

Valley Business FRONT

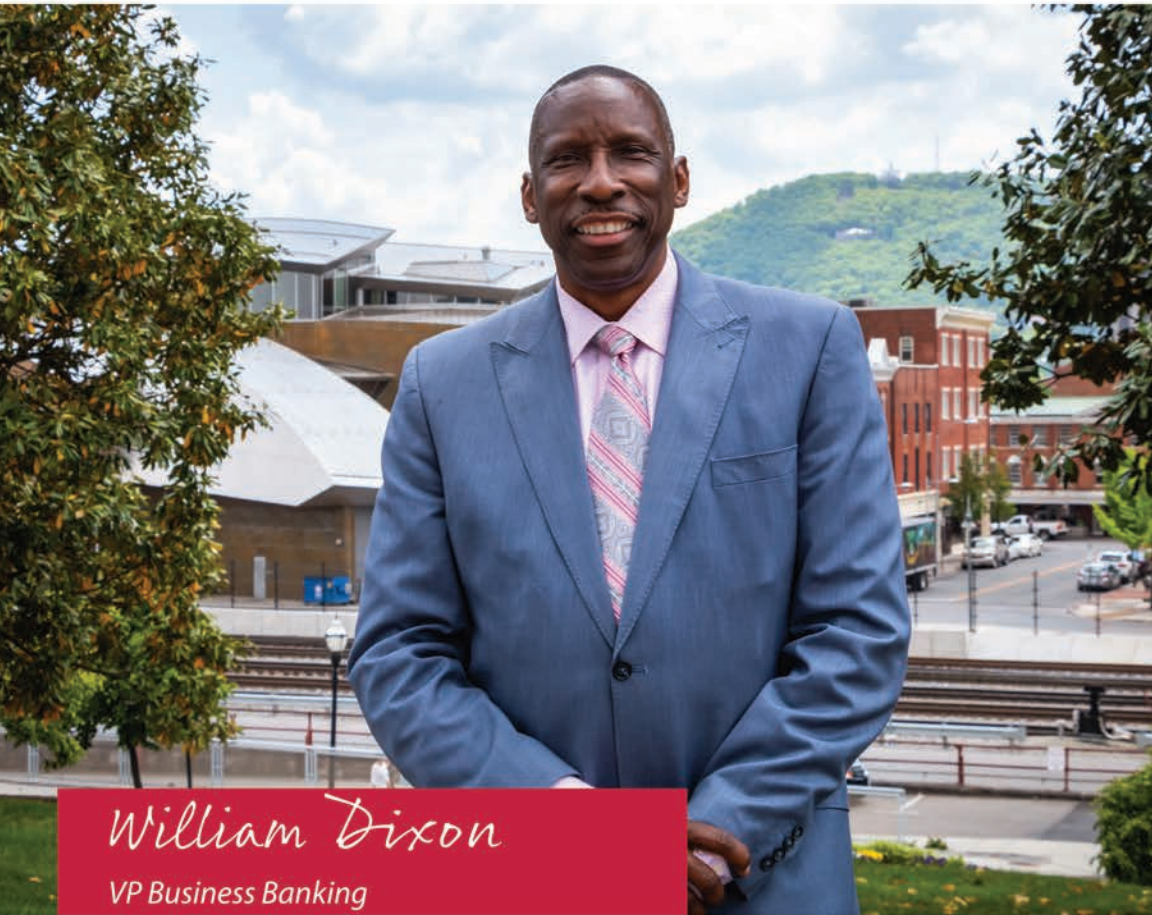
**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION
FREE • ISSUE 135 • DECEMBER 2019

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In The Spotlight

Chip Addison,
Showtimers Community Theater

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William Dixon

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WELCOME to the FRONT

End of year... it's here. Your December 2019 FRONT is full of tidbits you can apply at this busy and reflective time amidst the holiday festivities.

First, take in a play. What better way to take a few hours one cold evening to just sit back and enjoy. Or consider a year end donation to one of our community theatres. An applause-worthy act, indeed.

Reflect and plan for your new year 2020 ahead by considering the advice from our FRONTperspectives expert columnists. We have six topics this edition, followed by three insights from our publisher, editor, and guest columnist. Being informed is a mark of a leader.

The book reviews might remind you to take time to read a good book after the hustle and bustle. Or you might think about buying Kathleen Harvey Harshberger's *Etiquette Still Matters* as gifts (from our own local writer and former FRONT columnist). How thoughtful.

And then there is the packed FRONT'n About happenings as well as our two excellent sources of business intel—the Career FRONT (for keeping up with professionals and industries) and FRONT Notes, a recap of business that can give you insight for future developments.

End of year... a time of wrapping up, just as we've wrapped up content for you.


Tom Field



Ginger's
JEWELRY

We buy

- Diamonds
- Gold
- Platinum
- Silver
- Coins
- Brand Watches

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COVER STORY

The Business Side of [Local] Show Business

by Cricket Maiden



Cover photography of Chip Addison by Cricket Maiden.

66 Your office could be in the research center

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The region's newest co-working space at Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center is now open.

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DECEMBER



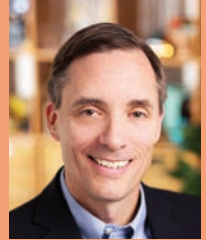
Beth Bell



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Kaitlyn Van Buskirk

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



Bruce Bryan



Dan Dowdy



Tom Field



Cricket Maiden



Gene Marrano



Tulane Patterson



Sherri Winesett

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

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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.

“Sometimes you jump through the hoop and everyone cheers. Sometimes you pee on the floor.

— Page 30

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Twitter: [@vbfront](https://twitter.com/vbfront)
Blog: morefront.blogspot.com

The Business Side of [Local] Show Business

The Business of Community Theatre >

Executive Summary:
*Volunteer-driven
community theater both
thrives and struggles to
stay afloat in the area.
We talk to some of
the players involved.*

By Cricket Maiden

Its opening night. The house lights go down, the spotlight comes on, the curtain comes up, it's showtime. That single moment is the product of countless preparation and planning, expenses, and a great multitude of "man hours."

So how much exactly does a community theater spend to make it that one moment? The answer can vary theater to theater, however, there are a few expenses that are consistent. Every theater must pay royalties to stage a certain play – unless they are so old they are in the public domain. That can amount to anywhere between \$75 per performance for a "straight play" (aka non-musical) to \$250 per performance for a very popular musical.

There is also the cost for each actor's script book (\$9-\$15); add in cost for materials such as wood, paint, and hardware for set design, printing costs for tickets, marketing budget, playbill and posters, makeup, lights, sound rental, costumes, props - the list can get quite lengthy depending on the production. Last but not least, there are the actors themselves. Therein lies the main dividing line between the "professional" or equity theater such as Mill Mountain that pays most of the individuals involved in a production, and a "community theatre," where those involved are volunteers.

"We have a wonderful group of people who donate their time" states Stevie Holcomb, a board member for Showtimers Community Theater, and a Realtor by day. "When you go see a play [here] you see on the stage your lawyer, your dentist, your realtors, local business owners. It's a passion that we have and want to share. You are seeing people that you know and are part of your community."

Even though the actors are not paid, it doesn't mean you



Gene Marrano

Attic Productions

get less of a show. "After a performance some people come up and say 'where are you going next?' thinking they are all professional actors, not [even] recognizing some of the people in the play," reveals Holcomb.

Showtimers is Roanoke's oldest continually running community theater. When they first began, performances took place on Roanoke College's campus in Salem. In 1961 Showtimers purchased their own building (a former church) and, over the years remodeled it into the performance house it is today. Since they have their own building, they do not have to pay rent as many community theaters do in order to use a school's theater or another public space. They also save by not having the expenditure of light and sound rentals since they were able to purchase it all (or have it donated) over the years. But buildings and equipment require constant maintenance and there is still the cost of royalties, sets and costumes. How do they pay for it all?

Most community theaters in this area are 501(c)3 Registered Charitable Not-for-Profit theater companies. Ticket sales only cover part of the costs, Holcomb points out, "the theater has 138 seats. Non-musicals run for 8 shows, musicals for 12 shows. We plan for the year. One [show] might have a large cast, another small. One might have a big set; another will have a small set. Everything has to balance. Musicals are very expensive to produce but they sell the best. We don't walk away with much, and sometimes we don't cover the expenses, but maybe we will make up for it on the next one."

According to a recent National Endowment for the Arts report, Showtimers is not alone. It states that earned income made up 52 percent of all nonprofit theater revenue. The remainder

Where to find community theaters in the region >

(all of these organizations have websites and/or Facebook pages)

Logos Theatricus Productions, Inc.

See website for performance location (typically Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church-Roanoke County)
Produce / perform socially relevant, meaningful entertainment in order to enhance life and better understand the human condition.

Off the Rails

302 Campbell Ave SE, Roanoke, Virginia 24013
Dynamic theater known for its daring productions that range from cutting edge, philosophical, modern plays to the classics of theater history.

Showtimers

2067 McVitty Road SW,
Roanoke, Virginia 24018
Roanoke's oldest continuously running live theater featuring musicals and more.

Star City Playhouse

107 South Pollard Street,
Vinton VA 24179
Produces a variety of plays in an intimate setting with emphasis on providing affordable theater for the community.

Fincastle

Attic Productions

7490 Roanoke Rd, Fincastle
Provides exciting live family entertainment

was mostly contributed. Individuals and foundations remain the biggest contributors to nonprofit theater—and theaters now rely on them for an even greater share of financial support.

Since shows don't always cover expenses, community theaters must get creative with other ways to bring in income. Holcomb says they raise funds with paid memberships, Playbill advertising and underwriting, and "if someone wants to underwrite a show - they get things like tickets and advertising during the show. We also get donations for something specific, like paving our parking lot one year."

Having their own theater means they can get even more creative with alternate means to raise money. Chip Addison, an Art teacher at Lucy Addison Middle School and the current president of the board for Showtimers, just finished spearheading a big campaign. "We sold the right-away for our land to a cellular company to generate some more money for the theater." That can go a long way for updating tech, building maintenance and more.

As a not-for-profit those involved usually end up wearing multiple hats. Addison's "titles" have included board president, director, actor, set designer, set construction, camp director and light technician. Being versatile means that is one less person they have to hire. "We pay music directors and choreographers but that is about it. We would like to turn a profit, but [as with] most theaters you are putting back all that you get." Addison also notes that "it's community theatre, we share the same people and prop pieces. If you

*Bedford***Little Town Players**

931 Ashland Ave., Bedford

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*Lynchburg***Academy Center of the Arts**

600 Main Street, Lynchburg

Endstation Theatre Company

2500 Rivermont Ave, Lynchburg

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Renaissance Theatre

1022 Commerce Street, Lynchburg

Productions from the classics to new works, Renaissance engages the community as both participants and audiences in outstanding artistic shows that inspire, challenge, entertain,

and most importantly, contribute to the vitality of the performing arts in Lynchburg.

*Blacksburg***Summer Musical Enterprise**

Haymarket Theater, Blacksburg VA

Strives to bring quality musical theater that can be enjoyed by the whole family

New River Valley Regional Theater

Produces plays, musicals, and The Pulaski Radio Show. Located in Pulaski, Virginia in the New River Valley.

Editors note: *see also the Two Muses and Three Spirits Facebook pages for information on upcoming Shakespeare plays they may produce in 2020 at various venues. Also note that several of these playhouses/theater troupes may not be operational in 2020 – including Off the Rails and Star City Playhouse. Check their Facebook pages for updates*

—List compiled by Cricket Maiden

gain experience at another theater and you can bring that to us, that is great.”

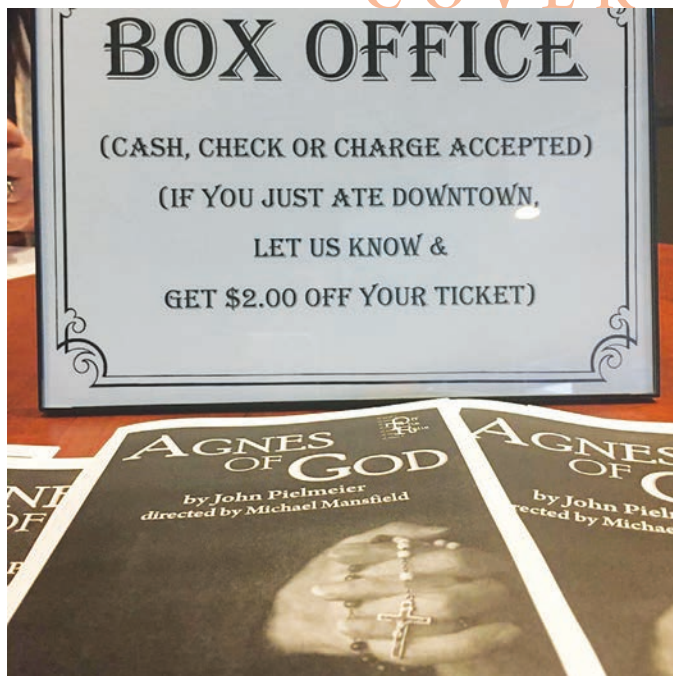
Such is the case with Patrick Kennerly, who has directed and acted in plays at Showtimers and other community theaters but is also a founding member of Logos Theatricus Productions. Logos Theatricus officially incorporated in 2007 with the help of Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church and focuses on producing socially relevant and meaningful entertainment, covering topics such as adoption.

Kennerly explains, “we began with self-funding. Founding members put their own money into the shows and the church put some money in it sometimes. Once we got rolling and incorporated, we decided to keep a ‘nut’ in the bank of about 6-8K. At the end of the production at hand, we try to keep that before we give the rest of the money to the charity.”

With the backing of a space such as Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church in southwest Roanoke County, which has some of its own light and sound equipment, Logos Theatricus is able to cut production costs by only having to supplement the equipment rental. This enables them to ask for a voluntary donation in lieu of a set ticket price. Despite not having a set ticket price, Logos Theatricus can often bring in a profit for each show, one they share with other non-profits.

Kennerly notes, “since 2011 we haven’t charged [a ticket price] at all. We just collect a love offering at the end of every show for a designated charity that is advertised





as part of the show and it's always related to the production at hand. We cover the expenses of the show, which range from \$2000-\$6000, and whatever is left over we donate to the charity. When we did *Song of Mark* in 2016, we designated the charity as the Dr. Robert L.A. Keeley Healing Arts foundation at Carilion." (Alas, Logos had to cancel a revival of *They Chose Me* last month when one of the lead actors was injured)

Community theaters help more than just charities, they even bring business to their surrounding neighborhood as well. Off the Rails, a smaller community theater that performs out of Community High School in downtown Roanoke, encourages their audiences to patronize local restaurants by offering a \$2 discount off ticket price for anyone who dined nearby. (Off the Rails, which specializes in more avant-garde adult dramas and comedies, has taken a hiatus that will last into 2020 as it reevaluates its mission.)

Another theater located right in the heart of downtown Vinton has helped increase evening traffic there as well: "the nearby restaurants have mentioned that they have seen an increase in business on show nights" states Marlowe Ferguson, who co-owns Star City Playhouse with his wife Karon Sue Semones Ferguson. He once taught a young Tommie Lee Jones some acting chops while Jones was at Harvard.

Star City Playhouse, a small 40-seat storefront theater, leases a building on South Pollard Street, where it stores all props and hosts performances. Ferguson and his wife have amassed quite a collection of costumes and props during their decades together, including sets and backdrops from his time working with on the *Muppets Show* building sets and with NBC. Eventually, they moved their theater from New York City to New Jersey and then on to the Roanoke Valley where it is today. The Vinton location is the third for



Star City since Ferguson and Semones (she's a valley native) came south from New Jersey.

Some individuals in the community are seeing the benefits of having the theater there. Ferguson revealed, "we have one child in our upcoming play that is autistic. His mother has commented how much of a positive change she has seen in him since he started with the theater. He has found a home, something he understands, better than I do possibly. It's just wonderful." The Star City Playhouse's commitment to their theater's home can be seen in their stated mission, "to have affordable art for those who maybe can't afford coming to a theater. Our goal is to serve the community."

Sometimes the drive to serve the community can come at a high price. Having lower ticket prices than say, a Showtimers means there is less money to pay for the things needed to keep a theater running. Just this year Star City Playhouse had to post on Facebook asking for assistance with making ends meet: "Oct. Bills... Electric 350, Water 55, Gas 50... thanks so much for helping." Yet despite their overhead, they still work hard to keep ticket prices low to make the theater accessible to all who would want to come. One thing is certain, in order to continue to serve the community, the theaters need the support of the community to survive. Note: there is a distinct possibility that a show this month could be the last for Star City Playhouse in Vinton.

Attic Productions in Fincastle is the theater with the largest seating capacity serving the area. With 284 seats there is a lot of overhead in keeping up with the cavernous building itself (so big, the actors must wear mic packs on stage), not to mention the lights and sound system, which must be upgraded from time to time. Wyatt Ewell, President of the Board of Directors notes, "we really rely upon the community. We count on donations." (Ewell is also on stage this month as the judge in *Miracle on 34th Street*; he's directed plays at Attic as well.)



Wyatt Ewell (on left)

Attic Productions has gotten creative with ways to help raise the extra funds by doing fundraisers related to current productions. "When we did *Alice in Wonderland*, we hosted a proper tea party for kids and their parents. It not only raises some money, but it builds awareness and can result in more ticket sales," Ewell continued.

Since ticket prices do play a major part in a theater's income, what will sell must be considered. Ewell reveals that "the play selection committee looks at the prices of play [licensing]. Musicals are the most popular. We generally only do one musical a year as they are many more times expensive - around \$7,000 upfront just to pay royalties, and to rent the music and score. Comedies are second only to musicals [in popularity]. We will do one comedy, one drama and the others are mixtures."

Community theaters can't just raise the prices of tickets in an attempt to cover costs. "If we raise the ticket price, [the play licensing company will] raise the royalty," notes Ewell. Thus, the need for creative fundraising and donations from the community it serves. Attic Productions has also supplemented their income with outside concerts staged there. "In some cases, we do a 50/50 thing where we agree upon a percentage of profits to go to either one of us. There are also organizations who have rented our space for local conventions and events," mentioned Ewell.

On top of providing entertainment to the community, creating a space for local businesses to host events, and opportunities for individual growth, community theater is an integral part of the area's arts and culture scene, one that includes equity theater (Mill Mountain; see the Good Work column elsewhere in this issue), several ballet companies, music venue, plus performance and the visual arts. A culture that is directly tied to community and economic growth. A recent study conducted by Americans for the Arts shows that the City of Roanoke's nonprofit arts and

Showtimers set design



NOW SHOWING >

Attic Productions

Miracle on 34th Street. December 5-12

Showtimers

Is He Dead? December 5-15


Renaissance Theatre, Lynchburg

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, December 6-12

Star City Playhouse

A Christmas Carol - A One Man play by John Hardy Dec 1-12

cultural organizations spent \$25.4 million during the fiscal year 2018-19. In addition to spending by organizations, the City of Roanoke's nonprofit arts and culture industry leveraged \$38.8 million in event-related spending by its audiences. As a result of attending a cultural event, attendees often eat dinner in local restaurants, pay for parking, buy gifts and souvenirs, and pay a babysitter.

Any way that an individual chooses to support local community theater can yield a return - whether as a source of entertainment, an engine for other local businesses (patrons who go out to eat before or after as show) - or even individual self-discovery as a performer. It's the business of show business. 





Patrick Perkins photography

Dr. Pepper Park

Blood, sweat, tears >

Executive Summary:

Tribute bands and team building have paid off for Waynette Anderson—the hard working, always smiling, on top-of-it music venue president of Roanoke’s Dr. Pepper Park.

By Gene Marrano

Dr. Pepper Park has a lot of, let’s say, character. The outdoor music and special events venue, which turns 5 years old in 2020, has a covered main stage located just beneath the Walnut Street Bridge. Inside the park to the left is the old trolley barn where in days of yore when such a mass transit system was in place (see the cool old photos of downtown Roanoke with all of those tracks crisscrossing city streets) this is where trolley cars were sent for repairs. Now it’s a refurbished space leased by Carilion – with Dr. Pepper Park using a second story, wide outdoor balcony as its private party, rentable “Skybox” for shows.

Then there are the concerts – music events featuring long time rockers like Tesla and Night Ranger this past season, and the signature Flashback Friday Series of tribute bands. It’s become the brand most associated with longtime local rocker (and friend)

Waynette Anderson, president of Dr. Pepper Park, who first created Sponsor Hounds after spending time selling spots for local radio, holding events like Woofstock and Wingfest at Elmwood Park.

Then Waynette realized she needed another space and worked out a deal with the folks behind The Bridges development. After some early grumblings from neighbors about the noise being generated at the park (bands have a strict 10pm cutoff) “its now imaged as a huge benefit to buy a house near Dr. Pepper Park.” Anderson formed an alliance with the Dr. Pepper brand in part because it used to be bottled right down the street in Roanoke; the soft drink is now celebrated every October 24 (as in 10-2-4 like the logo on the cans/bottles) in downtown Roanoke with Anderson and the local beverage distributor in the middle of that event.


First came Throwback Thursdays, which morphed into the more patron friendly, lets-kick-off-the-weekend-right Flashback Fridays. Tribute bands that look and sound like Tom Petty, Fleetwood Mac, Led Zeppelin, KISS, Prince (that was new in 2019) – and coming in May 2020 on the heels of the Bohemian Rhapsody movie – Absolute Queen. The shows are family-friendly, bring the pets and your lawn chairs. The new Rewind series next year will bring back some of the favorite tribute groups from the past 5 years. Craft beer and food trucks on site

help make it a complete night out, and yes, you can also purchase a Dr. Pepper soft drink.

"We've seen whole families dress up like KISS [at the KISS America shows], it's amazing," says Anderson, who lives on Bent Mountain with her husband when they are not in Florida at a newly purchased Gulf Coast house. I can personally recommend the Wildflowers Tom Petty and the Fleetwood Mac Rumours tribute groups – people of all ages know the words and there are plenty of singalongs up near the stage.

Anderson has also tried a movie series with vintage films, and other events like Wingfest and a cornhole tournament are still held at Dr. Pepper Park. Behind the stage by the way are several old industrial buildings that look like they have potential for redevelopment (that's being optimistic perhaps) – she envisions one big space as being made

over into an indoor meeting venue she could use in the colder months or during inclement weather.

What has Waynette Anderson learned over the past 5 years, or even from establishing Sponsor Hounds before that? (Her former Vice President Elliott Broyles now runs the City Market building.) "When you surround yourself with people that are smarter than you and know how to do things that you can't do – really build that team – you just all rise together." Don't let that flashy rocker-chick exterior fool you however: Waynette Anderson is one smart, media-savvy, music lovin' tough cookie. "We just all have so much invested in Dr. Pepper Park. Emotionally, blood, sweat and tears. To see everything be so successful over these past two years is just such a blessing." 

Keep up with Dr. Pepper Park announcements on their Facebook page or at drpepperpark.com.

Waynette Anderson with KISS America



Patrick Perkins photography



Disrupt yourself >


We've all heard of disruptive companies. Inc. Magazine (inc.com) defines disruptive companies as companies whose founders have "groundbreaking ideas – and ambitious plans for bringing them to market." Inc.'s Top 25 includes an app that lets you sell a house without a real estate agent (Opendoor), a financial service provider that lets you name your own price (Aspiration), and a company that makes vegan burgers for meat lovers (Beyond Meat).

Can this theory apply to you? It's really not the company that's disruptive, it's the person. How can you disrupt yourself? Start by being intentional. People who move between organizations are typically seen as job-hoppers. This has become more common with the influx of Millennials in the workplace. The key is to not zigzag randomly. Consciously choose experiences that are out of your comfort zone, will cause you to grow, and could lead to a new career trajectory.

Here are some suggestions for how to disrupt (reinvent) yourself.

1. What are your disruptive strengths? What can you do well that others don't? Once you've identified your disruptive strengths, begin looking for unmet needs within your organization that leverage those strengths.
2. Check your entitlement at the door.
It will make you work harder.
3. Define your own metrics – the metrics you are working on for your company are not your personal metrics. Have your personal evaluation cycle match that of the organization you work for to keep you on track.
4. We all know several people who have fascinating careers that have nothing to do with prior experience or college major. Seek out those people and ask them questions. Find out about the decisions they made that changed their path.

If you've reached a career plateau or don't like the next job in line, you should disrupt yourself. It could create a whole new future for you.

Bonus: There's a podcast by Whitney Johnson called "Disrupt Yourself Podcast." Listen to a few episodes to learn more about disruption. 

Professional Development

By Lesa Hanlin

Executive Summary:

Be your own change agent and disruptive force. Just use that power wisely to further your career.



CONNECT & UNITE



DEVELOP & EDUCATE



ACCESS TO TALENT



ROANOKE - BLACKSBURG
TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL
CONNECT • GROW • LEAD

Learn more & join: www.rbtc.tech

Turning that big idea into a small business – or more >

No matter what stage of business you're in or where you are in the Valley there's a business resource center that can help you get to the next level. I have shared a few below that you can stick in your toolbox.

CoLab & The Hive - If you need office space in the city of Roanoke or Vinton you can check out these co-working spaces. They offer shared space, private office space and conference rooms for creative thinkers, freelancers and entrepreneurs to gather and hold meetings. Virtual, part time or full-time memberships are available. <https://www.colabroanoke.com> and www.theadvancementfoundation.org, and entrepreneurs.

The Gauntlet - Virginia's largest business competition, based in Vinton. Over 100 companies participated last year and received help from community partners (including cash and in-kind services) to develop a business plan. They start taking applications in February. You can apply at www.theadvancementfoundation.org


Innovation Mill - If you're in the proof of concept stage, the experts at Innovation Mill can help you validate your business model and engage industry experts, higher ed, professional service providers, and community stakeholders. They take applications year-round and work with 5 clients at a time. You can go to www.theadvancementfoundation.org for more information and to apply. These businesses are considered "scalable" for major growth.

Libraries - Your local library offers resources that are free to you with an active library card, including live business workshops, online training resources such as Lynda (online business courses) and free access to Reference USA to build a targeted prospect list.

Offices of Economic Development - Your local office of economic development can be very helpful, connecting you with the right business resources and can guide you on zoning, licensing, small business tax credits, workforce incentives and more.

RAMP Accelerator - Its mission is to propel high-potential startups to expand and create jobs in the STEM-H fields. If you have a minimum viable product and want to scale your business, the accelerator on South Jefferson Street in Roanoke can help you do this by providing mentors, access to capital and key partners. They work with two cohorts per year. The next round of applications is due in Q1 of 2020. www.rbtc.tech/RAMP

SCORE - They provide free confidential mentoring, educational workshops and online resources to help start or grow a small business. <https://roanoke.score.org/>

Small Business Development Center - The SBDC provides professional business counseling, affordable training and informational resources. They assist small businesses, individuals purchasing or selling a business, not-for-profits, and startup entrepreneurs. <https://roanokesmallbusiness.org/>. You never have to feel lost in your business. These are just a few business resources that are available to help you grow. 



Small Business Tool Kit

By Sherri Winesett

Executive Summary:
It wasn't the case a decade or so ago, but there are now a handful of places in the Roanoke Valley to help nurture fledgling companies.

Sheri Winesett is Chief Innovation Officer for the Innovation Mill in Vinton and adjunct faculty for business & entrepreneurship at Virginia Western Community College. Reach her at sheri@sheriwinesett.com



Evan Lineberry working the board

Evan Lineberry, globetrotter >

Executive Summary:

He has to pinch himself sometimes but a Roanoke native with a love of music and an ear for good sound has his dream job and made a career of it in far-flung locales.

By Gene Marrano

Evan Lineberry may be the poster boy for what Roanoke wants to promote – a thirty-something native who left town but came home again, basing his career here as he literally travels the world, working the sound systems for musical artists of various stripes. The Patrick Henry High School graduate moved to Charlotte after spending some time at Virginia Western Community College, in part “because I needed to get out of the situations I was in.” He came back to Roanoke around 7 years ago - in part to take care of his young daughter with family support after a divorce.

Lineberry lived downtown at first when he returned to Roanoke and was captivated by a growing cultural scene that included the brewpub boom. Lineberry, who is 37 but could pass for 27, is a freelance audio

engineer who has worked locally (like FloydFest last summer and even at Elevation Church when in town) but he’s just as likely to be halfway across the country or around the world. Now various performers hire Evan Lineberry Productions “as a service provider,” to mix the sound and “it’s kind of skyrocketed.” He also does work for Norman Sound in Charlotte, where he first got into the business when he left Roanoke.

For several artists he works with, Lineberry says it’s a “white glove thing,” where the sound boards have already been set up for him and he just has to load a sound file program. Pop artist Jason Derulo is a steady client now; Lineberry was hired as his main man after filling in one night in Charlotte when they just clicked. “It’s all about connections,” says Lineberry, who did just that with singer/songwriter/actress Erykah Badu about seven years ago while freelancing in Raleigh, a relationship that endures. After that first show one of Badu’s people asked him “do you travel?” and the rest is history.

He’s also worked with The Jacksons, Sergio Mendes and one-offs with performers including 50 Cent. Last month he had a gig in Australia and New Zealand where Janet Jackson was the headliner. (50 Cent was part of that tour). In many cases he gets to rub elbows with clients; Derulo warmed up to him right away. The Jacksons called him “Tree” because of his height. Lineberry

casually mentions that he ran into Jermaine Jackson at the airport while working a gig in Bahrain not long ago. Then they chatted on the flight out. There's a statement few if any in these parts can make.


Lineberry tracks where he's been via an app – all over the US and more than 60 countries to date: Russia (Moscow) and Saudi Arabia are near the top of his favorite's list. He worked a concert during the World Cup soccer matches in Moscow, also spending time at Red Square and The Kremlin, the stuff of spy novels.

"I never thought I would ever be there." A Saudi Arabia concert was "amazing," and he's been to Dubai a handful of times with Derulo. "I feel like what I'm doing now is a once in a lifetime kind of opportunity." He's quick to give his wife, a Roanoke City school preschool teacher, kudos for her understanding as he globetrots. He keeps in touch with the family in real time via social media. Lineberry has turned down work in the past due to family considerations – like a Stevie Wonder gig – and he has eliminated most of his local work opportunities. The perk there: when not on the road he may be offline for several weeks.

A drummer himself in a band while in high school, Lineberry wrote out some goals for



Evan Lineberry

himself while still in his 20's – he wanted to travel the world, and "mixing" for A-level artists was at the top of the list. He's passing those life lessons about goals on to his now 13-year-old daughter. There will be ups and downs along the way – including some adverse situations you may put yourself in, but he adds, "stick with what you're passionate about." Lineberry isn't sure how long he'll continue at this current pace when it comes to travel, but for now he says, "I feel like I'm at a really good place." Wherever that place may be these days. 



Jason Derulo in Berlin



Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:

The key word you'll recognize is v-i-s-i-o-n.

Buts it's not just a buzzword, it's crucial.

2020 Vision >

With the year 2020 around the corner, I've seen my fair share of organizations use next year as a target for their large initiatives (20/20 Vision...get it?) It's a catchy way to communicate strategy and goals for next year, but few organizations do a good job of creating a clear vision.


A vision is simply a picture of a desired future. In other words, a vision is a vivid description of where you see your organization at some point in the future. Imagine the vision of a puzzle made up of hundreds of pieces and each team member is one piece of the puzzle. From any single piece it's hard to see the big picture or know where it fits into the puzzle.

When the big picture is clear to everyone, each team member will better understand where they belong and what their role is in the organization. Clear vision also enables team members to work together more effectively toward completion of the organizational vision.

Great leaders are totally focused on their vision. Not only do they think about it constantly, they are able to communicate it to their entire team in a way that is easy for them to see. Continually focusing on the vision helps your team understand and internalize it, and generates action.

Defining and communicating a vision is important at every level of an organization, not just at the top. Senior leaders should have a vision for the entire organization, but even small teams and their leaders should have a vision for their team. Do you know what the vision is for your organization? For your team? Does everyone know what it is?

Five years ago, I created an organizational chart of what I wanted my business to look like in 2020. At the time, it was only about 10-20% filled in. Today, it's 80% full and will be complete by the end of next year. I show the chart regularly to my team, and to every prospective new team member. When we all "see" the vision, we all know our role and where we fit into the puzzle.

Use 2020 to develop and communicate your 20/20 vision and engage your entire team in your vision for greater success! 

Send your questions or comments to Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com

“Great leaders are totally focused on their vision.”

Get your team in order >


Opportunities2Notice

Football teams have evolved their rosters through the years – just like baseball teams did years before. You have short yardage runners, nickel backs, receivers who only play on third downs, and kickers who are especially talented at nailing long field goals. (If you can kick a long one, shouldn't you be able to kick a short one even better?) They have specialists galore. The business-as-sports analogies can get old, but at times they are appropriate. You have a marketing director, or a marketing coordinator, or even a few people in your marketing department. That means your marketing needs are covered, right?

How to Address Them4Development

There are dozens of positions on a football team and, similarly, there are a lot of marketing specialties. No one person can have the necessary capabilities to handle all the various marketing needs – and typically even two or three fall short. That's where you find the gaps. The creative wiz who can brand and make eye-catching graphics may not have the expertise with the written word, or with media buying, or with managing a Google Adwords account. A web designer may not be as efficient as a website builder, or if they can do both of those things, there's a good chance they wouldn't be as good at maintaining an ongoing program.

And that doesn't even count video work, radio production, the creation of white papers, or direct mail – whether via the post office or the digital world. There is just too much for one or even a few marketers to master. Why try to fight it?

You wouldn't expect that third down receiver to toss the touchdown pass, and typically most coaches don't want their high-priced quarterback blocking defenders. In this case, the sports analogy works just fine. Ask for help with that out-of-the-ordinary project when you need it and be excellent at what you regularly do. It's a win-win. 

Bruce C. Bryan is the president of B2C Enterprises. Contact him at bruce@b2ccenterprises.com



Ask for help with that out-of-the-ordinary project.



A Little Insight

By Bruce C. Bryan

Executive Summary:
Head coaches take notice – review your roster to make sure the right players are in place.

Hope Cogen and best friend, Spartacus





Happy to learn >

Executive Summary:

High Hopes Dog Training serves a growing and diverse two-legged to four-legged customer base in the Roanoke Region.

By Tom Field

"I became obsessed with dogs."

And so, we have the story of Hope Cogen's business. The origin of High Hopes Dog Training doesn't get any more complicated than that. But building that enterprise (and indeed, her passion has evolved to the top of the chain in the Roanoke region) was hardly a simple process.

But wait! Don't say "chain." Words like that — chain, prong collar, dominance, shock collar, alpha, aversive — make Hope Cogen cringe. That's the second part of this business story.

High Hopes Dog Training is the most prevalent training operation in the local market; and it's all based on behavior modification and positive reinforcement.

Is the scientifically backed rewards-based system the reason High Hopes has become the most popular service, attracting more "students" and expanding class offerings since the business moved and opened in Roanoke a decade ago in 2009? Perhaps. The most adamant dog lovers are all about keeping their best friend's tail wagging.

But Hope says other methodologies using punishment and forced compliance are actually making a bit of a resurgence in our area. Some trainers adhere to the idea of "breaking the spirit" and subverting a dog to his or her master as quickly as possible; and some pet parents see that procedure as an old but tried-and-true practice.

"But that is exactly what it is—OLD," Hope says. "That is the way dogs were trained many years ago. Now there are different, more effective ways to train a dog. A dog is a treasured member of the family, and they should be treated as such. You wouldn't choke or pin down any other individual you love in order to teach them something."

"Most dogs are very happy to comply," she says. "They just need to be taught what to do! It is important for us to understand that we are often teaching our dogs to go against their natural instincts. When someone is banging (knocking) on the door of our house, it is a dog's natural response to be protective of the home and family. Then, once they realize that the banging is coming from a friend, it's natural to bounce around in excitement."

By using positive reinforcement (shaping the dog's behavior and then rewarding him or her for doing the right thing), you can get your dog to, for example, sit on his or her dedicated mat off to the side of the door when people arrive. The reward is then getting permission to greet the guest.

See how that works? Just one example, but one of many that Hope has compiled and modified and perfected to build the popular training outfit.

Can't get enough >

Mindy Conley (and her best pal, Luke) are quite studious when it comes to training with High Hopes. "I have no intention of using the therapy certification [for formal assignments]," she says about her most recent registration, "but I've already signed Luke up for it [Therapy Dogs program]. I like taking every opportunity to reinforce Luke's good manners; and that also includes behavior around other dogs—not just people."

Luke, an American Staffordshire Terrier, was adopted from the Regional Center for Animal Care & Protection (RCACP) and Mindy says High Hopes Dog Training was a perfect fit.

"Hope is excellent, really," she says. "She's knowledgeable about dogs, but also people. The training is fun, but beyond that, I like that it doesn't involve punishment. Instructors Hope and Candice use positive reinforcement; they demonstrate appropriate interactions between people and their dogs; and I've been very pleased with the training, both group and individual.

"Hope runs a great service."

Luke attended High Hopes Dog Training group classes, the "GObedience" program,



Luke displays his CGC certificate as proud
Mindy holds the ribbon.

private training, got his CGC Certification (Canine Good Citizen) and is headed to Therapy Dogs next.

He's a model alumnus.
Doggie diploma and all.

Puppy Phase

Interesting fact: Hope Cogen didn't grow up with dogs.

The first dog arrived in Hope's life when she was in her 20s. Shadow wasn't exactly the ideal choice for a first-time dog owner. The poor pup had serious separation anxiety and could not handle thunderstorms at all. Quite unfortunate, because Hope lived in South Florida.

To help Shadow, Hope began researching what to do. A teacher at the time with a degree in elementary education, she began digging more and more into the behavior and psychology of dogs. She became obsessed with learning everything she could; and then she volunteered to help out a dog trainer.

Her obsession took over. And it didn't take long.

"I decided to quit teaching and go into dog training," Hope says, emphatically. This was in 2000. It was a risky move since, at that time in South Florida, the telephone book yellow pages were full of dog training services. Nevertheless, Hope knew she was going to open her own practice; and from the very beginning she put into practice the positive reinforcement, force-free training methodologies she still employs today.

"All of the resources we provide for our dogs can be used as rewards. That way, we set up a system called 'Learn to Earn.' If your dog wants food, a walk, a belly rub, a yummy chew, a game of tug, etc., they have to earn it by doing some 'work' first. Constant correcting is pointless. Your dog doesn't know what else to do. That is your job as the dog parent. The result is a well-mannered dog."

Hope believes that this kind of training creates

a bond, a partnership in which you and your dog enjoy working together.

Sun to Star

In 2009, Hope and her family moved from the Sunshine State to the Star City of the South. From Florida to Virginia, four states northward, over 900 miles. The trek was the easy part. And in many ways, so was the decision, as she preferred diversity of seasons, mountains, and loved the down-to-earth people she met in the Roanoke Valley.

But you don't just hook up your business to a leash and casually trot it on over to a new market. Not when it's dog training. Those customers and referrals aren't a pack that comes with you.

"It was like starting from scratch... all over again," Hope says.

The Roanoke market, it turned out, was very receptive. There were (and are, of course) other dog training outfits; but Hope gave herself a goal of six months that had to involve her husband, Michael's vocational goals as well (a difficult long term "commute"). Along with her son, Ari, the family came first, even as they had to manage this entrepreneurial

High Hopes Dog Training instructors Candice King, Hope Cogen, and Sandy Evans with Candice's pal, Mazy.



Training options: let us count the ways >

High Hopes Dog Training offers a wide variety of training and instruction. And the timeline of the business shows a programming lineup that is constantly evolving. Dog owners/pet lovers want choices, Hope understands, and her service is the most flexible and pervasive in the Roanoke market. High Hopes also manages the exclusive contract with Roanoke County; offering courses at Brambleton Center in the southwest quadrant and Green Ridge Recreational Center in northwest. The current schedule includes the following programs:

Group Classes

- Puppy Kindergarten
- Beginner Obedience & Good Manners
- Intermediate Obedience & Problem-Solving
- Canine Good Citizen (CGC) Certification Course
- Therapy Dog Course
- GObedience

Private, In-Home Lessons

Specialized Programs

- F.E.T.C.H. Day Training Program
- Dog and Cat First Aid & CPR
- Out-and-About and Collaborations with Animal Support Organizations

For an up to date listing, visit www.high-hopes.net



pursuit while setting up their new home.

"We moved in Aug of 2009, and I got a part-time job as a preschool teacher. I got my first High Hopes client three weeks later and by January of 2010, I had enough High Hopes business to do that full-time and quit the preschool job."

Hope's perseverance paid off.

Her business model is like life with dogs. Challenges... rewards. Quick learning... long-time process. Sometimes you jump through the hoop and everyone cheers. Sometimes you pee on the floor.

Hope has a soft spot for rescue dogs, especially pitbull-type dogs.

"Rescued dogs aren't damaged," she says. "They are just like any other dog... better, in my opinion! They are appreciative because you're giving them another chance at life. We all deserve second chances. With patience and understanding, we can almost always work through issues a rescued dog might come with... all breeds, all ages, all sizes."

When looking to add a dog to the family, Hope encourages people to visit local shelters first.

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"There are so many wonderful dogs in shelters that need families," Hope adds.

The Cogens adopted their Staffordshire Terrier Mix, Spartacus, when he was about 18 months old. Seven years later, not only is Sparty a beloved family member, he is also a Canine Good Citizen and an ambassador for rescued dogs and pitbull-type dogs everywhere. Hope admits to being a bit obsessed with Spartacus and bully breeds in general.

Obsession often means going overboard with something. But that intensity is going to be required if you intend to run your own business. Or strongly favor a well-behaved dog.

And who doesn't appreciate hearing those words more often in our community?

"You're a good dog. Yes, you are!"



FRONT

High Hopes Dog Training pre-selects and recommends merchandise that "passes the test" for quality, and makes it available at classes.

THE LEA'S HIGH SCHOOL WINTER CLASSIC JAN 11, 2020 BASKETBALL CHALLENGE

If you donate a Winter Essential item (coat, gloves, hat, scarf, etc.) to go to those in need, you will receive a voucher for a FREE popcorn or FREE soda to use at this event or a future Berglund Center event.



The goal of the Winter Classic is not just to showcase local talent, but also to serve as a reminder of the great resources focused on strengthening members of the community. Tickets will be general admission for \$10.

Game Schedule

12:00pm (County Cup)

Cave Spring HS vs
Hidden Valley HS

1:45pm

North Cross HS vs
Roanoke Catholic HS

Mayor's Cup

3:30pm

William Fleming HS vs
Patrick Henry HS
(Girls)

5:15pm

William Fleming HS vs
Patrick Henry HS

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FiftyCentLove Photographie

Mindful Business

By Beth Bell

Executive Summary:

Time to take stock as 2020 approaches fast in the rearview mirror – where is your business right now? And yes, there's math involved.

Calculating the ROI on your Networking Efforts >

2019 is coming to a close. It's a time to celebrate successes and envision your goals for 2020. I'm not a resolutions person but I always spend time at the end of the year to reflect on what went well and the things that didn't. I use those reflections as a catalyst to strategically plan my new year. I think it's safe to say that most of us value our time above anything else. How I spent my time and how I feel about how I spent my time – ironically – is always an area that I spend a lot of TIME on when setting goals and action plans for the new year. Networking and building strategic business relationships easily costs more in time than money and you should consider reviewing your return on these activities at least annually.

First things first. You need a system for tracking where your business comes from and the dollar amount of business received. An organized and easy way to do this is to add the specific groups you are in, members of your center of influence, chamber memberships and events you regularly attend as sources in your CRM (customer relationship management).

You should have at least two categories itemized:

1. Revenue received directly by someone you meet networking, including any residual referrals received as a result of this connection.

For example, if you sell a life insurance policy to John, a member of your weekly networking group, the value of the commission from that sell is a direct return on your investment in that group. When John refers you to the human resources department of a local business and you write 10 policies for that group, that commission is a generational result of your membership in the networking group and relationship with John.

2. Revenue received by referrals continuously passed, usually by your circle of influence.

Having this type of system in place will not only help you figure out how much your return on networking is, but also help you easily identify which products and services results in the highest returns.


Cost. The main cost of networking is the time you spend at events and building relationships. Although I prefer building meaningful connections with a close circle of business partners, I still think there is value in referral groups, the business networking circles that usually meet on a weekly basis and are obligated to pass business among and to the other members of the group. (We will talk about best practices for choosing this type of group in a future article.) One of the costs associated with this type of group is the 6-10 hours a month you'll spend attending the group. Something to consider, a study from Ivan

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

Misner, Founder of BNI (Business Networking International), showed that the longer you participated in a networking group, the higher the number of referrals and dollar amount you'll see. The chances of receiving more than 100 referrals doubled with each passing year and the likelihood of receiving a referral valued over \$1000 was more evident after 4 years.

In addition to time, there are membership fees, the cost of meals, coffee and entertainment and the cost of doing business with others to consider. Now that you know how much you earned in business and what the associated costs are, you can do a quick formula to determine ROI.

$$\frac{\text{Income from referrals in one year} - \text{Cost of networking over one year}}{\text{Cost of networking over one year}}$$

When determining your ROI on networking keep in mind that the financial return takes longer to see than traditional business expenses. However, that time will significantly decrease if you focus your time on relationships and strategic alliances. 

Beth Bell is President of FemCity Roanoke, a 300+ member business networking community for women. Connect with Beth at Roanoke@femcity.com

“ ”

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Roanoke's Equity Theater has a long history >

It all began in 1964, when two New York producers came to Roanoke, Virginia and established a summer theatre in a vacant resort inn. Initially, it was called Mill Mountain Playhouse, but over the years the company underwent a series of institutional changes. When the original playhouse burned down in 1976, the company moved to Grandin Theatre. From these humble beginnings grew one of the most respected regional theatres in the United States. Today, it is known as Mill Mountain Theatre, a wonderful nonprofit working out of Center in the Square.

The organization's mission is "to inspire, entertain, enrich, educate and challenge audiences of Southwest Virginia through high-quality, professional theatrical productions and experiences," and many agree that it does just that.

Good Work

By Kaitlyn Van Buskirk

Executive Summary:

Our cover story this month is on local community theater groups – all volunteer, no one gets paid. Now the other side of the coin – Roanoke's Equity theater, where the lead actors are often paid visitors from places like New York City.

Mill Mountain Theatre presents world premieres, dramatic classics, full-scale musicals, youth-oriented classes and educational classes for all ages. Last year alone, Mill Mountain Theatre held 222 different arts related events. These events included performances, concerts, education courses, and summer camps, all of which were produced locally. Over 1,200 actors, directors, designers, musicians, artists, and stage technicians were employed by the theatre. General audiences reached close to 25,000 people, of all different ages and backgrounds.

Mill Mountain Theatre Conservatory, which began in 2015, also held 26 multi-week courses and nine one-week summer camps, teaching over 500 students various theatre skills and workplace disciplines. The MMT Conservatory has also developed a multi-year focus of children's outreach productions that will perform plays with literacy sources to encourage reading.

Throughout the years, Mill Mountain Theatre has made a profound impact on our community and its culture. This holiday season, as you look for community activities, include the joys of live theatre in your plans. The Sound of Music will be performed from December 4th to December 22nd at Trinkle Mainstage. It's a great way to support your local theatre and have a jolly good time in the process! 



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Chris Copenhaver and Patrick Henderson

Cathy Benson

Keeping America safe >

Executive Summary:

At Protos in Botetourt County, they call themselves the Uber and AirBnB of security.

By Cathy Benson

Protos Security is the largest provider of security guards in the United States. The company started by Christopher Copenhaver and Patrick Henderson is located in Botetourt County at Daleville Town Center. It began in 2006. Henderson described the company, "We are like the Uber and Air BnB of security guards. It is a 24-7 computerized system." On the local level they won a Business to Business Roanoke Chamber of Commerce Award several years ago.

They have a software platform and their

own software developers for the retail loss prevention industry that has guard vendors, but it is the Protos Security computerized system that keeps the company moving. There are over 4,000 vendors to handle the hiring of guards but Protos does all of the billing and follow work through their data system. Some of their well-known clientele includes Walgreens, Lowes, Car Max, Family Dollar, CVS and Ulta (a beauty chain) to name a few. The system is nationwide.

Josh Wilson is the marketing and creative director for the company: "we recently merged with Security Resources International out of the Northeast this past late summer. We are all on the same page and a one stop shop for over 500 retail companies." Both companies are committed to continued success and ease in the management of security guards says Wilson. The two were a good match, with Protos Security using state of the art technology and SRI focused on a hometown, personal approach.


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Wilson and Henderson work out of Daleville, while Copenhagen is in Charleston, SC. There are two people in the Northeast office. Henderson gave a real time example of how it all works. Using a dial-in reporting system just like a security guard would use, he reported a test that popped up on a huge screen in the conference room. An employee of the company, one of many that work out of their home, answered the call through the computerized system. In a real-life situation, he would take all of the facts of an incident at a retail business from the security guard who made contact.

The home-based employee would create a report from the information to be placed in a manager's hand at the retail outlet within ten minutes. It would detail what happened, so the manager could make an informed decision on the next step. Wilson said, "We do not encourage our guards to create an altercation within a situation. Most of how it would be handled comes from the client and if an illegal action, with law enforcement involved."

In a large room full of employees sitting around a table, each with double computer screens, the group of employees manage the timeliness of guards reporting to work, absenteeism and more. For instance, every day these employees are scheduling future assignments so that all positions are filled at the customer businesses. They provide 125,000 guard services per week. Billing, (interestingly, they bill by the minute,

another reason punctuality is important) and other primary business concerns like timekeeping, data analytics, and budgeting are performed as well. Screened and vetted security guards are also part of the Protos system. Copenhagen said, "From the very beginning we believed there was a better way to reduce program costs, capture valuable data and improve the accountability of guard teams."

This is what Protos believes to be their strengths in a full range of loss prevention services: security that never stops with around-the-clock support client account managers, dispatch teams and call centers. Guarding expertise that comes from managing both direct and vetted guard service. Industry leading guarding technology that streamlines the security guard, management and virtual check in process. The largest best-trained guarding network in the industry they claim.

In the future Protos will expand into other areas using cameras in Live View. Lowe's in some of its national outlets already has the Protos Live View coverage. At the headquarters in Daleville, a separate room of employees handles the Live View at Lowe's outlets. The Protos staff can even speak to the individuals in a parking lot or garden center area via the camera. The market for Live View has increased as technology advances. "Look for a part two in our endeavors," said Wilson. We have more planned in the future." And it seems Protos Security is watching. 



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What to do when you're offended >

In so many ways, our business journal here is a safe zone.

We primarily report on business happenings and the individuals behind them. Occasionally, a business we feature comes with some controversy. Now and then, particularly in our FRONT Notes section, we'll place a notice about a layoff, an embezzlement, an environmental fine or citation, a consumer or community protest.

But for the most part—the huge part—the FRONT is a resource of positive news, if not advocacy for community progress from business, organizational, and economic impact.

We've been told over and over again, you like that about us. You appreciate the differentiation from a media outlet with a mission to advocate—or, in simpler terms—tell a good story.

We're comfortable with that, even as we are often tempted to jump up on a soapbox. And indeed, we get to vent a little from time to time in this very section here... our reviews and opinions (and editorials).

For example, you can't argue it would make compelling news to list something like "business leaders we love to hate." We could showcase the notorious slumlord, the manufacturer who wants no trespassing from greenways and such, the robocaller whose actions stimulated statewide regulation, the developer who stripped the side of a mountain, and the franchise owner who sued a wildlife preserve. (All real people here, "newsmakers," if you haven't already guessed.)

We've trifled a time or two with such mentions... such as in our "Definitely NOT in the FRONT" feature; but we don't typically address these activities as part of our standard articles or staple of lineup. Without being too Pollyannaish, we do give credence to the power of positivity, and that a rising tide lifts all boats—not to mention that adage my momma (and Thumper) oft-reminded us: if you can't say somethin' nice, don't say nothin' at all.

When we do bring "problems" to light, I'd still like to show multiple perspectives. Even if I—or my entire readership—is overwhelmingly on one side of the matter, if you only point out the one view or universal belief you feel supported or offended by, guess what? You'd be better off not reporting on it at all. The view you don't espouse will dry up and blow away if you give it no attention.

It's funny how people deal with ideas and issues they don't like. I try to be as open-minded as I can be; but I have to

continued on Page 41

On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:


A person or organization does something that really grinds your gears... what do you do about it?

The long, long corridor with a slight dog leg left >

A first-ever State of the Corridor address initiated by Roanoke County officials led off early last month with an update by Dr. Michael Friedlander, executive director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, on the economic impact of the about-to-double-in-size complex on the Virginia Tech Carilion campus in Roanoke. (He put it at \$500 million annually right now). The future goals are anything but modest: “we try to focus on a couple of areas that can make a difference in the world,” said Friedlander, who also spoke about a handful of business spinoffs that have come out of the FBRI, and the possibility of a new incubator that could be built there to nurture even more startups that are being hatched with research. “You have to get the word out,” said Friedlander about what’s going on there.

Roanoke County officials also described what they call the other end of a corridor that starts at VTC: the Reimagine 419 Town Center Plan. The county hopes to lure those in school or working at the VTC campus to southwest Roanoke County to live, shop and dine once the area around Tanglewood Mall is redone. Friedlander can envision that 3-mile long corridor between the two anchors – once bike lanes, sidewalks and more healthy eating options are in place for starters; right now, he calls it “challenging.”

The County actually initiated the State of the Corridor event at the South County library, describing a 419 Town Center that might attract researchers, students and staff from the VTC campus a few miles away. It “seems like a natural connection,” from the Medical School-Research Institute to the Tanglewood Mall area (once it is truly reimaged and rebuilt); “think ahead of the curve,” added Friedlander. The Reimagine 419 Town Center Plan was approved by Roanoke County in July but could take decades to finish – starting with much needed roadwork on 419/Electric Road that includes adding another southbound US 220 lane and sidewalks/bike lanes.

Carilion Children’s is remodeling the old JC Penney store into a consolidated outpatient center. That might seem like an odd choice for a Reimagined Tanglewood Mall but Roanoke County Economic Development Director Jill Loope can show you a trade magazine article that details how the medical center-mall mix is a thing elsewhere as big box stores (Sears for one) go the way of the Dodo bird. County planner director Philip Thompson ended the State of the Corridor with this question: “how do we work with the city [of Roanoke] to make those connections [to the VTC campus on South Jefferson],” and to make the entire corridor “more walkable, more attractive?” That is indeed the question. 



Gene Marrano

There’s something happening here

By Gene Marrano

Executive Summary:
Roanoke County wants in on the buzz surrounding VTC campus.



Retirement planning: for your parents and you >

"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now." — *Alan Lakein, author*

Jodie got a call at work from her mother. She had fallen at home and was in pain. She could not stand up. Jodie called 911. At the hospital, after an examination, she was told her mom had a broken hip. She needed surgery and would then be sent to a rehab facility for several months. Jodie was not prepared for this. Things were very busy at work. But she had no choice but to take charge.

The above scenario is sadly not too uncommon. Taking care of our parents is not part of our agenda, now or later. But if you are fortunate enough to still have living parents your time will come. The truth is, most seniors do not die unexpected at home. Most decline over time, with complications, and long-term difficulties. And their adult children are expected to assist in this journey, whether they want to or not.

According to the AARP Public Policy Institute the average senior needing care is a 69-year-old female. The care is provided by a daughter averaging 49 years old. That daughter will provide 24.4 hours of unpaid time a week caring for mom (or dad) for over four years!

I tell adult children of older parents, please talk to them and be prepared. Make sure all the legal work is up to date. Then consider a three-part plan everyone can agree with.

First part of the plan to consider is where they want to live; first while independent and then when they need assistance. Most seniors want to live at home. If so, consider the layout of the home. Is one floor living possible? Is the bathroom accessible for a wheelchair and the bath safe with grab bars? Reduce all tripping hazards. Is the kitchen safe? Is there an emergency response system in case of an accident?

You should consider if a rehab facility or nursing home stay is needed at some point. Go on-line and check the reputation, past quality of care, ratio of staff to patients. I always recommend a facility that is closer to you. The more convenient the greater chance you will visit. Patients with regular visitors almost always get more attention.

Secondly, who will manage the care? Will this be a family member? Is there someone else the family wants involved? Make sure all legal documents reflect these decisions. Someone needs to agree to be the go-to person.


Finally, how will this be paid for? Is there long-term care

Guest Commentary

By Tulane Patterson

Executive Summary:
Retirement is not only a significant chapter in one's life, it's a much longer timeframe and more complex than ever.

insurance? Know what the policy includes. Is there cash? Is there enough, and do you have access? Are there other options to pay for care. Care can be costly. Consider every option.

If you are blessed to have an elderly parent, you should consider the future. Have a plan, communicate the plan to everyone involved. And be prepared that this will NOT be easy. But being ready will make decisions easier and reduce not only stress but potentially the costs as well. 

Field / On Tap

from Page 38

admit, when the unoriginal—and what becomes practically obligatory—labels start getting tossed around, I can ignore them and move on. Too predictable.

Consider these two approaches, on nearly opposite sides from each other:

Mr. D.G. experiences an activity he doesn't like. He posts on social media, interviews with local television news, and demands disciplinary action.


Mr. Z.W. experiences an activity he doesn't like. He posts on social media, interviews with local television news, and invites the offenders to share their polarizing views.

Both reactions are a little extreme. One threatens and shames and attempts to halt the beliefs or practices deemed inappropriate for our society. One encourages dialogue and engagement even if it means the beliefs and practices deemed inappropriate for our society are allowed to continue.

Which response actually advances our society?
Which offers improvement in a more expedient fashion?

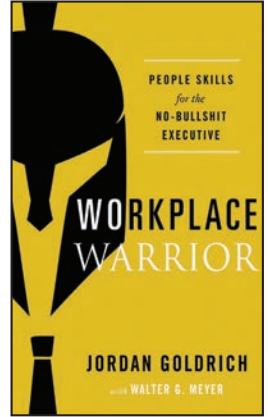
A non-extreme measure, like we often employ here at the business journal, would be to allow multiple perspectives, while at the same time, not rewarding the truly polarizing viewpoints with elevated media coverage.

For the record, Mr. D.G. and Mr. Z.W. are college students. I admire their passion, even as I am far more intrigued with the potential of Mr. Z.W.'s course of action—an immensely more difficult task.

It reminds me that there are times...
we need to be extreme. 

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



Better boss

Bosses with bad people skills are at risk of losing more than admiration from those around them. Fostering a “hostile workplace environment” is a one-way ticket to a pink slip, but the very thing that makes some execs so abrasive can actually be channeled into a superpower for the good of the company.

Workplace Warrior (Greenleaf; 2019) by Jordan Goldrich has been hailed by #1 New York Times bestselling author Marshall Goldsmith as providing “a unique perspective on executives who get labeled as abrasive or as bullies.”

This book is for you if you've ever worked for a boss who's an “impossible” (and who hasn't?) and for those abrasive bosses who need to learn how to inspire their teams to do great work.

—Trish Stevens

numerous publications and lives, naturally, in Burbank, California.

Raftery weaves interesting tales about the often very slow process that can take years before some studio is a) interested in the script, and b) willing to pony up the money for financing. 1999 saw the release of films including *Fight Club*, *The Matrix*, *Star Wars Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (yes, the Jar Jar Binks movie, sigh), *Boys Don't Cry*, *Three Kings*, *Eyes Wide Shut* and the *Blair Witch Project*, to name a handful.

Raftery calls 1999 “the most groundbreaking year in cinematic history,” and *Best. Movie. Year. EVER.* features more than 100 interviews with actors, directors, “troublemakers and revolutionaries.” You can make your own decision on where 1999 lies in the pantheon of great filmmaking years. Raftery makes a pretty good case for the final year of the last century.

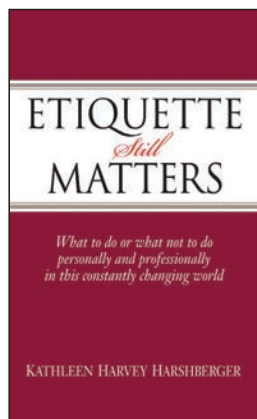
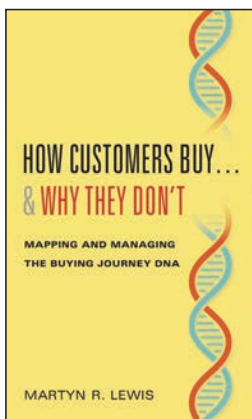
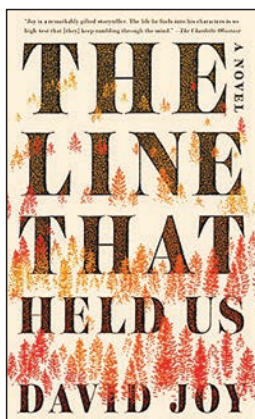
—Gene Marrano

A very good year for cinema buffs

You may disagree with the general premise put forth in *Best. Movie. Year. EVER. How 1999 Blew Up The Big Screen* (Simon & Schuster, 2019) but it was a pretty good year for those that like to sit in dark public places and watch flickering images on big screens. Author Brian Raftery writes about film, TV, music and internet culture (that's a thing?) for

Mountain meanness

Though no literary triumph, I was held by *The Line That Held Us* (Penguin; 2018) due to David Joy's level of detail and guy-talk. When he's describing life in deep Appalachia, you instantly pick up he knows what he's talking about when it comes to guns and tractors and clapboard houses and the decaying of felled life. Mountain vigilante justice cliché aside, our narrator is most



adept at painting the picture of each action. The voice is not bad on the emotional side, either, as characters aren't too melodramatic, matching the condition and environment at hand.

Our conclusion was a bit rushed, following the last climax; but the possibilities were realistic enough, and we wanted to see what happened next—the essence of telling a good tale. Growing up, most of us were told to respect the law of the land, but then incidents happen where we begin to question whether relying on authorities is truly the best route. How life works in the microcosm known as Appalachia (even today) sometimes seems to live up to the cliché. Or as one character puts it, “Some people were born too soft to bear the teeth of this world. There was no place for weakness in a world like this. Survival was so often a matter of meanness.”

Okay, there are slivers of literary prowess.

—Tom Field

When logic is overrated

Think of the last time you made a big decision. What did your gut tell you? Studies show people have a hard time making decisions solely based on logic. According to entrepreneur Martyn R. Lewis in *How Customers Buy... & Why They Don't* (Radius; 2918), the only way to succeed in business

and sales is to understand the emotional factor.

“When sellers gain a deeper understanding of the emotional aspects of buying decisions, the buyer's or client's behavior is predictable and very human,” Lewis says. The book discusses ways to use emotion for success, knowing your audience, the emotional effect of your product or service, and cultivating trust.

—Mallory Campoli

Engaging and instructional

After personally knowing Kathleen for many years, I couldn't imagine how she could bring the same energy to her book, *Etiquette Still Matters* (Berryfield; 2019) as she does in person! I was wrong! This book is an excellent read that engages the reader by combining humor and etiquette knowledge. Who says an etiquette book should be stuffy and serious? Not Kathleen Harshberger! Once you read it, I promise you will buy at least two more for gifts for people of all ages from 8 to 80!

—Holly Cline

The reviewers: **Gene Marrano** is a Roanoke news reporter and editor of FRONT; **Trish Stevens** is a publicist from Friendswood, TX; **Tom Field** is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; **Mallory Campoli** is with a publicity firm in Cherry Hill, NJ; **Holly Cline**, Ph.D., is the chair of the Department of Design at Radford University.

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“When you surround yourself with people that are smarter than you and know how to do things that you can't do—you just all rise together. — Page 19



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'Homebrew'Do >

Blacksburg's **BrewDo**, held Oct. 26 at Virginia Tech / Corporate Research Center park, included its traditional Homebrew Competition (among the craft brewery tastings); **Justin and Carrie Cox** (above, with custom Star City Growler and BrewDo director Diane Akers) won "Best of Show" for Drink Your Vitamins fruit beer base and 18A American Blonde Elderberry among 53 entries. They get to brew and serve at Three Notch'd Brewing Company in Roanoke. Other 2019 winners included **Dennis and Chris Stevens** (1st place; light); **Steve Lusk** (1st place; amber); Beth Durham (1st place; specialty).



FRONT

Reading in a mansion >

Kathleen Harvey Harshberger reads from her book, *Etiquette Still Matters*, the evening of Nov. 6 at a packed Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery champagne reception in Radford, hosted by **Jack and Sandy Davis**. Her anecdotal illustrations of etiquette practices throughout history and civilization were both whimsical and instructive, accompanied by book snippets on topics from dining, to men's neckwear, to "phubbing."



Art, packaged >

About 400 attended the 15th Annual **Women's Luncheon at The Taubman Museum of Art** on Nov.19 which honored **Judy Tenzer** and **Yvonne Olson** (arts and culture advocates) as well as featured a keynote address by **Mitchell Kaneff**, CEO of Arkay Packaging, who did an excellent job tying in the visual components of packaging to the current "POP Power: The Art of Attraction" exhibit at the museum. Kaneff showed examples of art from as varied subjects as Van Gogh and Ed Hardy (they both liked to depict skulls) to Warhol, and said he especially enjoyed working with creative directors on merchandising. The goal in his business, is to "feel connected," he said, and nothing does that better than art.





More details on RU expansion >

Radford University, the **Radford University Foundation** and the **City of Radford**, has announced plans to build a hotel in close proximity to campus at the intersection of Tyler Avenue and Calhoun Street. Four existing structures will be demolished to make way for the hotel (first mentioned in last month's issue), which will include 125 rooms, a conference center, a rooftop restaurant, and on-site parking. Radford University President Brian O. Hemphill says, "the hotel will provide amenities not available at current area hotels and a proximity to campus that cannot be matched."



Roanoke River inspired art >

Virginia Tech Professor Emeritus of Art **Ray Kass** lives along the Roanoke River – except when he's in New York City every few months getting his fix ("you can't work anymore in New York [as an artist]" he laments about that uber-hyper metropolis). His wall-sized new exhibition at the Taubman Museum of Art reflects his love for the outdoors. *riverrun: New Works by Ray Kass* runs through April 11, 2020. His technique for these giant watercolor works includes sycamore bark pieces, smoked paper, beeswax and, well, go give it a look. He opened the show with an artist talk last month.

Meadery up and running >

Dr. Stephen Ausband won a number of awards for his home-brewed mead over the past few years, but once he outgrew the kitchen, he searched for a place to ferment the honey-based beverage that some associate with the Vikings of yesteryear. Ausband settled on the old Dr. Pepper bottling plant on McClanahan Avenue in Roanoke. (His wife Ginger was also happy to reclaim the kitchen at home). **Atheling Meadworks** is now selling several versions of mead every Saturday from 1-6pm and also via their website. Atheling Meadworks products are also available at Barrel Chest on Electric Road. Ausband, an ER physician at Carilion Clinic and an Air Force Reserve doctor, says a tasting room may be in the offing down the road.



Cave Spring High School construction >

Roanoke County School Board members, superintendent **Dr. Ken Nicely**, along with spokesmen for Spectrum Design and Avis Construction, showed off progress on the 40-million-dollar makeover of **Cave Spring High School** last month. Its “old bones” remain but basically it will look like a new school when it opens late next year, with more natural light, state of the art labs, wider corridors, a new media room, outdoor spaces for students, etc. The project should be entirely under roof by mid-December.



One less GoFest day this year >

Rain washed out the last of three days for the annual **Go Outside Festival** in Roanoke, but officials with the Roanoke Outside Foundation report that mid-October's GoFest was still a success. One sign of that: despite prepping for crowds expected up to 40,000, vendors were selling out of food and other items before GoFest's second day was over. GoFest spotlights outdoor equipment vendors and area recreation amenities, along with Frisbee-catching dogs, BMX bike stunts and other crowd-pleasing demos.



Black Dog 20th >

Black Dog Salvage celebrated its 20th anniversary last month with an all-day open house at their 13th Street SW location in Roanoke. It started with humble beginnings in 1999, when co-founder **Robert Kulp** says he met **Mike Whiteside** "over a construction project" and a one-off salvaging of the last house standing in what was downtown Roanoke's Orchard Hill neighborhood. "We had forklift, a truck and a black dog," recalls Whiteside ... and it's been an exciting weird ride ever since." In 2003 came a move from the original Franklin Road location; followed by an in-house marketplace, a second warehouse and the DIY Network **Salvage Dawgs** show that has now made Black Dog Salvage a tourist attraction. "We had an overnight success after 12 years in business and suddenly Salvage Dawgs comes along and the opportunity to spread this all across the country," says Kulp.





A new (used) car donation >

Roanoke City Public high school students at the **Roanoke Technical Education Center** now have a more recent, updated vehicle to work on after Magic City Ford-Lincoln donated a 2013 Ford Fiesta to the program. Magic City Auto Group Chairman and CEO **Cameron Johnson** (at right) was on hand for the presentation. That Ford Fiesta has around 60-thousand miles on the odometer. Johnson dabbles as an internet investor when he's not selling cars. He's also on the ROTEC board and a Roanoke City High School graduate. Johnson said having a newer vehicle to work on is better than a donated 20-year-old outdated clunker. "There's a major shortage of technicians. We want to do our part to train and help train [more students] and get people interested in learning. We wanted to give them something that would show the technology on newer vehicles."



Historic house rebirth >

Restoration Housing has cut the ribbon on a third historic property, this time the former **Villa Heights Recreation Center** in northwest Roanoke that had been vacant and fell into disrepair over the past decade. Roanoke City sold it to Restoration Housing, run by Isabel Thornton, which spent around \$800,000 to restore the former Compton-Bateman House to its past splendor. Tax credits will cover a good deal of that cost. It will be used as a community center with low cost office space for non-profits. The Humble Hustle and LEAP for Local Foods are already in place, along with anchor tenant Kingdom Life Ministries International. Restoration Housing has turned two historic homes elsewhere in the city into affordable apartment spaces and is working on a third house in southeast Roanoke.



Between three ferns >

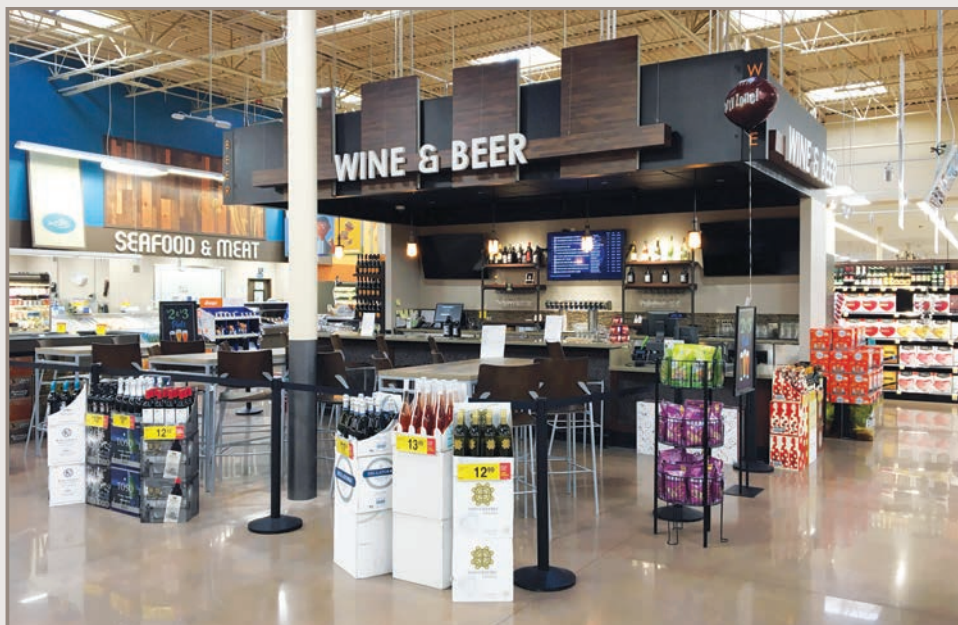
Roanoke College presented another Henry H. Fowler Distinguished Public Speaker Program on Nov. 12 under its “Can We Talk” subject of civil discourse and democracy. **Jen Psaki**, a political commentator with CNN said it’s no secret that “cable networks wants conflict” as it makes good ratings, and continued saying “in a weird way, Trump has done a service” [with how he changed White House briefing room protocol] because it actually expanded press coverage. **Howard Kurtz**, a Fox News media critic pointed out how giants in social media have changed policies on political advertising as “Twitter says ‘no ads’ while Facebook says ‘all ads’” but they’re not going to police them. He also said “despite the animosity between the president and media, he has been incredibly accessible... more than any I’ve seen,” and that behavior “balances out the demise of briefings.” Both speakers expressed concern over polarization and the decline in civility. The College’s Bast gym held a robust crowd of mostly seniors on a bitterly cold evening.



Parkway volunteers >

The National Park Service honored volunteers who have made significant contributions to the preservation, protection, and enjoyment of the **Blue Ridge Parkway** at its VIP luncheon on Nov. 7. Over the past year, 1,380 volunteers contributed over 48,000 hours of service. Recipients of 2019 Blue Ridge Parkway Volunteer Awards included: **Latane Long** from Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway – Humpback Rocks Chapter; **Virginia Ward** – Rare Plant Monitoring Volunteer; **Nelson County Master Gardeners** - Humpback Rocks Farm; **Christ School** – Pisgah District Maintenance Projects; **Craggy Rovers** – Craggy Pinnacle Trail; **Linda and Bill Taylor** – Johnson Farm.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Kroger makeovers >

Two **Kroger** stores in the valley cut the ribbon last month on a total of \$7.2 million in renovations. The Daleville location has new self-checkouts, a new floral shop and upgraded seafood and meat display cases. Meanwhile the Hardy Road Kroger in Vinton now has a Starbucks and is the second location in the valley with a beer and wine growler bar. "Having these grand reopenings coincide with our 90th anniversary in Roanoke feels right," said Kroger mid-Atlantic spokesperson Allison McGee. In addition, employees at the two remodeled stores selected four local non-profits at each location to receive a \$500 donation at the ribbon cuttings.



Unique exhibition, unique artist >

Paintings, antique furniture, items rescued from old homes - **Hunt Slonem** owns 7 historic mansions from New York to Louisiana - Beyoncé shot the music video for Lemonade at one of them. The first thing you'll notice when walking in to Slonem's "Huntopia" exhibit at the Taubman Museum of Art - paintings of bunny rabbits - lots of them. There's also a local flavor to Huntopia - Black Dog Salvage, the Taubman itself, the Salem Museum and local collectors of Hunt Slonem works also contributed to the exhibition that runs through March 2020.

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



Fairley

Freedom First Credit Union has promoted **Richard Fairley** to Business Intelligence Manager and founding leader of the new Business Intelligence Division. Fairley has been with Freedom First since 2014.

After one year in the Accounting Department, he transitioned into Finance and was most recently the department manager.

Bank of Botetourt has hired **Susan Larkin**, Assistant Vice President – Treasury Services. Larkin has over twenty-five years of banking experience and will focus on growing relationships with the



Larkin

Bank's commercial lenders and business bankers, traveling around the region to meet with clients. Larkin is also current president of the Board of Directors for the West End Center.

LEGAL FRONT

The American Bankruptcy Institute (ABI) has recognized **Brandy M. Rapp**, a Roanoke-based Partner with Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, as a "40 Under 40" Emerging Leader in Insolvency Practice. The program recognizes insolvency professionals who are committed to "the highest standards of achievement at

work and in their communities." The honorees will be recognized at a special ceremony during ABI's 2019 Winter Leadership Conference, taking place this month. Rapp handles clients in bankruptcy cases, complex business litigation and business transactions.

Kevin Byrd, Executive Director of the New River Valley Regional Commission (NRVRC) has been named President of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for a one- year term through October 2020. Byrd has been executive director of the NRVRC in Radford for ten years. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) for ten years. NADO member organizations serve local governments and the public within their regions through

various programs focused on diversifying local economies, assisting businesses, creating jobs and providing community services.

EDUCATIONAL FRONT



Deisinger

After almost a decade as an academic advisor, **Maureen Deisinger** is now the assistant director for partnerships and affiliations in the Global Education Office. Deisinger will oversee Virginia Tech's student exchange agreements and activities as well as its partnership with the International Student Exchange Program. About 120 of the nearly 1,500 Virginia



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Hanlon

Alexandra Hanlon is now director of a new effort in the Virginia Tech College of Science, the recently launched Center for Biostatistics and Health Data Science. The Center is tasked with providing a statistical and quantitative support base for faculty, researchers, clinicians, and students throughout Virginia Tech's health and medically related research fields. Launched earlier this year, the program is based at the Virginia Tech Carilion Health Sciences Campus in Roanoke.

Have a career announcement?

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



DaSilva

A former Virginia Tech professor who is now at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, will lead the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative as of March 2020. The CCI is described as higher education and industry experts working to build an ecosystem of cyber-related research, education and engagement, designed to position Virginia as a world leader in cybersecurity. **Luiz A. DaSilva** spent 17 years at Virginia Tech.



Peterson

Virginia Tech professor of agricultural and applied economics **Everett Peterson** was recently named a Global Trade Analysis Project Research Fellow at the 22nd Annual Conference on Global Economic Analysis, held in Warsaw, Poland. Peterson joins a select group of researchers focused on enhancing the project's simulation model, which is used to assess the potential impacts of proposed trade policies.



Jandreau

Scholarly Integrity and Research Compliance (SIRC) has named **Cristen Jandreau** as director of the Conflict of Interest (COI) Program at Virginia Tech. As the newly appointed director, she also serves as the university conflict of interest officer. The program oversees the university-wide process for disclosure of outside interests and identifies where research conflicts of interest exist.

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Career FRONT



Gehrt

Katie Gehrt has joined the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech as its director of marketing and communication, leading the marketing, communication, and patron services operations. Gehrt had been serving as the director of marketing at NewCity, a full-service digital agency. During a previous tenure at Virginia Tech,

she served as communications director for the College of Architecture and Urban Studies and assistant director of communications and marketing for the Division of Student Affairs.

Shari Whicker has assumed the role of assistant dean for faculty development at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine in Roanoke. Whicker will direct all faculty development efforts within the medical school. Whicker will also continue leading the Teaching Excellence Academy for Collaborative



Whicker

Healthcare (TEACH), which serves the medical school, Carilion Clinic, and Radford University Carilion.

SENIOR FRONT

Friendship has announced the appointment of **Susan Painter** as director of admissions and



Painter

marketing at Salem Terrace at Harrogate. Salem Terrace at Harrogate is a retirement community managed by Friendship and located in Salem. Painter has over 25 years of marketing experience, the last 11 focused on senior living.

Erin McCoy is now the Director of Admissions

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McCoy



Davis

for Friendship Health North, and **Ashley Davis**, LPN, is now Director of Nursing for Assisted Living, the

result of two recent internal promotions at Friendship. In the past several months a Friendship says they have “completely revamped our vision and mission statement and has had team member input lead the way.”

NON-PROFIT FRONT

Profiled here just a few months ago, **Michelle Darby** has left the position she took earlier this year as executive director for the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce and has



Darby

now joined United Way of Roanoke Valley as Vice President of Resource Development.

MUNICIPAL FRONT

The Town of Christiansburg has hired **Craig Hatmaker** as the information technology director. Hatmaker brings



Hatmaker

more than 30 years of experience in information technology to the Town. A Virginia Tech graduate, he worked as director of management information systems for Roanoke County and had a long stint in private industry.

*Compiled by
Gene Marrano*



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FRONT Notes

VWCC gets thumbs up

Virginia Western Community College has received initial accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) for its Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing program. That came after a "comprehensive and rigorous review process for more than two years," according to VWCC.

Another craft venue closes – for now

A Roanoke craft brewer will close but another one – reportedly a home brewer - will soon take its place. **Soaring Ridge** says it is selling a Shenandoah Avenue building and brewing operations to a local group. The statement says they will re-open after a full remodel.

Volvo Trucks suffers temporary setback

A United Auto Workers strike at a Mack trucks plant in Maryland resulted

in 3000 temporary layoffs at the **Volvo Trucks** plant in the New River Valley (profiled here in October for all those new jobs that are supposed to be on the way over the next few years). The Maryland factory produces engines and transmissions that are assembled in Dublin. The walkout was short lived and Volvo workers in Dublin are back at work.

More IT jobs forecasted

The Valleys Innovation Council released a report last month that forecasts more than 1,250 new jobs being created in the next 18 months, in IT and software-related fields in the Blacksburg-Roanoke region. It's the result of a new employer survey. The VIC report says the new jobs are being created by more than 40 companies that range in size from fewer than 10 employees to some of the largest regional employers

VMT gets another sweet ride from Volvo

The Virginia Museum of

Transportation has received another donation from the Volvo Trucks' New River Valley assembly plant in Dublin. The 2007 Ride for Freedom Volvo VNL 670 model is now on display at the VMT. The one-of-a-kind truck honors U.S. military personnel taken as prisoners of war or missing in action (POW/MIA) through imagery from Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Also included are the words, "All Gave Some ... Some Gave All." The truck will be featured near the front entrance of the downtown Roanoke museum.

Big plans on drawing board for RU

Two ambitious projects were announced by **Radford University** president Brian Hemphill during his annual State of the University last month: a multi-story hotel across from the school (with rooftop restaurant) and development along the New River that would help brand Radford as

a river campus, with recreational and cultural amenities.

BT is the best

Blacksburg Transit System has been named the 2019 Outstanding Transit System in America by the American Public Transportation Association. BT (featured in our September cover story on the incoming Virginia Tech freshman class) is the 4th largest system in the Commonwealth. Over the last three years ridership is up 22 percent.

Two Roanoke Authors release new books

Roanoke author **Tim Smith** wrote the novel *Star Sharks: Beneath A Swift Sunrise*, a Lord of the Rings King Arthur style novel in 2017 as a way to cope with his mother's brain cancer diagnosis. Smith, a schoolteacher and college track coach, says he was able to channel those emotions into his characters, forming a bond. A trilogy is



A Mission of Quality Service, Excellent Support and Advanced Technology

Citizens began with a vision, a need for communications in rural America. From the front steps of the Floyd County Court House evolved what would become Citizens Telephone Cooperative. From that February day in 1914 to today, the mission to provide quality service, excellent support, and advanced technology remains steadfast.

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planned. Meanwhile local historian **John Long** has resurrected the true story of a Roanoke County 1891 murder that attracted plenty of local and national attention. It's the murder of Susan Watkins, and trial of her husband Charles -- an African American with a white lover in the segregated south. The book is titled "Murder in Roanoke County".

New jobs in the Hill City

CloudFit Software will bring 139 more jobs in the first three years of operation in its new location in the circa-1931 Art Deco building next to Monument Terrace in Lynchburg - the iconic Carter Glass Building that has been vacant for 12 years. The projected economic impact is \$69 million.

Iconic building sold

The First Federal Building on the corner of Church Avenue and 1st Street SW in downtown Roanoke has been sold to Kalyan Hospitality

for \$3.1 million. Kalyan is exploring options to renovate the property for a new downtown hotel or for offices space. The glass-and-steel First Federal Building was originally constructed in 1958. Current tenant Pinnacle Bank will move next year to a new headquarters on Campbell Avenue.

HUD funding for apartment complex

Berkadia, a joint venture of Berkshire Hathaway and Jefferies Financial Group, has secured financing for Foxridge Apartments, a multi-family property in Blacksburg. The refinancing loan deal involves almost 43 million dollars in loans through HUD. Foxridge has been home to Blacksburg residents and Virginia Tech students since the mid-70's.

Starr Hill expanding

Starr Hill Brewery, based in Crozet, established a location on Roanoke several years ago and has now set its sights

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.

on the Hill City. Starr Hill announced it would be opening a brewery and taproom in downtown Lynchburg by early 2020. A 5-barrel brewing system will be housed at 1300 Main Street and will feature local collaborations as well as small batch brews only available in the Lynchburg.

Kudos for VWCC expansion

The expansion project that added 8000 square feet to the Claude Moore Education Complex - home to the **Virginia Western Culinary Arts Program** on Henry Street (named for late restaurateur Al Pollard) - has received an Award of Merit within the Contextual Design category from the American Institute of Architects Virginia

chapter. The expansion added three state-of-the-art teaching kitchens to the program as well.

FloydFest 2020: Vision Quest

Tickets and camping passes for **FloydFest 2020** (July 22-26) next year are now on sale. FloydFest CEO John McBroom says the 2020 Vision Quest theme is also a play on 20-20 as being a benchmark for ideal vision. It signifies a look back and a look ahead as well says McBroom. Among the early announcements of who will appear: Grace Potter, Leftover Salmon, The String Cheese Incident, Andy Frasco & the U.N. and last year's People's Choice Award winners from the On the Rise series, Downtown

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FRONT Notes

Abby & the Echoes. See FloydFest.com for more details.

Props for The Branch Group

The Branch Group, Inc. has been recognized as a top contractor by Engineering News-Record (ENR) and Virginia Business magazine. Roanoke-based Branch is ranked No. 249 on the 2019 ENR Top 400 Contractors list and No. 25 on ENR's list of Top Contractors in Transportation: Highways. The rankings are based on 2018 construction revenues. Branch was also named the 5th largest general contractor and 24th largest private company in Virginia Business magazine's 2019 edition of The Big Book, which ranks the state's largest companies by industry sector. Branch was the only company in Southwest Virginia to make the largest private companies list. The rankings are based on billings from 2018.

Where to bring your hemp

The first commercial hemp processing plant in Virginia will be located in southwest Va. **Appalachian Biomass Processing** in Wytheville will invest almost \$900,000 and create 13 jobs over the next few years. The company plans to purchase and

process more than 6000 tons of Virginia-grown hemp, valued at more than \$1 million, over the next three years. Governor Ralph Northam was on hand to make the announcement in Wytheville, saying, "hemp production opens up a wealth of opportunity to bring new jobs and new business to Virginia." A network of hemp processing plants throughout the Commonwealth is seen as vital to reduce transportation costs incurred by industrial hemp farmers, who are expected to start planting a crop seen as having a lower profit margin.

Legal firm recognized by U.S. News

Spilman Thomas & Battle (Spilman), based in Charleston, West Virginia, has been ranked as a 2020 "Best Law Firm" by U.S. News - Best Lawyers in 61 areas of law. That includes a number of high marks for its Roanoke office in the following categories: Banking & Finance Law, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights / Insolvency and Reorganization Law, Corporate Law, Financial Services Regulation Law, Public Finance Law and Trusts & Estates Law.

Let the kids play

The Wonder Universe: A Children's Museum, has opened at the New River Valley Mall.

Wonder Universe features hands-on exhibit areas including farm to table, veterinary clinic, dental office, a builder's toolbox, and a 16 ft fire truck – Engine #3, among others. Additional interactive play spaces include an infant/toddler area, art and maker space and Amazing Air Play, a pneumatic airway exhibit that allows guests to study the power of air. Sarah Nucci, the museum's executive director, says, "not only are the current exhibit areas fun and new but we will soon have engaging programs to complement them."

More good news for Luna

The third quarter for Roanoke-based **Luna Innovations** was very good. The fiber optics manufacturer posted total revenues over 18 million dollars - up 72 percent from the 3rd quarter in 2018. CEO Scott Graeff says it marked the eighth consecutive quarter of double-digit, year-over-year growth in revenues for Luna

Major boost for computer science degrees

The Commonwealth of Virginia will help 11 Virginia Universities and Colleges create 31,000 computer science graduates over the next 20 years. Virginia Tech has pledged more

than 16,000 bachelor's and master's degrees towards that total; Radford University around 400. The "Tech Talent Investment Program" was also linked to the HQ2 Amazon development in Northern Virginia by the Governor's office. Virginia Tech could receive almost \$550 million dollars over a 20-year period under the program's terms.

Virginia's Blue Ridge scores big

Roanoke was recognized as the large (75,000+ population) "Top Adventure Town" by online voters in the 9th annual Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine survey. Hot Springs was voted the top tiny town, and Clifton Forge is the top small town. Hiking, biking, gathering spots like brewpubs and other cultural/outdoor amenities were all part of the mix. "The Virginia Mountains Region boasts some of the most spectacularly beautiful and charming destinations in the world. This region is a playground for outdoor enthusiasts, boasting unparalleled views and a multitude of outdoor adventure options," said Rita McClenny, President and CEO of the Virginia Tourism Corporation in a release with the survey results.

Compiled by
Gene Marrano

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“It’s really not the company that’s disruptive, it’s the person. — Page 20

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“Russia and Saudi Arabia are near the top of his favorites list. — Page 23



If you donate a Winter Essential item (coat, gloves, hat, scarf, etc.) to go to those in need, you will receive a voucher for a FREE popcorn or FREE soda to use at this event or a future Berglund Center event.



The goal of the Winter Classic is not just to showcase local talent, but also to serve as a reminder of the great resources focused on strengthening members of the community.
Tickets will be general admission for \$10.

Game Schedule

12:00pm (County Cup)

Cave Spring HS vs
Hidden Valley HS

1:45pm

North Cross HS vs
Roanoke Catholic HS

Mayor's Cup

3:30pm

William Fleming HS vs
Patrick Henry HS
(Girls)

5:15pm

William Fleming HS vs
Patrick Henry HS



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