us what's possible here, in our own neck of the woods.

**Garland Gravely** directed the project. As president and co-founder of Fashionista Roanoke, Inc., he helped us with last year's feature on fashion tips and trends for the working professional. A fashion merchandising major from VCU, Garland's 25 years in the industry gives him "street cred" and insight, and he's keenly aware of the local scene, from retail product to designers.

**Steve Curtiss** served as our photographer. He's not only a photographer for Fashionista Roanoke, other media and events throughout our region, he's shot everything from NASCAR racing to high society events; and local folks also know him as an on-air radio personality and standup comedian.

Our models include **Shauna Paddyfote, Linda Lackey, Jo Orji, Janet Norwoods-Smith, Lillian Hardiman, Rosemary St. Jacques, Belkis Rodriguez, Marina Trejo, Sky Coda, Jada Tinsley.**

Our designers include **Rosemary St. Jacques, April Via-Ward, Jasmine Beene.**

Our clothing selections are from **Proms, Pageants & Pretty Things, Golden Shoestring Boutique, Bride of the Fox Vintage Clothing, The Bird Cage Boutique, 310 Rosemont, Vixxen, Bry & B Fashions, Shades of Color.**

And our venue / set for the photoshoot was provided by Samantha Sutphin of **The Woodland Place** ([www.thewoodlandplace.com](http://www.thewoodlandplace.com)) in Vinton, which hosts weddings and other special occasions in historic country style.

## Roanoke— New River Valley fashion options >

### Executive Summary:

*Fashion options off the rack and tailor made are available in our region; Fashionista Roanoke captures some of them.*

### Special FRONT Report



**Model: Janet Norwoods-Smith**  
**Outfit: The Bird Cage Boutique**





**Model:** Jo Orji  
**Outfit:** Bride Of The Fox  
Vintage Clothing





**Model:** Jada Tinsley  
**Outfit:** Shades Of Color







**Model: Linda Lackey**  
**Outfit: Golden Shoestring Boutique**





Model: Marina Trejo  
Outfit: Bry & B Fashions



**Model / Designer: Rosemary St. Jacques**  
**Outfit: designed by her**





**Model: Sky Coda**  
**Outfit: Design by Jasmine Beene**





**Model: Shauna Paddyfote**  
**Outfit: Proms, Pageants & Pretty Things**







Designer Jasmine Beene created this dress with elegance, fanciful.



Designer April Via-Ward stands by her work, a floral, cultural vibe.






# Our designers, three

**Jasmine Beane** is a Roanoke-based artist with a diverse artistic background including fashion design and photography. Beane received a Bachelor of Science in Studio Art with minor in Design Appreciation (Fashion Emphasis) from Radford University in 2015.

**Rosemary St. Jacques** was born in Roanoke and was a costumer and seamstress at Patrick Henry High School, from which she graduated in 2007. She studied fashion design at VCU from 2007 to 2011, receiving a Critics Choice Award from Isabel Toledo and a participant in the 2010 international Arts of Fashion Foundation Annual Competition. She now resides and works in Roanoke as an artist fashion designer in 202 Gallery in Market Square.

**April Via-Ward** is an independent fashion designer and fashion illustrator with much of her work invoking a gambling style that mixes light and dark colors. Her projects have included the Stuart Weitzman Shoe Exhibit, the Fashion Show at Roanoke's Taubman Museum, and Roanoke Fashion Week. 



## Resilience >

With surprising regularity, well-known businesses make headlines because of some egregious error. They handle this in a variety of ways including denial, defensiveness, apology, recalls, policy change, or even closing.

Resilience is important both personally and professionally. Oftentimes we focus on personal resilience, but businesses have a resilience quotient too. Business resilience is about endurance and renewal. It is being able to respond nimbly to internal and external pressures. If the leadership and workforce are resilient, then the organization will be resilient by extension.

How is business resilience built?

### 1. Realism over optimism.


If overly optimistic, companies can easily slip into denial. Leaders must ask themselves if they understand the reality and more importantly, do they accept the reality of the situation? Optimism can mask difficulties. It takes courage to confront difficult situations, but facing those situations is needed for resilience.

### 2. Lessons over problems.

Focusing on what is lost, such as revenue, keeps a company stuck. To move forward the focus has to be on what has been learned. Tylenol (Johnson and Johnson) could have easily had a “woe is me” approach instead of the lessons learned approach in 1982 when the cyanide-laced Tylenol deaths occurred. It was predicted that the brand would never recover. Two months later, they put tamper-proof packaging in place and paired that with an expansive media campaign that brought it back from the brink and made a hero out of Johnson & Johnson.

### 3. Two time cycles over one.

It would be easy to focus on one new strategy or market, and some companies find themselves doing just that when resources are limited. But that is short-sighted and puts the company at risk of failure, in an all eggs in one basket approach. Companies that are resilient focus on both short term and long term strategies and markets. The one strategy approach can work with giants like Apple, whose culture is focused on the “home run” product, but most companies cannot sustain that approach.

What’s your organization’s resilience quotient and which of the three tips above could you embrace to increase your business resilience? 

## Professional Development

By Lesa Hanlin

### Executive Summary:

*No matter how well-intentioned your business is, you should employ a formidable strategy upon mistakes, errors, and miscues to stay in the game long term.*



## Being average isn't great >

Numbers don't lie, but people sure do. I learned that lesson after buying The Tax Man. At the end of the day, I'm a numbers guy. I like to know what creates them. Numbers always have a story behind them. Most number gurus only see black and white. You'll find a whole lot of grey when you take the time to explore the substance behind those digits you're seeing. That's what makes my job a joy for me – discovering the nuances.

Perhaps you share my enthusiasm for statistical fun facts? Here are some I found fascinating:


**If you're an average American, you have \$137,063 of debt.** That's according to nerdwallet based on 2017 Federal Reserve figures. The U.S. Census Bureau reported median household income of only \$59,039 in the same year. How does that add up to financial independence?

Transportation and housing comprise almost 50% of household expenses. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average married couple with children spends 31.6% of income on housing, 16.4% on transportation, 13.6% on food, 7.1% on healthcare and 12.8% on personal insurance and pensions. Ouch.

Households give \$5,491 to charity annually, according to 2015 IRS tax data. Of course, that only includes the people who itemized deductions (about 30%). Those in the \$50-\$100K income range, which would apply to most in the Roanoke area, claimed a little over \$3,200 on average. We have a generous spirit.

The average FICO score is 704. Pretty surprising, right? That's 2018 data according to CNBC. This is an all time high. With a possible range of 300-850, anything above 700 is considered good. Those with scores above 750 are deemed excellent risks. If you want to raise your credit worthiness, make payments on time, don't max out your credit cards, pay down debt and check your credit reports frequently. The Federal Trade Commission estimates 20% of the population has report errors.

Only 32% of Americans are saving for retirement in a 401(k), according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Granted, only 79% of the workforce has access to these accounts, but those who do can contribute as much as \$18,000-\$24,000 annually. That's tax deferred money that's often matched by an employer. It's foolish not to put as much as you can into these accounts. Don't be that 68% (OK, technically 41% of those who have the option).

Being smart about financial planning isn't rocket science. Most of us make dumb decisions about how we spend our money, or fail to save. Sometimes, simply having someone to offer objective perspective and professional guidance can make all the difference. 360 Financial Solutions offers free consultations to Valley Business FRONT readers. 



## Financial Figures

By Michael Shelton

**Executive Summary:**  
*According to the stats, there are a number of reasons why you should strive to be better than average.*



## Write a book, start a company >

### Executive Summary:

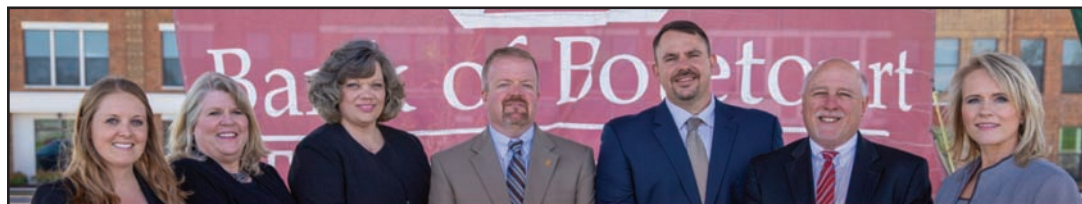
*Jane Fenton wasn't satisfied with writing a superb novel; she wanted complete control—enter Blue Morpho Books.*

By Dan Smith

Jane Fenton, who lives in Franklin County, is a newly-minted author and publisher, one who waited until her middle years (she's 52) to spring into action. She brought her recent-Roanoke College graduate daughter, Emma, along for the ride.

Her first novel, *Repo Girl*, is a surprising and splendid read, one that's hard to set aside and almost impossible not to finish.

Jane's road to this point is in some ways



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pretty typical, in others quite unusual. We'll let her tell her story because she does it so well:

"I've always enjoyed writing. When I was in grade school, I'd write adventures inspired by my love of *Nancy Drew* books and my sister, cousins and I would act them out. I loved creative writing classes in school and college and I'd always dreamed that someday I'd write a book. I finally got serious about writing that book about five years ago and finished my final draft on January 1, 2018—what a way to begin the year!"

Jane has a bachelor's degree in business administration and marketing from Loyola (Baltimore) University and has worked for Verizon for more than a decade after college as a marketing/sales analyst, accounting

coordinator, and program manager. She became a stay-home mother until her kids were teens, then worked as a teaching assistant in Roanoke City and Franklin County.

She picks up her story: "About five years ago, Community School in Roanoke sponsored a 48 Hour Writing Contest. My daughter, Emma, who was in high school at the time, and I entered it for fun.

"To ensure that the writers wouldn't submit a story they'd already written, requirements for the contest were sent to all participants in an email Saturday at 9 a.m. I don't remember all the details in that e-mail except the story had to take place in Roanoke and had to be in the pulp fiction or sci-fi genre. That's the weekend I came up with the story line about a newbie



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female repo agent that finds a dead body in one of the cars she's collecting. With little sleep and lots of caffeine, I wrote a very rough story.

"I spent the next five years reading all I could about plot, character development, story structure, etc. Three years ago, I found Roanoke Regional Writers Conference and I faithfully returned each year, learning so much from the many talented writers that attend and speak at the conference."

The conference made a difference. "One of the things I love about RRWC is the exposure to all forms of writing, as well as the many possibilities for publishing. That was the first time I'd ever considered the feasibility of self-publishing. I'd heard the pros and cons of each type of publishing by authors that had landed an agent and then a major publishing deal, authors that had used an independent publisher, and those that had self-published.

"By the time I finally finished my book, I was eager to publish it, and the thought of waiting for that dream for another year or two, if at all, was disheartening. After weighing all the options, I took a giant step into the world of entrepreneurship and opened my own publishing company, Blue Morpho Books.

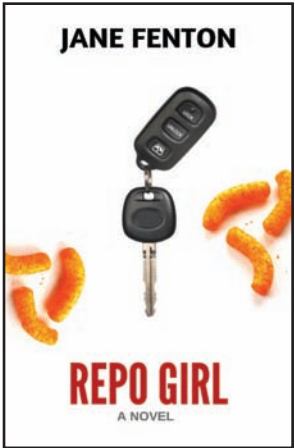
"I can still remember going to RRWC last year with a ridiculous smile on my face because I had just registered my publishing company. Ironically, the keynote speaker for last year was Jane Fenton. I had followed the steps outlined in her self-publishing checklist to open my business just weeks before the conference and there she was, live and in

person, giving even more valuable suggestions.

"Within two and a half months after I wrote the last sentence of my final draft, *Repo Girl* was published and has been very successful. In less than a year, it has landed on the No. 1 spot on Amazon's Best Seller lists in multiple categories (satire, humor, and cozy mysteries) four times."

Next, came another person's book. "In August, Blue Morpho

Books published *His Last Roll Call and Other Poems* by S.T. James. This was a collection of poems my uncle wrote over the years and for his family members as a keepsake. He always dreamed of publishing his poems in a book and I was so happy to help him realize that dream. On December 30, Blue Morpho Books published two more novels, which hit the Amazon Best Seller lists—the sequel to *Repo girl*, *A Repo Girl Christmas* and a wonderful young adult fantasy novel, *Throne of Shadows*, written by Emma.





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"I'm running Blue Morpho Books with the assistance of my creative director Emma, who is a recent graduate of Roanoke College (BA in English Lit/Creative Writing). We're not taking any submissions at this time, but it's something we may consider in the future.

"As the owner of Blue Morpho Books, I have complete creative control over everything. That's incredibly freeing and at the same time, can be a little overwhelming. I'm learning new things every day about writing, production (ebooks, paperbacks, hardcovers, and audiobooks), accounting, and marketing.

"Even though I have an optimistic outlook, the success of our books has even surprised me. It seems like every week, there's a new success. We're building our reader base by connecting with individuals from across the country as well as around the world, building relationships with other writers

and businesses in the community, increasing our sales each month, and having a wonderful time sharing what we've learned about self-publishing."

Business success is rarely a solo ride. "I've had a lot of help. Let me just say that the writing/publishing community is one of the friendliest and most supportive environments to do business. My family has been encouraging me to chase after this dream. The RRWC Facebook group is active year long and is a wonderful place to go with questions and receive feedback. There are tremendous tools available online, many fabulous local writing groups, and a supportive community. Many local businesses like Book No Further and Upcycled Gifts have allowed me to sell my books in their shops as well as hold book signings. The South County library has also been very supportive of local authors too." 

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## Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

### Executive Summary:

*For some types of salespeople, compensation on a straight-commission basis is illegal.*

## Sins of commission >

I love visiting the showroom at the local Southeastern Widget store. They change the displays on a regular basis, and they have an aesthetic sense that makes it really easy to imagine one of their widgets in my own home. The new showroom salesperson seemed very friendly, too. Then one day the president of Southeastern Widget called.

"I had to fire our showroom salesperson last month," he said.

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," I said. "She seemed so nice. What went wrong?"

"She just wasn't very good at sales," he said. "Even after being with us for more than a year, she barely brought in a quarter of what our previous showroom person did."

"So did she take it well?" I said.

"Hardly," he said. "That's why I'm calling. She was really upset when we let her go. Now she's suing us."

"Suing you?" I said. "What for? You have every right to terminate an employee for poor performance."

"The lawsuit is pretty crazy, actually," he said. "Get this, she's saying that we didn't pay her minimum wage! Even though all of our employment contracts make it perfectly clear that sales jobs are commission-only. She says that we owe her \$9000 in unpaid minimum wages, plus another \$9000 as a penalty."

"You have other sales jobs?" I said.

"Oh yes, only a fraction of our sales are through the showroom," he said. "Most of our salespeople spend their time visiting corporate customers."

"So they're on the road all the time?" I said.

"Yes, all the time," he said. "They work out of their cars. The only one who's based at the store is our showroom salesperson."

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"OK, it looks like you have a problem," I said. "Your showroom salesperson actually was entitled to receive the minimum wage."

"No, she was straight-commission!" he said. "All Southeastern Widget sales staff are straight-commission!"

"Well, let's take a moment and walk through this," I said. "Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, the basic rule is that all employees have to be paid at least the minimum wage."

"OK, got it." he said.

"However, there are a few exceptions to that rule," I said. "For example, certain executive and professional employees don't have to be paid minimum wage. There also is an exemption for outside sales employees."

"Yes, she was a sales employee," he said, "and so she was commission-only, and didn't receive the minimum wage."

"Well, the key term here is 'outside,'" I said. "To qualify for the outside sales exemption from the minimum wage and overtime, the salesperson has to be customarily and regularly engaged away from the employer's place of business. That's what 'outside' means."

"Like our corporate salespeople," he said.

"Yes, salespeople who work out of their cars probably are going to be exempt," I said. "You can pay them straight commission without worrying about the minimum wage, or about overtime either, for that matter. But a salesperson who works out of your store is not going to get the 'outside sales' exemption. You have to pay her minimum wage and overtime."

"But that's ridiculous!" he said. "It's natural for salespeople to work on a straight-commission basis. Are you telling me that it's not possible to do that if the salesperson works at our store?"

"Pretty much," I said. "If a salesperson works at the



To qualify for the outside sales exemption from the minimum wage and overtime, the salesperson has to be customarily and regularly engaged away from the employer's place of business.



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Salespeople who work out of their cars probably are going to be exempt. You can pay them straight commission without worrying about the minimum wage, or about overtime either, for that matter.

employer's premises, then she can still be paid by commission, but if her total commission for any pay period is less than the minimum wage she would have received for the hours she worked, then she has to receive enough extra money to give her at least the minimum wage for that pay period."

"Well I had no idea!" he said. "Although you know, if that's so, then I think she's probably right that her total commissions fell about \$9000 short of the minimum wage. But then why is she asking for \$18,000?"

"The law is designed to encourage employers to do things right the first time," I said. "If you're supposed to pay minimum wage or overtime but don't, then the employee can bring a lawsuit against you for double the amount of the underpayment. Plus you have to pay their attorney fees if you lose."

"Their attorney fees?" he said. "How much would that run?"

"It depends on how long and complicated the lawsuit is," I said. "Sometimes the attorney fees wind up being a lot more than the amount of the unpaid wages. Last year in

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

Maryland a court awarded \$600,000 in attorney fees even though the unpaid wages were just \$62,000.”

“Damn,” he said. “So if we really should have paid her minimum wage, then it would be cheaper just to go ahead and pay it, instead of fighting it. Right?”

“Probably,” I said.

In the end, after some initial posturing, we wound up negotiating a settlement for slightly less than the total amount that the fired salesperson had requested. It was a pretty good deal for our client. And of course we made sure that Southeastern Widget revised their contract for future showroom sales hires. They’ll never make that mistake again. 

Keith can be reached at [keith@creekmorelaw.com](mailto:keith@creekmorelaw.com)

**Note:** *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn’t legal advice—you should consult a lawyer before deciding whether a particular employee is exempt from minimum wage or overtime requirements, before crafting a compensation scheme, etc.*

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The goal of Mini Med School is to ‘create a true dialog of what we do, what we know, and how does this help you answer the questions you have about life.’

—Charlotte Baker, DrPH, MPH, CPH and Assistant Professor in Epidemiology for the Department of Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech

## It's all genetics >

### Executive Summary:

*Virginia Tech Carilion's Mini Med School encourages the public to explore what genes mean.*

**By Nanette Levin**

Have you wondered about the difference between what you get from a genetic test such as 23 & Me or Ancestry.com and something your doctor may order for cancer screening? Charlotte Baker, DrPH, MPH, CPH and Assistant Professor in Epidemiology for the Department of Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech says she saw the proliferation of ads for these commercial products as a great hook. This became the theme for a series





of interactive events designed to get the general public engaged and informed about medical issues surrounding genetic testing in our community.

The 6th Mini Med School series took place at the Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC) campus in downtown Roanoke during January and February. Over three consecutive weekly evening gatherings, 55-70 people converged to discuss what's going on in the local

medical community as it specifically relates to public health, genes, disease, health surveys and clinical trials. Participants were encouraged to discuss and explore how those developments might relate to them.

### Chili as an analogy

The last session on February 12th involved a chili celebration. Participants were asked



**Medical students from the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine precipitate in a mini medical school. (David Hungate for VTC)**

to bring their favorite chili recipe the week prior. Attendees picked their four top selections and staff spent much of the day preparing the fare prior the 5:30 p.m. event start time. "All the recipes were very different from each other," says Dr. Baker. That was the point. Attendees brought everything from white and red chili favorites to vegetarian selections. "The only thing that's necessary to make chili is chili powder," she explains.

Dr. Baker compares this reality to disease. Each of 10,000 people who have a heart attack look different. This series was designed to foster conversations centered around what contributing health factors are common, but more importantly, what can be different. For disease and genetic testing, things like genes, behavior and environment can have a big impact on the probability of disease onset, she notes.

## Including the public in public health discussions

The Mini Med School events, which began in 2014, are open to the public

and intentionally designed so that anyone who wants to participate can come. Dr. Baker says the goal of these events is to "Create a true dialog of what we do, what we know, and how does this help you answer the questions you have about life."

The three recent sessions focused on defining population health and exploring the importance of collecting genetic information, environmental issues that contribute to disease and how the community can help create better population health, respectively. Medical professionals have discovered that things like unhealthy diets, lack of exercise and other factors that can easily be controlled by individuals play a much bigger role in disease onset – or prevention – than had been realized in the past. Heart disease, cancer and diabetes in many cases can be prevented or controlled by behavior, Dr. Baker notes.

Featured speakers for these events included Emily Doherty, MD, Kathy Hosig, PhD, MPH, RD, Julia Gohlke, PhD and Michael Friedlander, PhD.






Mini Med School participants prepare for a group learning activity

"Community work is a huge piece of what we do," says Dr. Baker. "It gives participants the idea that it's not just one person looking after your health, but a whole group of people looking after your health. We've really enjoyed doing the series with the Med School. (We want) anyone interested in learning more about science or what we do from a clinical

side to participate and come out."

Dr. Baker organized this event with David B. Trinkle, MD and Laura Hungerford, DVM, MPH, PhD, CPH, Head of the Department of Population Health Sciences at Virginia Tech.

The next event will be held in the fall. A theme and dates will be announced in the near future. 

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## The 5 S's >

"Where is the strainer?" "Who put away the salad tongs?" If you're like most people, you have a place for everything in your kitchen. But when someone who doesn't know your system, like a young child or a house guest, puts something in the wrong place, you can get frustrated searching for it.

Much the same happens in organizations. It's not uncommon for workers to spend over 10% of their time searching for parts, tools, papers, and files. A disorganized work environment can be a significant source of frustration, wasted time, lost productivity and hidden problems. And if your customers enter these disorganized areas, it conveys a message that your team may be unorganized and incompetent.

There is a simple technique which was developed in Japan that provides a systematic approach to organize your work areas and increase productivity. It's called "5S" for five sequential steps.


# Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

**Executive Summary:**  
*What hurts an organization? Disorganization, of course! Here's a handy 5-point system to cleaning up your act.*

1. **Sort** – Separate what you need from what you don't need, and get rid of what you don't need. Think of this as getting ready for your garage sale. Get rid of what you don't need.
2. **Straighten** – Place all needed items in a location that is optimal for performance. Like storing your coffee mugs by the coffee maker. Everything has a "home." Place the items used the most closest to where they are needed.
3. **Shine** – Clean the work area. A clean work environment is safer, improves quality, and makes it easier to see problems or abnormalities.
4. **Standardize** – Develop standard processes to do the first 3 items. Examples of this include annual file shredding, or weekly housecleaning.
5. **Sustain** – Develop the culture and self-discipline to ensure all employees follow "5S".

Sounds easy, right? The technique is easy, but there can be resistors who like to remain disorganized. Before embarking on this, make an effort to get buy-in from all those who will be affected, or you will never get to steps 4 and 5, and you will slip back to prior conditions.

Marie Kondo has built an empire using many of these concepts. Use 5S to bring these concepts to your business. 

Send your questions or comments to [Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com](mailto:Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com)



## Sharing the limelight >

### Collaborate4the Best Performance

Everyone there was in attendance to see Wynton Marsalis. The famed musician was the main attraction for the night and his mere presence dominated the Jefferson Center stage. It was an amazing show and the audience seemed to appreciate the performance. Marsalis is one of the giants of jazz and in that room there was grandeur and magic.

What a night. One I'll remember for a long time. But I remember something else about that evening's concert.


Marsalis played as part of a band that evening and, while everyone knew when the trumpet master was center stage, he knew the right times to step back and let others move to the forefront.

### Helps You2Improve

Most of us love watching the supremely talented do what they do. It's inspiring and rewarding to see greats excel. There are also some memorable leadership lessons to be gleaned from them. In the case of Marsalis, he knew when to share the stage. He'd occasionally move to a less noticeable space amongst the group and admire the other band members' solo performances. As he looked on with appreciation, it encouraged the audience to do the same. I watched him genuinely enjoy their specific time to shine.

Then, I watched him step back in and effectively take over the spotlight again.

It was a powerful reminder of the power of team and the beauty of collaboration.

The audience had the opportunity to experience a leader sharing the glory, and the stage, and the accolades. Whether he actually used the words, or it was merely the recollection of the night, I remember feeling like he didn't care who got the credit. He just wanted to put on an incredible show. That's exactly how we should work as we conduct business – in concert. 

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## A Little Insight

By Bruce C. Bryan

**Executive Summary:**  
*Effective leadership isn't about dominating the stage, it's about producing a worthwhile performance.*



Bob Kinsey holds picture of The Roanoke Star



## Sign guy >

### Executive Summary:

*Bob Kinsey recalls his profession in the sign business.*

**By Tom Field**

Bob Kinsey is proud of his papa.

That's the first observation you'll get when talking to him. Ask Bob to start telling anything about the Roy C. Kinsey Sign Company that dominated Roanoke and the surrounding region's "cityscape" and he'll list details like a Wikipedia entry (and in chronological order, if you like).

"I'm proud of my father," Bob says. "He was born in 1893 and is responsible for it all."

The "it all" of course, is Bob's profession (and 93-year life) in the sign business. A walking Wikipedia of Roanoke's commercial scene (and pretty much any aspect of the City's development) Bob recalls not only the countless signs he and the company manufactured and installed, he'll cite the timeline, the people involved, the location (down to the address in some cases), and what was happening in both the local economy and American society at the time.

It's as if Bob Kinsey is running an app... but there's no digital device involved.

"Bob has contributed a great deal to our

## A Kinsey Sign Timeline >

- 1908** Roy Kinsey, sign writer, Roanoke City Directory
- 1925** Roy C. Kinsey Sign Co., incorporated
- 1933** Opening of first neon sign plant in Virginia
- 1949** Roanoke Mill Mountain Star installed (for Merchants Assoc.)
- 1984** Kinsey Sign Co. sold to Tyson Sign, SC
- 1987** Kinsey Crane & Sign formed (nephews David and Neil)
- 1987** Bob Kinsey Enterprises formed
- 2008** Bob retires (at 83 years of age)

community and region," says Todd Marcum, an advertising agency principal who worked with the sign company on numerous projects. Kinsey signs are prevalent in a documentary entitled "Shine" that Todd produced a few years ago (and viewable at Shine Documentary.com).

"I believe that a skillful sign maker is critical to the aesthetic of a community," Marcum continues. "Signs are a visual currency that guide us to the goods and services we need. Kinsey Sign did this in a way that was beautiful and functional. His prolific work made the streets of Roanoke a more interesting and pleasing place to be."



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Vintage photos courtesy of Todd Marcum and Access Advertising





Kinsey Sign Co. is credited with Roanoke's most recognizable landmark, the star on top of Mill Mountain. Marcum says Bob's contribution "transcends the Star."

Kinsey icons on buildings and skylines include signage for Heironimus, Grand Piano, Ponce de Leon Hotel, Miller & Rhodes, First National Exchange Bank, Mick-or-Mack grocery stores, even the rotating chicken bucket for Colonel Saunders and KFC.

"My grandfather moved his blacksmith shop to Cave Spring (area), and then my father comes along in the midst of Roanoke's wild growth in 1917 as a sign painter, hires four guys, and it all started," Bob says.

Bob's stories are every bit as colorful and attention-grabbing as the signs he put up.

One particularly conservative banker was

practically knocked backwards when he saw the new sign Kinsey put up, because he thought the colors were too "garish and flashy." The business was also frequently recognized for "firsts," such as building the first neon sign plant in the state and first to install specific kinds of moving components or unique configurations. And of course, there's the ubiquitous Star itself, on top of Mill Mountain, overseeing the City: the largest freestanding illuminated man-made star in the country (a record held since its installation in 1949). The icon responsible for Roanoke's nickname: Star City of the South.

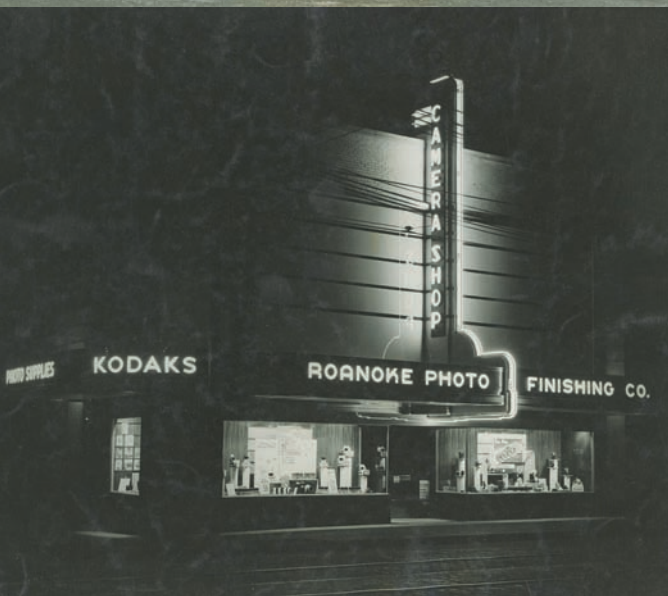
Bob and his two older brothers, Roy Jr. and Warren, worked the sign business for more than seventy years of the vocation, which technically spanned a century (and still does in an iteration that no longer includes family members).

**SELECT THURSDAYS**

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**MAY 23 - THE KINGS**  
**JUNE 6 - UPTOWN**  
**JUNE 20 - SUPERHOLD**  
**JULY 18 - THE WORX**  
**AUGUST 1 - FUZZY LOGIC**

 **Daleville**  
town center



Bob's wife, Lois, and their daughters, are all too familiar with the folders and envelopes and scrapbooks he keeps jammed packed with photographs of various signs. Cute little merchant signs. Elegant law firm names. Massive letters running atop industrial plants. Moving parts and illuminated glows in the night. And everything in between. Photos

that, while impressive, hardly do justice to what your eyes experience when you drive by the real thing.

Or what your heart does as you descend upon the runway seconds after passing that welcoming Star below you on a cold, lonely night. 





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and process improvement. [ [Mike@OpXSolutionsLLC.com](mailto: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](mailto:nlevin@fulcrumny.com) ]

**Michael Shelton** specializes in working with Roanoke and Lynchburg area residents age 55+ who want to ensure they won't run out of money before they die. He currently holds his Series 6, 63 & 65 licenses and received the

prestigious Chartered Financial Retirement Counselor designation. He's an Iraqi Freedom War Veteran. As owner of both 360 Tax Solutions and 360 Financial Solutions, he takes client satisfaction seriously and makes himself available to every client and prospect of his firms. Tune into Fox radio for his weekly Small Business Figures show. [ [michael@discover360financial.com](mailto:michael@discover360financial.com) ]

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“““

The operation is a striking example of what can happen when concerned citizens... collaborate

— Page 45




## One efficient health care solution >

It was a Monday night in mid-November 1992 when the Free Health Clinic of Franklin County, located in Rocky Mount, saw its first patient. As part of a community health assessment she had completed, Jeanne Bernard, a registered nurse, began the effort that now operates four days a week. In the beginning a completely volunteer operation, the clinic today employs a nurse practitioner, still supported by a cadre of volunteers, to provide primary care for those whose financial position would otherwise leave them uncared for.

As Executive Director Donna Proctor explains it, the operation is a striking example of what can happen when concerned citizens, socially conscious corporations and generous donors – individuals, churches and community groups among them – collaborate. “We are supported strictly by grants and donations,” she notes. “The only governmental support involved comes indirectly through money we receive from the Virginia Association of Free and Charitable Clinics. Schewels donated the land on which our building sits, and that building, too, came from a private donor.”

The strength of that support allows the clinic to serve not only those who are unemployed, but also the working poor. What’s more, individuals living in nearby counties who would have to travel significant distances to get care in their county of residence are also welcome.

How is this possible? “Efficiency is the name of the game,” Proctor points out. “An individual who has to go to a hospital emergency room just for a regular visit – no surgery, no complicate testing – will incur costs of around \$650. We provide that care for roughly \$100, and we offer a pharmacy, too.”

According to a Georgetown University study released in November, the number of uninsured children in the US increased by 276,000 in 2017, despite the drop in unemployment. Clearly, the country could take a page from Franklin County’s approach! 



## Good Work

By Rachael Garrity

**Executive Summary:**  
*Bernard Health Care in Franklin County provides services for individuals with financial difficulties.*



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## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*Are you getting  
good advice from  
all the experts?*

### Splish, splash >

In my forty years in the marketing and business development profession, I have never seen the advice pool this overcrowded. Apparently, there's no lifeguard either, watching the swimmers. Not even the kiddie pool. And if that isn't bad enough, we don't even have a respite for Adult Swim time.

It's the most splashing around uncontrolled swimming hole I've ever witnessed. Belly flops off the high dive. Canon balls too close to the edge. Fingernail scratches from couples playing "Chicken." Trapped kids you can't even see up under garish inflatable characters. No one hollering "WALK! Don't RUN!" as children skid around the deck. Teenagers dunking other teenagers as if everyone had an endless supply of oxygen. And I'm pretty sure the water is turning yellow from... well, you get it.

It's not pretty. I don't even want to dip my toe in.

Having all these experts—advisers—consultants—and "you-can-be-successful-just-like-me" voices and faces blasting out at us from the great Olympic pool of Instagram-Facebook-YouTube-Webinar-Podcast Series should be celebrated, I suppose. The resources are plentiful where no one needs to do anything to get started but—DIVE IN. For free! (Pool memberships usually start after the second or third visit.)

But here's what's different at our splishy-splashy pool.

At today's summer watering hole, we get that annoying kid who finally hits the season where he's able to jump off the diving board on his own. In the deep end.

"Look at me, ma!" he shouts. "Now, look!" "And now!" "Watch this!" "Look!" "MOM!!! LOOK!!!"

He's everywhere.

Constantly calling out for attention.

Lest you think I'm the grumpy old man sitting in the lounge chair sitting off to the side so his Garden & Gun magazine won't get splashed by all the unruliness, I'm all for sharing the wealth of knowledge gained from experience and measurable performance. I listen to the voices of experts all the time.

I don't demand a swan every time, but I prefer a bit of gracefulness in the dive.



## Letter

### Slapshot

I always enjoy reading Valley Business FRONT but this issue was special. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the article by Anne Sampson on the Rail Yard Dawgs.

**Faye Shively Curren**  
Salem

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

Are people really responding to all this noise? Fast-talking flapping-gums that take great pleasure in describing how you too, will make your splash, when you do exactly what they do?

Is the new expert required to be brash and hyper-assertive at all costs in order to be trusted? Or is that just the packaging required these days to get attention?

Maybe this kind of presentation is a correlation to the civil unrest and feverish protestations permeating our great society pool today.

Open your mouth. Move and gesture. Wear a red hat or pink bonnet. GET IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

I've got an old trough in my garage. I'm going to fill it with water. Sit in it. Cancel my pool membership.

"LOOK AT ME, MOMMA!!!!"

She'd just laugh. 

1983 . . . 2019 . . . tomorrow



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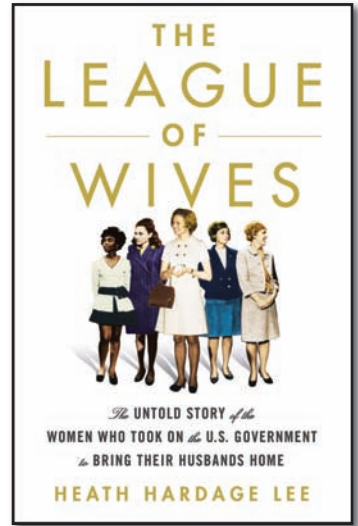
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## Books @ the FRONT >

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](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com)



### *They're ours, not just yours*

In her second book, *The League of Wives* (St. Martin's; 2019) author and Roanoke resident Heath Lee tells the story of a group of women whose husbands were shot down over Vietnam and held captive, some for as much as five years or more. Frustrated by the slow pace of U.S. military and government efforts to secure the release of the captives, the women banded together to work multiple angles to obtain information on the captives and ultimately push for their release.

Lee lays out the hierarchy among navy wives – with status predicated on their husband's rank – and how that close, yet stratified association impacted the actions each woman was willing to take and how they related to each other. First told to stay quiet and let the government handle publicity and negotiations, the women quickly realized they are being sidelined rather than looked after. Reading about the bureaucracy they faced when trying to maintain their households in a time when women often had little authority over their own lives and less over government and military actions, becomes heartbreaking. Some lost housing and found it difficult to even obtain access to their husband's paycheck which was usually the family's only source of income.

Lee's experience curating historical exhibits lends her writing a thoroughness and clarity from which we feel the day-to-day exasperation to the women faced. Lee published *Winnie*

*Davis, Daughter of the Lost Cause* in 2014.

—Doloris Vest

### *Elders, respect*

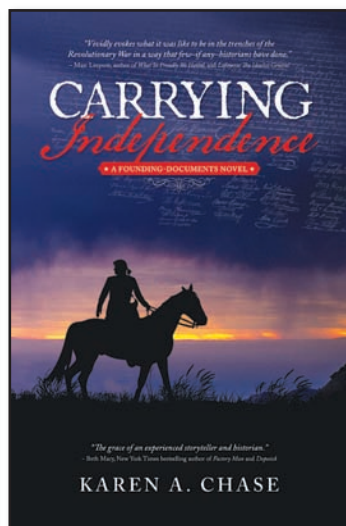
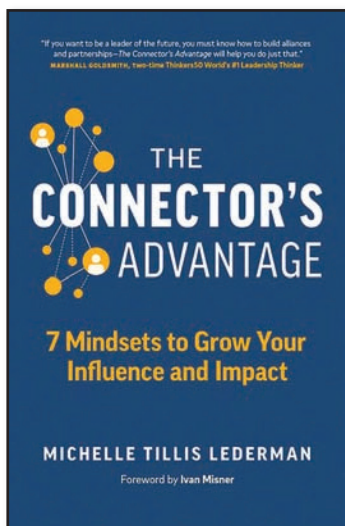
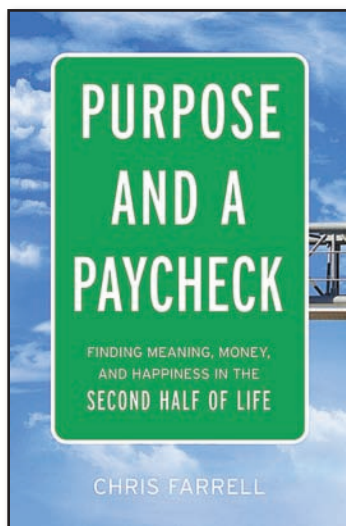
When most people think of entrepreneurs, they picture young professionals at the start of their careers. But right now, people in their 50s and 60s are turning that theory on its head, launching new businesses at nearly twice the rate of those in the 20s.

Chris Farrell, veteran journalist and senior economics contributor to "Marketplace," has been monitoring this grassroots movement for years. Now, he's proving that our aging population is far from a burden to the economy; in fact, they're saving it.

Filled with scholarly research and first-hand reporting, in *Purpose and a Paycheck* (HarperCollins; 2019) Farrell reveals why our aging population is one of the most powerful economic forces in the coming decades; the negative impact of age discrimination, and why we should value the skills of experienced workers; how workers in the second half of life are just as creative and productive as their younger peers—if not more so; why the leading edge of the 'work longer movement' is self-employment and entrepreneurship; and the growing trend among older adults to do well and do good by finding careers with nonprofits.

—Mallory Campoli





## Introverts extra points

Introverts and networking usually don't go hand and hand. Typically, the last thing an introvert wants to be is in a room with a lot of people they don't know. But as 85 percent of jobs happen through connections with people you know (and scientists have found that social isolation is as detrimental to your health as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day) making connections is key to leading a successful personal and professional life.

According to Michelle Tillis Lederman, CEO of Executive Essentials and author of the new book, *The Connector's Advantage: 7 Mindsets to Grow Your Influence and Impact* (Page Two; 2019) introverts have many strengths that make them perfect connectors. By following a few simple tips – like listening to their own rhythms, paying attention to what make them feel comfortable, and not trying to emulate their gregarious colleagues – introverts can feel completely at ease in business and social situations.

—Erin MacDonald-Birnbaum

## Revolutionary declaration

Former Roanoke graphic designer Karen Chase became an author when she celebrated her 40th birthday eight years ago with the much-honored *Bonjour 40: A Paris Travel Log*, an unusual approach

to a focused memoir. Now she's back with her first novel, *Carrying Independence*, a rip-snorting fictional look at just how all the signatures were collected for the Declaration of Independence. This is a small piece of arcane history that is given vibrant life in this treatment, one full of spies and patriots, of hard rides and double-crosses.

The simple premise is that the Declaration was not signed completely on one sultry July afternoon in 1776 Philadelphia. Several of our founding fathers were not in the room—for a variety of reasons—and had to be chased down for their signatures. That task fell to post rider Nathaniel Marten who, armed with the only copy of the document whose ink was barely dry, rode into the night.

Chase, a native of Canada who now lives in Richmond, worked with two marketing companies in Roanoke before founding her own, 224Design. She began the book in 2008 and it is apparent from the depth of historic detail that she did her homework before publishing in April of this year.

—Dan Smith

The reviewers: **Doloris Vest** owns Book No Further book shop in Roanoke; **Mallory Campoli** is a publicity manager in Cherry Hill, NJ; **Erin MacDonale-Birnham** is a publicist with Smith Publicity; **Dan Smith** is a local writer and former founding editor of FRONT.



## Look up, little leprechaun >

Stilt-walkers infiltrate the massive crowds at **Roanoke's Freedom First St. Patrick's Day and Shamrock Festival** on Saturday, March 16. The brisk but bright, sunny day found downtown Roanoke packed to the gills with folks at the festival, reproducing that sea of green we see each year.



## Because mommin' ain't easy >

**Macaroni Kid Roanoke** hosted "Stroller Traffic LIVE" on Feb. 21 at The Spot on Kirk; a mom's night out, meetup, photo booth, expert panel for mothers of newborns and toddlers.



# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## Rescuing roof and HVAC >

**Rescue Mission of Roanoke Valley** received a \$65,367 grant awarded by **Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia** for infrastructure repairs at the men's shelter and roof replacement at the main building.



## Local writers share >

**Michael Abraham** (author of eight books set in our region and FRONT correspondent), **Gary McPherson** (*Joshua and the Shadow of Death*), and **Jiffy Day** (*The Growing Season*) spoke about how Southwest Virginia inspired their craft at Blacksburg Library on March 9.



## Artwork honored >

Roanoke Mayor Sherman Lea joined U.S. Cellular to announce the winners of the annual **Black History Month Art Contest** at Boys & Girls Club of Southwest Virginia on March 8; left to right: U.S. Cellular Area Sales Manager Bertram Daniels, 3rd Place Winner Ryan Vazquez-Ayala, 2nd Place Winner McKenna Ramsey, 1st Place Winner Tyler Turner, and also in 2nd Place (standing in for winner Harley Oldham) is Kristen Nash, Shawsville unit director, Calvin Curry, director of operations at the Boys & Girls Clubs and Mayor Sherman Lea.



## Mid-App education application >

Leaders of nine higher education institutions gathered to look at the state of higher education, demographic and economic trends, and workforce and career development needs in the region on Monday, March 4 at Emory & Henry College for the **Mid-Appalachian Higher Ed Summit**.



# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## School on brain >

The **Fralin Biomedical Research Institute** held its 7th Annual Brain School March 11–14, featuring amazing critter brains, sleep and circadian rhythms, traumatic brain injury, and aging and dementia. Above: Michael Fox discusses brain anatomy using scientific specimens.

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**MAY 18**



**Daleville**  
town center



**JUNE 1**



**ADAM RUTLEDGE**

**THE WORX**  
**JUNE 22**





## Cleaning up >

**Belle's Place Soap Co.** is a popular merchant at Roanoke's downtown farmer's market; the handcrafted goat milk soaps and bath products (out of Pulaski County) do a good job stopping folks walking by.



## Moose tracks >

Moose, a therapy dog with **Virginia Tech's Animal Assisted Therapy at Cook Counseling Center**, was named Virginia Veterinary Medical Association's 2019 Animal Hero; for the past five years he and owner Trent Davis has worked with more than 5,000 individual and group counseling sessions, participated in countless hours of research, and became one of VT's most beloved celebrities.

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



# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## Pioneering trio >

Coinciding with the celebration of Women's History Month in March, the Virginia Capitol Foundation announced that the statues of **Laura Copenhaver**, **Mary Draper Ingles** and **Elizabeth Keckly** have been fully funded and commissioned to be sculpted into bronze statues for Voices from the Garden: The Virginia Women's Monument.

# ARE YOU READY?



MAY 3 - THE WORX  
MAY 17 - FUZZY LOGIC  
JUNE 7 - LEGGZ AND GASOLINE ALLEY  
LADIES GET IN FREE 6.7.19

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



Cauley

**Lori Cauley** has been appointed senior vice president of Marketing for MemberOne Federal Credit Union.



Boynton

**Terry Boynton** has joined as office leader at Pinnacle Financial Partners, Roanoke Starkey Road branch.

**Rob Mangus** and **Candace Benson** have joined the commercial client advisory team at Pinnacle Financial



Mangus



Benson

Partners Church Ave. Roanoke office.



Lozowski

**Jeff Lozowski** has been appointed vice president, retail market for HomeTrust Bank Roanoke Valley.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

**Lud Eng** and **Lutheria Smith** have been named senior associates at Draper Aden Associates.

## LEGAL FRONT



Poarch

**Christine Poarch** has been named a Fellow of Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys.



Thompson

**Rachel Thompson** with Poarch Law

has joined as adjunct professor, teaching adoption law at Liberty University.

## TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Cox

**Dr. Chase Cox** has been promoted to director of technology for MELD Manufacturing Corporation.

## EDUCATION FRONT

Virginia Tech announces **Anuj Karpatne** has been appointed assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science in the College of Engineering; **Jay Winkler** has been appointed executive director of the Center

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## Have a career announcement?

Send announcements to [news@vbFRONT.com](mailto:news@vbFRONT.com). Photos should be color, 300dpi. A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.



Winkeler



Scales



Fricker

for Business Intelligence and Analytics in the Pamplin College of Business; **Wayne Scales** was named the J. Byron Maupin Professor of Engineering by the Board of Visitors; **Ron Fricker** accepted a new position within the College of Science



Hall

as associate dean for faculty affairs and administration; **Janice Branch Hall** has joined the Pamplin College of Business as its first director of diversity and inclusion; **Matthew Brandon** has been named chief advancement officer for inclusion and diversity; **Reza Ovissipour, Brandon Jutras, Kristopher Hite, Yun Yin, Clay Wright, and Chloe Lahondere** were hired in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

**Deborah Petrine** was presented the 2019



Petrine

Distinguished Alumni Award by Virginia Western Community College Education Foundation.

**Jamie Soltis** has been appointed director of instruction and career readiness at Salem City Schools.



DeLoia

**Julie DeLoia, Ph.D.**

has been named dean of graduate studies at Hollins University.

## CULTURE FRONT

**Michelle Darby** has been named executive director of Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce.

**Valerie Brown** has been named executive director of Williamson Road Area Business Association.

## MUNICIPAL FRONTS

**Kenneth Fay, RES,** has been appointed director of real estate valuation for Roanoke County.

*Compiled by Tom Field*



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# FRONT Notes

## *Box it up*

### **Pratt Industries**

corrugated packaging company is investing \$20 million to open a plant in an available shell building at Botetourt County's Greenfield industry park; eventually bringing 50 new jobs.

## *Flame flying*

### **Liberty University**

has filed a request to rezone nearly 500 acres off New London Road in Forest for development of a general aviation facility for its School of Aeronautics.

## *Scale back*

### **Genworth Financial**

is laying off about 80 employees, including 35 in Lynchburg.

## *Make mine recreational*

Ten economic development projects using \$10 million in grant funding from the **Abandoned Mine Lane Pilot** program have been proposed by Gov. Northam and U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith for southwestern Virginia, pending approval; the historic mining sites include

construction and development of walking, ATV, and mountain bike trails, and various homesteads, cabins, etc.

## *Mitigating on the mountain*

### **Mountain Valley Pipeline**

is compensating Roanoke County \$500,000 for disruption on Bent Mountain due to its construction; the money is earmarked for Bent Mountain Community Center renovation.

## *Moon landing*

### **Luna Innovations**

has acquired California-based General Photonics, a fiber-optic testing equipment manufacturer with approximately 65 employees; a deal valued at \$20 million.

## *Zipity zoo zaa*

### **Mill Mountain Zoo**

in Roanoke received accreditation from the Zoological Association of America.

## *Compressed overseas*

Kulthorn Kirby Public Co. of Thailand is purchasing **Bristol**

**Compressors** and plans to move the Virginia operations to Bangkok.

## *Pointed, clicked, gave*

### **Roanoke Valley Gives**

a 24-hour online charitable contribution initiative of Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia, exceeded its \$800,000 collection for local nonprofits on March 13.

## *Plant planted*

### **The Victorian Hempy**

has opened on Rivermont Ave. in Lynchburg, a specialty boutique offering hemp products and CBD oil.

## *Smyth packing*

### **Scholle IPN Packaging**

is expanding its product packaging plant in Chilhowie; a projected 40 jobs and \$10 million investment in Smyth County.

## *Original name brought back*

**Central Virginia Planning District**

**Commission (CVPDC)** has been re-established as the name of the governing council that was formed in 1969 and rebranded Region 2000 over the past years.

## *Erasing long time fixture*

**Mish Mish** art and design supply store in Blacksburg is closing this summer; owners citing the conversion to digital and product availability online as factors after nearly 50 years of operation.

## *Title swap*

### **Woodson Honda**

automobile dealership in Roanoke has been acquired by Priority Automotive out of Chesapeake.

## *Carter trades*

### **Carter Bank & Trust**

entered NASDAQ Global Select Stock Market under its CARE trading symbol March 25.

## *Positive machinations*

**Clarke Precision Machine** is expanding its machining,

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fabrication, welding operations in Wythe County; a \$750,000 investment that should add about a dozen position.

## *Here, you take it*

Roanoke City has approved a contract with **Total Action for Progress** to establish a land bank, where seized properties from unpaid taxes can be assigned to TAP for redevelopment.

## *Home health new home*

**Generations Solutions** senior care has moved its Roanoke office to 1133 2nd Street.

## *Historical preservation modernized*

**University Libraries at Virginia Tech** is compiling more than 58,000 digital items available for research through Digital Virginias.org, a hub of Digital Public Library of America.

## *Engineers unite*

**SFCS** architecture and engineering firm in Roanoke has merged with Louisville-based

Kidwell Engineering and Design; the deal expands project work across the Midwest, particularly in senior living and higher education.

## *Jobs you betcha'*

Colonial Downs, under the **Rosie's Gaming Emporium** moniker on Vinyard Road in Vinton, is hiring up to 125 people for its grand re-opening slated for the end of April; the facility includes restaurant, bar, gaming terminals for horse race betting.

## *From westside to eastside*

**Richfield Living** received zoning approval to build a retirement village on Mecca Street NE in Roanoke; a planned \$25 million project with over 100 beds, 70 assisted living apartments and 110 independent living apartments in a town center model.

## *Battling for business*

**MELD Manufacturing Corp.** in Christiansburg was selected for Phase II of the US Army Expeditionary

*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.

Technology Search program for battlefield repair of next generation combat vehicles.

## *I-81 blocked (on paper, too)*

Budget allocations for improving **Interstate 81** have been delayed, failing to address \$4 billion in construction projections by the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

## *Engaged interns*

**Roanoke Regional Partnership** has deployed a new Get2KnowNoke Summer Internship Program to engage young talent and increase retention.

## *23 large for four*

National Institute of Health has awarded a \$23 million grant to a collaborative unit of **Virginia Tech, University of Virginia, Carilion, and Inova**

**Health System** for medical laboratory research in diseases and health crises.

## *Narrows wide open*

**Town of Narrows** in Giles County received about \$1 million for downtown revitalization and promotion of its outdoor amenities from a federal Community Development Block Grant program and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

## *Bank on fork*

**First Bank & Trust Company** has opened a new office on Prices Fork Road in Blacksburg.

## *Scooting along*

**Roanoke City** has welcomed the electric scooter commuter service

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FRONT Notes

from Lime; the popular municipal app-based unit borrowing and GPS-tracked system expected to arrive as early as April.

RU + JCHS

Virginia General Assembly unanimously passed the bill authorizing the merger of **Jefferson College of Health Sciences** and **Radford University**.

HU + VWCC

**Hollins University** and **Virginia Western Community College** have established Guaranteed Admission Agreements for graduates of four Associate of Science programs from

Virginia Western.

*New name, upped game*

**Southwest Virginia Cultural Center & Marketplace** has opened in Abingdon, a renovation of the large “creative economy” complex formerly known as Heartwood.

*One school helps another*

**Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center** received 15 refurbished computers and installation from the **Burton Center for Arts and Technology**.

*Energetic education support*

**American Electric Power** awarded a

\$100,000 grant to Virginia Western Community College for its Community College Access Program (CCAP) that provides tuition for qualified high school graduates.

*Bringing bath back in Bath County*

The **Jefferson Pools** are planned for reopening in summer 2020 under a partnership between Omni Homestead Resort and Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

*Bath time is school time*

**Bath County Public Schools** has partnered with Google to equip school buses with WiFi so students can work on homework during

long commutes that are typical on routes throughout the rural district.

*Go green get green*

Roanoke’s **Ride Solutions** has deployed its new app that includes a rewards program for local restaurants and retailers when you log trips, use carpools, walking and bike trails.

*New hangout*

**The Hub** has opened in downtown Roanoke at 416 Campbell Avenue, an open community, technology, employment, networking, and development space and program by SVH Family Services.

*Compiled by Tom Field*

Check out additional FRONT Notes from Valley Business FRONT on our Facebook site or social media links at [www.vbFRONT.com](http://www.vbFRONT.com).

“Sort, straighten, shine, standardize, sustain — Page 36



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To move forward the focus has to  
be on what has been learned — Page 20



He knew the right time to step back and  
let others move to the forefront — Page 37

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