

# Valley Business FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE  
BUSINESS JOURNAL**  
ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION  
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## Aqua Culture Man

Dustin McCarty,  
Ridgeline Aquatics

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# WELCOME to the FRONT

Our FRONTlineup this month offers a veritable smorgasbord of occupational pursuits. We have a fish tank coral supplier, chemical solutions calibrator, vehicular wrapper, computer repairman, and a filmmaker. Even our FRONT'n Abouts move between an award-winning chef, gongster (not gangster), college professor, party loyalists, dentist, construction workers and home systems installers, chamber members, and an iconic popstar.

Like a wonderful candy assortment in that box of chocolates you might acquire on Valentine's Day, you can pick whatever strikes your fancy. Or eat it all up.

Enjoy.

  
Tom Field

“Turn knowledge  
into action.”

— Page 14

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#### DEPARTMENTS

# 8



**Ridgeline Aquatics 8**

**Inorganic Ventures 16**

**Sun Solutions 26**

**Brambleton/Vinton 34**  
**Computer**

**Chloe Shelton, 40**  
**Film Lab**



#### PERSPECTIVES

Professional Development 14

Financial Figures 15

Legal 22

Business Operations 38

A Little Insight 39

Good Work 43



#### REVIEWS & OPINIONS

On Tap from the Pub 44

Letters 45

Guest Commentary 46

Reviews 48



#### FRONTLINES

FRONT'n About 50

Career FRONT 56

FRONT Notes 60

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# Valley Business FRONT

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## FEBRUARY



Michael Abraham



Brian Bongard



Keith Finch



Rachael Garrity



Obinna Morton



Michael Shelton

## 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**



**Lesa Hanlin**



**Mike Leigh**



**Ashlyn Markland**



**Dan Smith**



**Nicholas Vaassen**

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 42.

## 2019 Members

**Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)  
**Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)  
**Nicholas C. Conte** Carilion (Legal)  
**Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Finance)  
**John Garland** Garland Properties (Development)  
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**Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)  
**Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)  
**Mary Miller** ACI (Tech/Industry)  
**Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)

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

“““  
 I would  
 take my  
 own blood  
 and look at  
 it under a  
 microscope.

— Page 16

“““  
 The small labels  
 you choose  
 actually are a  
 pretty big deal.

— Page 39

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Duncan - green

## Coral in the tank >

### Executive Summary:

*Ridgeline Aquatics raises coral for a more sustainable future for ocean life.*

By Obinna Morton

Picture this.

You're visiting the top aquarium in the region. You're excited. You waltz over to the Pacific Reef exhibit and are wowed by the wide array of aquatic life, many sizes, shapes and colors. As you adjust your eyes, you realize that the marine life exists against a polyped multicolor backdrop of coral—greens, purples, reds, browns.

While fish and other kinds of marine life have their place in popular culture, an air of mystery surrounds coral, a marine invertebrate.

Coral live in the ocean. In aquariums, coral is used for

# COVER STORY



**Dustin McCarty** admits he was "half excited, half scared" to play our "AquaCulture Man" on our FRONTcover, but we think he took command and made quite a splash. Knows how to hold that trident, for sure.

ornamental purposes. The growing importance of sustainable practices in recent years has led to the introduction of new methods to obtain coral for aquariums, outside of disrupting the ocean reefs to acquire it.

Enter Ridgeline Aquatics, which sells tank-raised coral to reef-keeping hobbyists. Also referred to as aquacultured coral, tank-raised coral provides a more ethical and sustainable alternative to obtaining coral from the ocean. Tank-raised coral is also already adapted to a protected environment like that of an aquarium.

"You don't have to go through that initial adaptation



Acropora - blue with green tips



Acropora - green rose



Reef vase

that things from the ocean go through—and we're not impacting the ocean at all," says Dustin McCarty, who started Ridgeline Aquatics in 2017 in a small facility in Vinton.

Introduced to growing coral when he was 12 years old by his father, McCarty developed a passion for the hobby, and delved further into growing coral after reading the *Book of Coral Propagation* by Anthony Calfo. McCarty worked in an aquarium store after high school and studied biology at George Mason University. After college, he taught high school biology. With a change in career path, he decided to quit teaching and focus on his passion for growing coral.

"I decided that I didn't want to teach anymore and wanted to make a positive impact environmentally. I thought, 'What about this business idea?' I had been thinking about it for so long that it just fit," he says.

McCarty is currently the sole employee of his startup, growing many species of coral such as the colorful *acropora* and honeycomb-like *favites*. Ridgeline Aquatics provides coral to home aquariums across the country and prides itself on a well-adapted, pest and parasite-free product.

Setting up a reef tank to grow coral requires specific



conditions: water flow, water quality, lights, trace elements and nutrients, which must be carefully controlled. "As weird as it sounds, coral actually consume some fish waste for nutrients. If you don't have enough fish waste in the water, you'll end up with pale, unhealthy coral," McCarty says matter-of-factly, with a hint of mirth.

McCarty focused primarily on growing coral the first two years in business because of the time needed for coral to grow and mature. *Acropora*, for example, grows at max, one inch per month.


When pruned, coral grows more quickly, he says. *Acropora* grows like branches on a tree. "I can snip off one branch and glue it to a rock. Then where the original branch was,



Green and orange chalice

several more will begin to grow and the original will grow as a separate colony,” McCarty says, speaking to coral’s regenerative properties.

Ridgeline Aquatics also recently added custom tank installations to its roster of services. As the company grows, McCarty envisions a larger facility with tanks to showcase the variety of the company’s coral, and provide educational opportunities to those in Vinton and beyond.

“Ultimately my hope is to have a larger space to give people a place to visit and see what’s going on. I like to educate—it’s the teacher in me coming out. I’d like to have a spot people can learn about coral, learn about aquaculture, and learn about what it is going into reef tanks. That’s my dream,” he says. 



## Overcoming the knowing/doing gap >

This column is inspired by a classic business book, *The Knowing-Doing Gap: How Smart Companies Turn Knowledge into Action* by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton (2000). The premise of the book is simple. We all know what we should be doing, but are we actually doing it?

We know we need to watch our diet and exercise, but are we? We know we need to be saving for retirement, but are we? We know we need to write a chapter a week on our new book but are we? This is the knowing-doing gap.

How do we overcome this in our businesses and in our lives? There are several ways to narrow this gap.

## Professional Development

By Lesa Hanlin

**Executive Summary:**  
*Here are three steps to ensure you are taking positive action.*

The first is to **prioritize**. Most of us have to do lists. Maybe we choose what things to do based on what is more enjoyable or takes less time. If you prioritize your list by which activities would most benefit your business, you'll find business development at the top of the list and ordering office supplies at the bottom. Is it more important to have a perfect web page or to visit clients? This is up to you, but prioritizing will give you control of the list and a better focus.

Second is remembering **it doesn't need to be perfect**. We can get stuck reworking tasks and that ends up being procrastination. You don't have to know everything. Taking more time to research, ask, and think results in being stuck as well.

Last, **take action**. It is the most important step of all. The technique I use is to just start and work my way around. Desk full of piles? Work your way around. Article need written, get started then edit. It's important to **just do the work**. Talking about something does not count as doing something about it.

There could be some fear here. To move your business or your personal goals forward, you have to reduce your own knowing-doing gap. Turn knowledge into action with these steps and before you know it, you'll have that book written and that business growing strong.

“You don't have to know everything.”

## Three biggest cost risks for retirement >

Back in the olden days not so very long ago, you could depend on a comfortable retirement furnished by an employer you had loyally served for decades. They'd replace your paycheck with a pension when you hit that age milestone beginning your Golden Years. Add Social Security to that monthly sum and most had comfortable savings to enjoy for however long life lasted after work.

Companies don't provide pensions anymore. Social Security isn't as secure as it used to be, particularly for those planning on retiring after 2034 (see last month's Financial Figures column). That's the year the Social Security fund is projected to be insolvent. Add another oxymoron to your "Civil Servant" and other heavily government-oriented irony list.


The biggest retirement costs today are health care, inflation and taxes.

Hands up here for a moment. Do you think health care costs will rise? What about inflation? And those pesky taxes? Granted these are kind of "duh" contemporary questions. Most would log in with a "yep" to all three. Want to bet against those odds? How about some ocean front property in Arizona?

You still can be savvy about planning for your future. Buy the pension income and invest the rest.

Let's say you need \$4,000 in monthly income to enjoy your current standard of living. You figure you'll see \$2,000 from Social Security. Now's the time to make a smart plan for generating that extra \$2,000 a month.

Assume you've been a frugal saver and have \$400,000 in your 401(k). You're maxing out employer contributions on this, right? A wise financial advisor should be able to find a company that can provide that best pension income for you for about half that. You can invest the rest in an IRA that has tax benefits either as a ROTH with no tax consequences in the future or a tradition account that eliminates taxes now on income you pay on later. It's gravy.

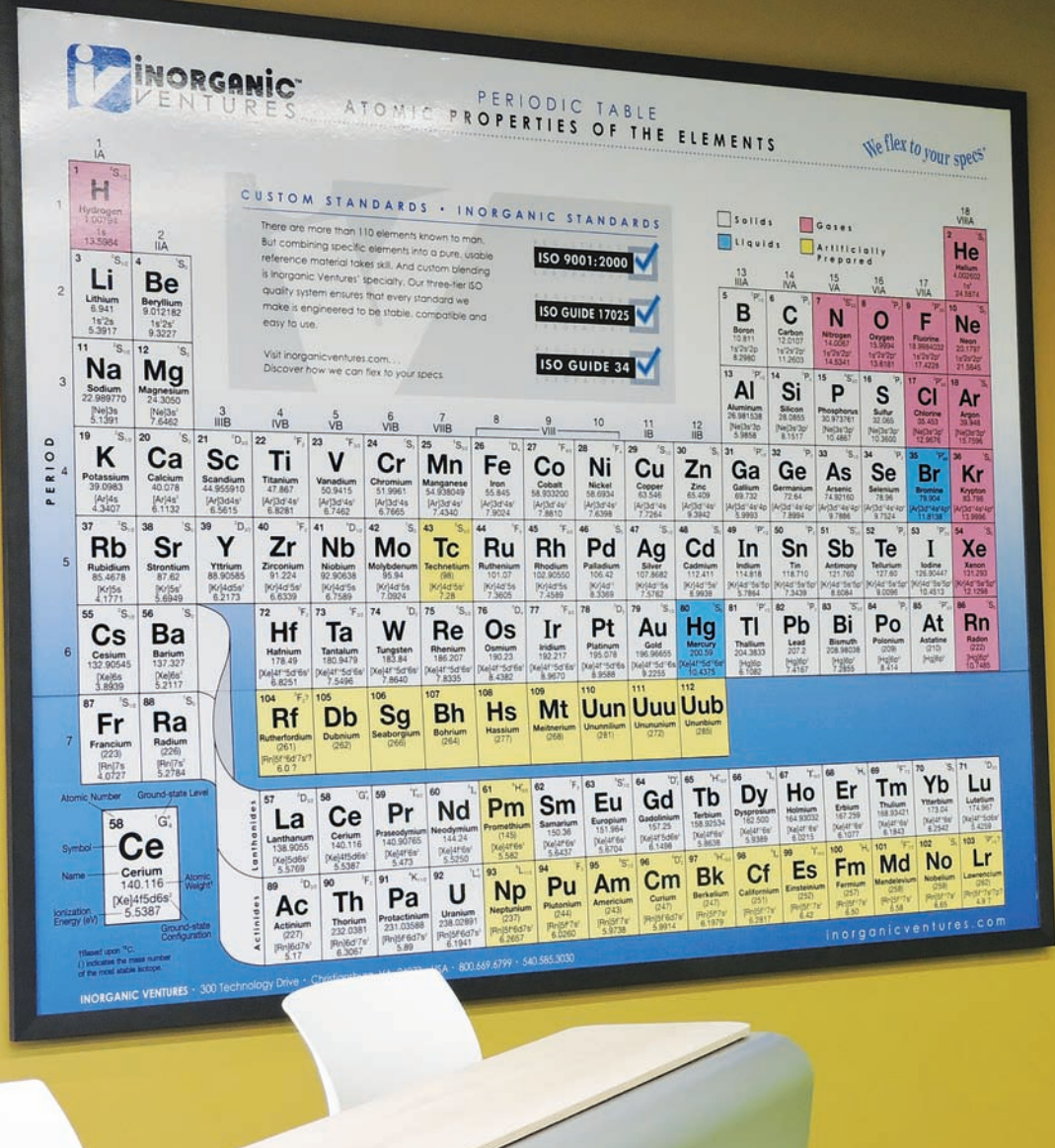
As you look at current government debt, there's nowhere to go but up with taxes. This is an important consideration that's best discussed with a financial advisor who considers tax consequences when offering professional input on how to maximize your retirement income. It's not just about the money coming in. Sometimes neglecting to see what will be going out can cost you more than you'd imagine. 



## Financial Figures

By Michael Shelton

**Executive Summary:**  
*Maximizing your income once you've retired requires a strategy against rising costs.*



## Combining the right elements >

### Executive Summary:

*Inorganic Ventures applies the "periodic table" to calibration and quality control for analytical labs.*

### By Michael Abraham

Paul Gaines' fascination with science is lifelong. "I was more interested in biological sciences when I was little," he said. "I grew up on a farm in Kentucky. I used to take apart little living things and look at them under the microscope. I would take my own blood and look at it under a microscope."

In the 1980s, Paul joined a colleague in New Jersey in a company called Inorganic Ventures, which he ultimately acquired. The company relocated to Christiansburg in 2008.

"We make chemical solutions that companies use for calibration of testing equipment and quality control purposes, but mainly for calibration. Our products are used by any testing group, in the realm of inorganic chemistry, which is most of the periodic table. Organic chemistry deals with carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and the things we associate with living organisms. Inorganic chemistry is basically everything else."

His son Christopher is now president of the company. Chris clarified, "Everything else is iron, magnesium, zinc, and all the metals."

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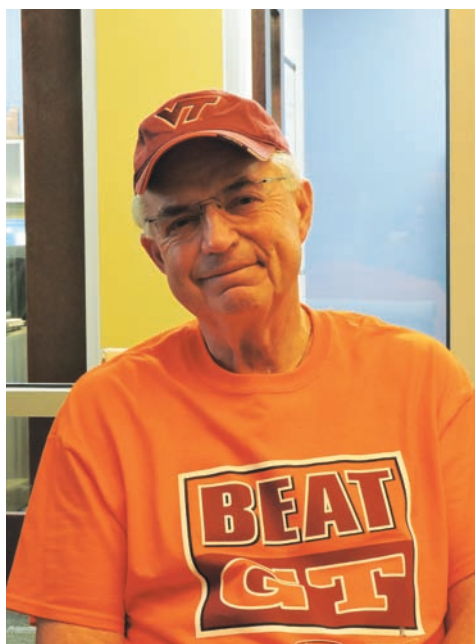


"People are made up of elements from the periodic table," Paul indicated, "some in just trace amounts. Our bodies, our blood, have a little bit of everything."

In the early days of the company, they sold mostly to environmental companies who tested soil, air, waste, sludge, and

water contamination. Nowadays, they sell to analytic chemistry labs.

To illustrate, suppose someone has been subjected to arsenic poisoning. Their blood may be tested at a lab. All instrumentation, to be trusted, must be calibrated. For example, a weight scale that shows 100



Paul Gaines



Christopher Gaines

# Our People Are the Key



pounds, but if you want to know for sure that it's accurate, you put a certified weight of 100 pounds on it. Inorganic Ventures sells the chemical equivalent of certified weights. To our example regarding arsenic; the lab needs to calibrate their instrument with a known, certified sample containing a given percentage of arsenic against which the patient's blood is compared.

"Many chemical instruments in industry measure photon intensity in unit time," Paul said. "A sample emits light characteristic of the element you're interested in. Each element has a defined photon energy. The instruments take samples up to 17,000F, hot enough to vaporize anything, and then the samples emit energy in specific wavelengths

# MANUFACTURING FRONT

## Key Element to Our Success.



that indicate the amounts of various elements.

"There are strict safety and environmental controls over everyday materials. For example, lead in paint is controlled. We want every lab that analyzes the same sample to get the same results. That's done through calibration."

The raw materials used by Inorganic Ventures include bars of metals like aluminum, chrome, copper, titanium, magnesium, and many others, and of course water.

"Here are a couple more examples of chemical analysis in everyday situations," Paul began. "Our samples will calibrate



# MANUFACTURING FRONT



instruments that measure the metal composition in the turbine oil and the fuel used in jet engines. If there is too much sodium in the fuel, it will burn out the turbine engines."

Chris added, "There are lots of chemical analyses of food and pharmaceuticals to ensure the levels are safe for ingestion. Everything is checked for composition."

The need for clean, uncontaminated air and water is one of the reasons Inorganic Ventures chose the New River Valley when they decided to leave New Jersey ten years ago. Three other big factors were access to transportation that was provided by nearby Interstate 81, the high quality of life, and availability of potential employees with scientific and specifically

chemistry education provided by Virginia Tech, Radford University, and the other regional colleges.

The privately held company now occupies an immaculate building in the Falling Branch Park, where 65 employees, most wearing white lab coats and many with degrees in chemistry, package and distribute their products.

The company also supplies technical support and training through conferences and training. "We do these here in Christiansburg and Blacksburg to support the area," Chris said. "We were heavily recruited by Virginia's economic development people. We love it here."

"This is a great place," Paul echoed. 



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## No First Amendment rights here >

The long-time client burst into our office with his son in tow. He was livid.

"That fancy-schmancy restaurant downtown refused to serve us!" he said. "One of their waiters said that we couldn't eat there because of these shirts!"

I looked at the two of them more closely and I noticed that they both were wearing shirts proclaiming their support for a certain controversial political figure.

"I want to bring a lawsuit against that restaurant!" he said. "This is clearly a violation of our freedom of speech. All of us should be allowed to express our political opinions. Doesn't the First Amendment mean anything any more?"

"Well," I said, "particularly in this age of viral social media, I think it's probably a mistake for a restaurant to offend people by kicking them out because of their political opinions. But it's not illegal. The First Amendment doesn't apply."

"What are you saying?" he said. "Has the sky fallen? Are pigs flying? Surely the First Amendment hasn't been repealed!"

"The First Amendment is part of the U.S. Constitution, but the Constitution only deals with the relationship between the government and the people," I said. "And so the First Amendment only applies to the government. But the restaurant that kicked you out is privately owned. It's not part of the government. And so the First Amendment doesn't apply to the restaurant. It's perfectly legal for them to refuse to

## Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

### Executive Summary:

*Freedom-of-speech protections under the First Amendment do not restrict private businesses.*

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

serve people because of political messages on their shirts."

"So the First Amendment doesn't apply at any restaurants, shops or other businesses?" he said.

"No, it would apply if the business is run by the government," I said. "So for example the First Amendment would apply to a cafeteria or a gift shop on the campus of a state university."

"But not a private university?" he said.

"That's correct," I said. "The First Amendment does not apply to non-government businesses."

Our client's son spoke for the first time. "Wait a second," he said. "That can't be right. I work at the widget factory, and last year one of my buddies was disciplined by his supervisor for bad-mouthing the company's cafeteria food on Facebook. He complained, and just last month a judge said that the company couldn't stop him from criticizing the company on Facebook."

“ ”

The First Amendment is part of the U.S. Constitution, but the Constitution only deals with the relationship between the government and the people.

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– Yhome Murphy



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"Oh I read about that case," I said. "That actually didn't involve freedom of speech under the First Amendment, it involved freedom of speech under the National Labor Relations Act."

"Well OK, but what's the difference?" he said.

"The First Amendment protects nearly all speech," I said, "while the NLRA protects only employee speech relating to employment conditions or terms of employment. The idea is that in order for employees to organize or to form a union, they have to be free to speak amongst themselves about their employment conditions. So an employer can't stop an employee from criticizing its employment conditions or terms of employment on Facebook, or anywhere else. But it's because of the NRLA, not the First Amendment."

"Well what about these shirts?" our client said. "Could my son's boss fire him for wearing one?"

"Sure," I said. "Again, the First Amendment doesn't apply to a private employer. Some states have their own separate laws saying that employees can't be fired for expressing their political opinions, but Virginia is not one of those states. So yes, he could be fired for wearing that shirt. Although it seems to me that from a business perspective it would be a stupid thing to do."

Right about then, the owner of the restaurant came running into our door and apologized to our client and his son. He had just found out that one of his servers had kicked them out of the restaurant without telling him, and he explained that he was very sorry and he offered them a free meal. And thus a major social media controversy was averted. But none of it had anything to do with freedom of speech under the First Amendment. 

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

**Note:** *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn't legal advice—you should consult a lawyer before deciding whether First Amendment applies to particular speech or to a particular business, before publicly criticizing your employer, etc.*



An employer can't stop an employee from criticizing its employment conditions or terms of employment. But it's because of the NRLA, not the First Amendment.



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## From hardhats to helicopters >

### Executive Summary:

*Sun Solutions and the Wrap Factory turn ordinary vehicles into rolling eye-candy.*

**By Brian Bongard**

Sun Solutions in Vinton was started by Jeff Belcher over 25 years ago to provide custom window tinting services. As time went on, his son Trevor joined the business and it became a family operation. Today it is a state-of-the-art facility that provides custom design services, signs, banners, complete vehicle wraps and more. One day, as Jeff was hustling to get 200 hardhats with custom graphics finished for Capco Machinery so he could get over to the



hanger and wrap the Lifeguard 10 helicopter for Carilion, a friend of his said, "From hardhats to helicopters, you do it all," and Jeff immediately adopted that as one of his slogans.

"I started in 1998 working out of the little shop just next door," says Jeff. "My dad was a drag racer and that was his race shop. Trevor was quite young, but was frequently down at the shop and 'helping' me." In 2012,

we bought this much larger (5,000 square foot) building." He even had room to build a memorial alcove in the showroom where you will find his dad's race car along with walls wrapped in pictures and newspaper stories about him and his car.

In the early days, Jeff and Trevor were spending quality time together on the weekends racing motorcycles at the local motocross circuits. It was there that they





started cutting custom vinyl decals for the trucks and trailers of their fellow riders. Jeff said, "It was a natural fit. With years of window tinting experience, the leap to vinyl lettering and striping was easy."

Trevor's 'on-the-job-training' from the time he was a little tyke was starting to pay off. While he was still in high school, he already knew the ropes, and the vinyl. He had become a valuable employee and an integral part of the business. After

graduation, he became a full-time employee with the idea that he will eventually take over the business and become Jeff's retirement plan.

In the early 2000s, advances in vinyl, design software, and large format printer technology combined to make completely wrapping a vehicle both possible and popular. So, in 2008 Sun Solutions started doing complete vehicle wraps.

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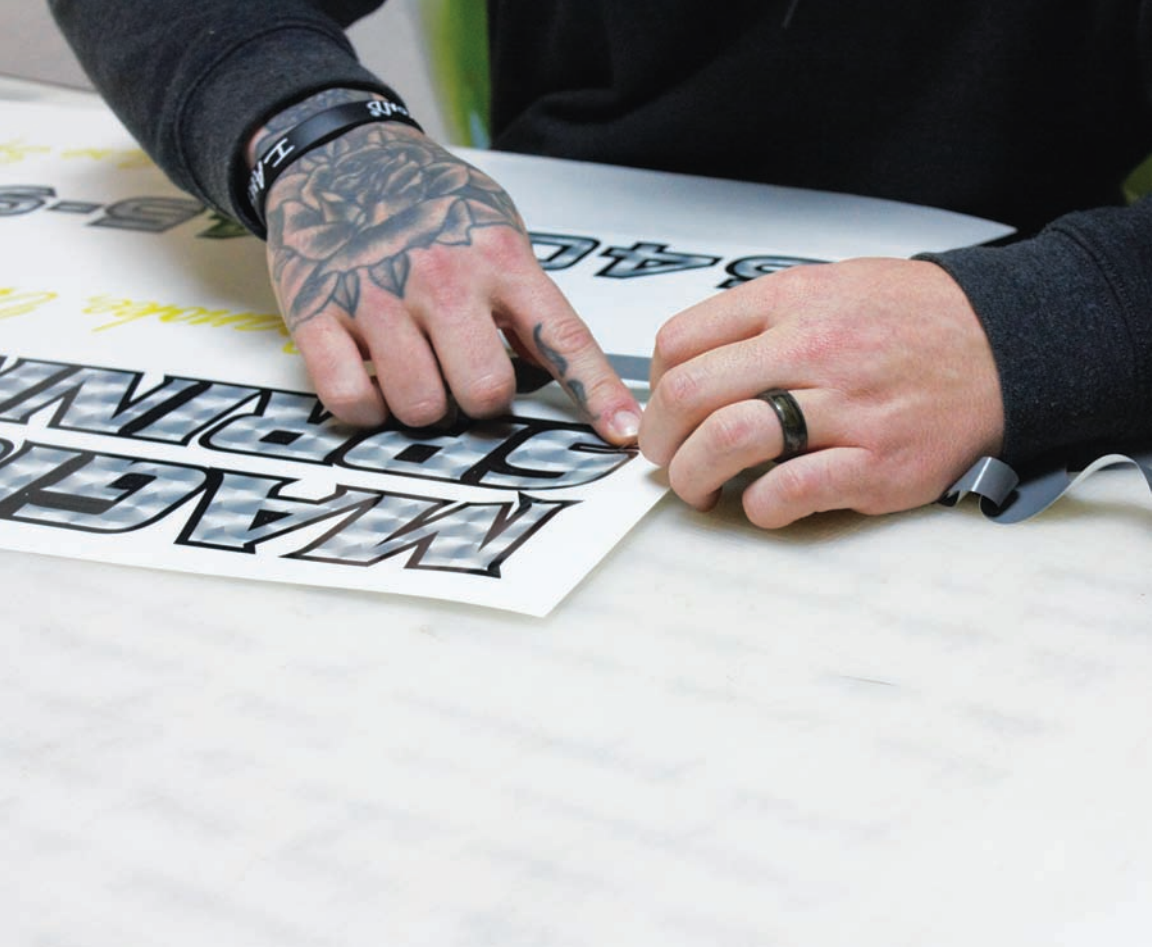
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"At first we used an outside vendor to print the wraps, ship them to us, and we would apply it," says Jeff. "However, we pretty quickly decided to make the leap and buy a trio of state-of-the-art machines that would let us do it all in house. It made the whole process smoother and the experience better. We could work with customers directly while designing their graphics on the computer, print it on the vinyl, cut it, laminate it, and apply it."

Jeff and Trevor give similar responses when asked what they think the best and worst parts of the job are.

"The best thing is watching the expressions on people's faces and how excited they get when they see their car," says Trevor. "Like on a full color change job, all they saw was a small sample. Seeing the finished product is pretty dramatic." The worst he said was, "Removing old vinyl off of signs or cars. It cracks and splits and is time-consuming to remove. The newer vinyl will hold up much better and much longer, so I don't figure that will be much of a problem in the future."

Jeff says, "The best part is the personal satisfaction I get from creating something and then going from the before, to the after." He agrees with Trevor. "I like watching the customers react when they see their custom wrapped car or truck for the first time." The worst part? "I love what I do. I don't look at it like work really, but when there is a big job or a deadline to meet, the hours can be long".

Today, Sun Solutions still does window tinting. As outdoor enthusiasts, they have also taken special pride in wrapping vehicles like the Go-Outside and Runabout Sports cars as well as the Bud Light and Chaos Mountain brewery vans you see at festivals. They will do more hardhats if someone asks them to and they have done Lifeguard 11, 12, and 13 as well as all of Carilion's ambulances, police cars and lab cars.

If you're looking for a custom graphic wrap job, head on down to Vinton and check them out. Take a look at their website for ideas, then bring them yours. Like their Wrap Factory sign says, they can "Turn your fantasies into realities." 







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## Fifty dollars and fifty-thousand computers >

### Executive Summary:

*Brambleton Computer / Vinton Computer is in growth mode—in some respect, it's been built \$50 at a time.*

**By Ashlyn Markland**

What do you get when you combine passion, a love for customer service and the Roanoke Valley? Brambleton Computer, of course! Founded in 2013, Brambleton

Computer is one of two computer repair shops owned by father and son duo Chris Duncan and Keith Duncan. With the company's recent success, Brambleton Computer has moved to a larger location to accommodate its booming success, customer demand and expand its services. However, the story of the largest locally owned computer repair shop doesn't begin here. It begins back in 2010 at Vinton Computer.

"I started in 2010 as a one-man band. I knew things could be done better and cheaper," Chris explained. "I had no marketing. One customer grew to three, three grew to 10, 10 grew to 50, and the rest is history."

Chris Duncan's vision for Vinton Computer and Brambleton Computer began after he

witnessed the frustrations others were experiencing with computer repair stores. From steep price points to slow turnaround times, Chris saw an opportunity to change the way individuals experienced computer repairs. As a result, Chris was ready and prepared to bring to life a business that broke the mold in the computer repair industry.

Chris' dream became a reality when Vinton Computer opened its doors in 2010. The goal was to provide a quick turnaround time, fantastic customer service and affordable pricing; something many may say is unheard of in the computer repair industry. The expert staff Chris hired practiced his belief that businesses should put customers first. No one would leave Vinton Computer feeling as if they didn't receive the best service possible.

In 2010, Chris ran what he thought would

be a one-month promotion, offering \$50 flat rate labor on all services. The response to the promotion was overwhelming, and nine years later "\$50 does it" is a staple of his business.

"What if you knew what you would spend before you walked into a store? That's what I wanted to do," Chris shared.

Vinton Computer was an instant success and experienced rapid growth in its first three years of business. In 2013, Chris Duncan's father, Keith Duncan, joined the journey and partnered with Chris to open an additional location, Brambleton Computer. Like Vinton Computer, Brambleton Computer found quick success under Chris' customer-centric model.

In 2018, the Duncan's announced that Brambleton Computer would relocate

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to a larger location to better serve its growing customer base and offer additional services. Brambleton Computer opened its new location in July at 3634 Brambleton Avenue in Roanoke. All makes and models of computers are serviced, and offerings include malware removal, wireless internet set-up, data storage and back up, email hosting, website hosting and more.

Based on the Chris' business model, it's no surprise both locations regularly receive an A+ rating by the Better Business Bureau. Annually, 50,000 computers are serviced between both locations, making Brambleton Computer and Vinton Computer a household name across the Roanoke Valley. Not only do Chris and Keith call Vinton Computer and Brambleton computer their place of employment, Chris' mom, aunt, uncle, and brother are also valued employees.

In total, Brambleton Computer and Vinton Computer employ 32 individuals.

Beyond providing the best customer experience possible, Chris also believes in giving back to the community where Brambleton Computer and Vinton Computer began. "In 2017, we donated over \$45,000 in computers to refugees, Salvation Army, Goodwill, Angel Tree, and more," Chris shared. "I try to give back as much as possible."

The future of Vinton Computer and Brambleton Computer is bright in an area like the Roanoke Valley that supports small businesses.

"We plan to expand – our style. I don't want to get so big that I'm no longer talking to my customers and doing what made me successful," Chris said. 


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# Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

**Executive Summary:**  
*Times of crisis don't seem as much a... well... time of crisis, when you've prepared.*

## The 7 Ps >

It's four days before Christmas (and one day after my deadline to write this article). My shopping is not done, my article is late, and now I'm in crisis mode. How did I get here?

I have a good excuse. There has been some illness in my family the past few weeks which caused me to be down, or to spend extra time helping other family members. My intentions were good, but now I'm up against deadlines (or past them) and putting out fires.

Sound familiar? In our business and personal lives, the unexpected always happens. An employee is out sick, or a computer system goes down, or a 15-inch snowstorm hits our area. But have you noticed that some people and organizations handle these situations much better than others? It's because those people and organizations plan, prioritize, and schedule their time better than the rest.

During my military career, we often used an acronym called "the 7 Ps." You've probably heard it before. Prior proper planning prevents piss (can I say that?) poor performance. The military executes their day-to-day operations much smoother, and with fewer surprises, than any organization I've ever seen. The reason is planning and preparation.

Regardless of how well you plan your activities and schedule your time, there will always be times when the unexpected puts you in crisis mode. But for some people, this is an excuse for doing almost no planning. "Why bother because something will screw up my plan anyway." If that's your attitude, you need to change it.

When you take the time to plan and prioritize your most important tasks and projects, and schedule time to do them, you will reduce the impact of the unexpected. It doesn't mean there will be NO impact, but when you develop a strong habit of planning, prioritizing and scheduling, it's much easier to put out that fire and recover with minimal impact.

And there are added benefits. You and your team will experience less stress, and you can take advantage of pop-up opportunities when they arise ("Want to join us out for lunch today?").

Planning, prioritizing and scheduling is highly productive time. It saves you much more time than it takes, and your operations and performance will improve.

Gotta run. I have Christmas shopping to do. 

## What's in a name? >

### Nomenclature<sup>4</sup>Your Consideration

It's a little thing really.

Little things can make a big difference though – especially in commerce.

One of the first questions I ask a new client is how they refer to the people with whom they do business. The labels you put on your interactions can be significant and often share a deeper meaning. Are your business relationships with patients, customers, clients, students, visitors, guests, users, or buyers?

Obviously in anything related to the medical world you'd want to address the people who visit you as patients.

If you're in the hospitality industry, it's likely you refer to them as guests, visitors, or customers. They are staying with you, in from out of town, or eating and drinking at your establishment. You can likely surmise the proper label to use and apply.


But what about those of you in more varied professions? Do you call the people in your day-to-day dealings clients or customers?

### Some Thinking<sup>2</sup>Do

There's a bit of a value assessment placed with the language you choose. While everyone may not agree with me, it feels like a customer is someone with whom a transaction takes place. A client label, however, implies a deeper, more collaborative relationship — perhaps ongoing in nature. It says more than "transaction." It says we're "your people" and we'll be here for you over time.

We intentionally have clients.

That's the business we are in. It may not be the same in your situation, but it is worth a review and your deeper thought. Not only should you be mindful of what you call your customers or clients, but if you're in the sales or service providing business, be aware of how the people with whom you do business refer to their end users. It's pretty awkward to speak to a medical practice about their customers (when you mean patients). That's a fast way to lose some credibility.

In the end, the small labels you choose actually are a pretty big deal. 



## A Little Insight

By Bruce C. Bryan

**Executive Summary:**  
*The individuals who buy your product or service: what do you call them?*



## Self-directed >

### Executive Summary:

*Chloe Shelton has taken advantage of the Grandin Film Lab by living her dream.*

### By Dan Smith

Chloe Shelton is 19 years old but has no high school diploma. She is not in college and has no interest in attending. She has made three movies and written a published book on writer Joel Chandler Harris. She works making promotional films, shooting head shots for business people and creating promotional movies for local theater groups. She has her own production company.

She explains her choices thusly: "I love to learn, and I am self-motivated. I'm finding

my own path and I take a lot of online classes."

It's the new way to learn for quite a few internet-based young people and for those with creative talent and energy. Chloe is the poster child in the Roanoke Valley.

She was recently rewarded for her non-degree accomplishments with a major award from the Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation. It was in honor of her movie (from Chloe Shelton Films, her company), "Til I Come Home," a 7 1/2-minute short about a World War I soldier, who is killed in battle. She has also written and directed "Dandelion" and "When the Lights Go On Again" and is in post-production with the eagerly-awaited "Cotton Cloud," a story about a turn of the 20th century mill in the Norwich section of Roanoke, which led to passage of child labor laws in Virginia.

Chloe, who lives in Salem, was one of the first students to enter the Grandin Film Lab, something of a clone of the Jefferson Center's Music Lab, which has been working with young musicians for more than a decade. The Film Lab is located in the Grandin Co-Lab Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4-7 p.m. Chloe is now a graduate of the lab, though not of high school, for which she was home-schooled by her mother, a former teacher.

Film Lab Co-Ordinator Tyler Lyon says the classes are meant for high school-aged kids, who cycle out when they graduate (though in Chloe's case, there was no formal high school graduation). There are 18 students in classes now. When Chloe began, there was a class of 16 and all finished the courses, Lyon says.


The lab was a natural for Chloe, who "wanted to make films since I was 7." Her younger

sister, Abby, is an actress in local productions and "It's helpful [for a film maker] to have a sister who is an actress," says Chole. "She's appeared in everything I've done."

School has helped Chloe with film theory ("I hadn't known it before"), practical production and, especially, networking. "That's probably the most valuable part," she says.

She says she'd like to create a full-length feature "as soon as a story comes along. Writing is one of my big things, but I'm mostly a director."

Directing her career seems to be one of her successes.

(You can watch "Til I Come Home" here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYNBRsVFzJE>) 

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The military executes their operations much smoother, and with fewer surprises than any organization I've ever seen. — Page 38

## Medical equipment house call >

What happens when a good idea takes hold, a dedicated professional takes charge, and a group of enthusiastic volunteers step in—and stay—and work—and care? That's a short definition of a sort of perfect storm that arrived in Roanoke two decades ago.

Having recognized that access to medical equipment often comes at a price beyond the financial means of adult patients, Dr. Bruce Stelmack, then working at the Carilion Clinic in Roanoke, put together the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment, better known as F.R.E.E. He asked one of his colleagues, a therapist with 16 years of experience working with the cognitively, neurologically and physically challenged, if she would be interested in working with him. Her name is Robin Ramsey, and today her work as executive director takes her to all six F.R.E.E. offices throughout the state of Virginia.

"This is in the fullest sense of the word a community effort," she explains. "Community donors—both individuals and organizations such as Goodwill, the Rescue Mission and Bradley Free Clinic—provide most of the equipment on which we rely. Each office has a part-time employee and the two of us who are fulltime move throughout the state, but everything else is managed and operated through the efforts of volunteers in each community. The people we serve can qualify quite easily, too, by simply filling out a short form and securing a physician's recommendation."

Conversations with Ramsey and her colleagues are laced with sprightly enthusiasm and a clear love of how they spend their days. Last year alone, they served 2,400 people, helping many of them remain safely at home and avoid hospital visits. Perhaps Winston Churchill said it best: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." 



## Good Work

By Rachael Garrity

**Executive Summary:**  
*F.R.E.E. helps people in need get medical equipment*



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## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*Why that sage business advice on giving your customers what they want isn't always an automatic and universal axiom.*

### What I like >

"I am my own audience."  
—attributed to Steven Spielberg

The worst thing a business owner-operator can say is that he doesn't ask his customers what they want or he doesn't listen to what his customers have to say. We all know that. "Business 101" makes it clear: create a product or deliver a service that is needed in a market and you will be successful. Figuring out what your customer wants is a sure-fire way to become a leader.

Except when it isn't.

Certainly, it's the classic case for business we read about most. The case where Johnny says he couldn't find the widget he needed, so he invented one. Where Jenny says the only option she saw was too difficult or too expensive, so she started a better option.

But look closely. Even in these examples, our successful businesses didn't really start from Johnny or Jenny figuring out what the market needed. They sought out a solution for themselves. The successful outcome results from all the other Johnnys and Jennys out there who want or benefit from the same thing.

As is often the case, customers don't even know what they want. The widget or option designed and deployed after determining market demand—versus simply determining what Johnny and Jenny wanted—might have looked entirely different than what our two entrepreneurs actually developed.

I've interviewed enough businesses over the past three decades to notice an irony that is seldom—if ever—addressed in business training: Self-serving motives produce the best products and services.

That doesn't sound very pretty, does it?

And the altruistic souls among us will object. "What about the scientist who invents the life-saving vaccine?" they will cry. "What about the philanthropist who devises a way to provide houses for the homeless?" "What about the person who developed Braille, so the blind could read?"

That was Louis Braille, by the way. A 15-year old French boy in 1824. Blind.

Yes, there are great individuals we need to celebrate. Individuals who sacrificed and produced goods and services to benefit mankind. And many of them did it for that very reason—to improve our world.

## Letters

### Hats off to the farmer

I just want you to know that I sure do agree with Cheryl Wray, the human resources director at Chemsolv [December 2018 FRONT; cover story on education; Page 21] when she said she finds people with farming backgrounds often possess the strongest attributes needed in the workforce. All of my grandparents came from Franklin County farms; and you get a real broad education when you work on a farm. I was able to teach myself how to weld, for example,

even though I also was eventually certified.

**Bob Kinsey**

*Retired signmaker,  
sign business owner/operator*

### Correction

**Salt Foot Sanctuary**, a collaboration with The Spa and Adventure Center at Hotel Roanoke [ [www.sparoanokeva.com](http://www.sparoanokeva.com) ] was incorrectly identified in the January edition of FRONT. **Anyday Outfitters** was also incorrectly identified in a photo caption and summary.

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

But let's not deny the source of that inspiration. The creative spark came from within, arising out of a calling and need to satisfy a very personal desire. To create, to produce, to serve, to do business.

The very act of satisfying the needs of other is... believe it or not... self-initiating, whether you're cognizant of it or not. Your own personal motivations cause you to act. Not only is there nothing wrong with that cause-and-effect, it's a very good thing.


Show me a man who contributes nothing to society and I'll show you a man with no self-worth.

\* \* \*

That's why training and education that encourages people to seek out what they enjoy, what inspires them, what makes them jump up out of the bed to take on the world... is the best kind of preparation. When asked how he was able to predict the market, figure out how massive audiences all over the world would respond so favorably to his movies—whether they were inspirational, like Schindler's List; scary, like Jaws; mesmerizing, like E.T.; or heart pumping, like Jurassic Park—filmmaker Steven Spielberg said he had no idea how people would respond. He just made what he liked.

A recipe that's pretty easy to follow, yes?

So what do you like?

Get on with it, Johnny. Or Jenny. 



## Guest Commentary

Virginia Chamber  
of Commerce

**Executive Summary:**  
*Virginia Chamber of Commerce provides a fact sheet and positioning statement opposing pending legislation to raise the State's minimum wage.*

### Don't raise the minimum wage >

The Commonwealth's current minimum wage reflects the federal minimum wage standard of \$7.25 per hour. There is legislation pending before the General Assembly that would raise Virginia's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. The business community is in agreement that too many Americans are living at or near the poverty line; however, raising the minimum wage to \$15 fails to solve this problem and will only create new problems for workers and business owners. Instead, our legislators should advance solutions that encourage quality education and job-skills obtainment, which will do more to increase the earning power of individuals than mandated pay increases that would smother small business across the Commonwealth.

#### Job Loss among Low-Skill Workers

A 2014 study from the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office found that if the minimum wage were increased to even \$10.10 per hour, up to 500,000 jobs nationally could be lost. Of those jobs lost, studies have shown that the individuals with fewer skills are most likely to be affected. In other words, an increase in the minimum wage would harm those who need the most support.

#### Harder to Find Entry-Level Work

Businesses would not be able to afford to hire as many low-skill workers if required to pay a \$15 minimum wage, thus creating a higher hurdle for individuals to clear when entering the workforce. In a survey conducted by The University of New Hampshire Survey Center, 80 percent of economists surveyed expressed that employers will hire entry-level positions with greater skills. Because it is harder to enter the workforce, individuals cannot obtain the experience needed to secure a job that pays a higher wage. Less experience means a lower likelihood of advancing beyond minimum wage jobs.

#### No Silver Bullet to Reduce Poverty

An increase in minimum wage will not affect the majority of those living in poverty, the demographic this policy proports to address. In a 2014 report by the Congressional Budget Office, only 19 percent in the increased earnings from a higher minimum wage would go to low-income families nationally, yet 29 percent would go to families earning more than three times the poverty threshold.


## Hit to Small Business

A minimum wage increase to \$15 will disproportionately impact small businesses across Virginia, especially those with razor-thin margins and whose payroll costs are a significant portion of their operating costs. These businesses would likely be unable to afford a 100 percent increase in their entry-level labor costs, forcing them to close their doors if unable to increase their prices or cut costs elsewhere. In a survey taken by The University of New Hampshire Survey Center, nearly 7 out of 10 economists expressed they feel a minimum wage increase will make it more difficult for small businesses to keep their doors open.

## Risk to Future Economic Development

Businesses considering whether to relocate to Virginia may decide to move to another state, such as North Carolina, Tennessee, or Georgia, where the minimum wage rate is not as high. CNBC and Forbes consider the cost of wages and labor when publishing their business climate rankings measuring economic competitiveness. Increasing the minimum wage would negatively impact Virginia's rankings, which factor into firms' business decisions, and would be detrimental to attracting investment from new companies and achieving Virginia's goal to be the best state in the country to do business.

Virginia must support initiatives that encourage job creation, champion innovation and entrepreneurship, support job training and foster increased earning potential rather than across-the-board mandates that raise the cost of labor. Ensuring Virginia remains one of the best states to do business is of the upmost importance to secure Virginia's position as a leader in job creation, innovation, and economic growth. The adverse effects of raising the minimum wage to \$15 will cost jobs and create barriers to obtaining entry-level jobs and inevitably, make it harder to obtain the experience needed to increase workers' earning potential.

We respectfully ask you to vote against any increase to minimum wage. 



Businesses considering whether to relocate to Virginia may decide to move to another state, such as North Carolina, Tennessee, or Georgia, where the minimum wage rate is not as high.

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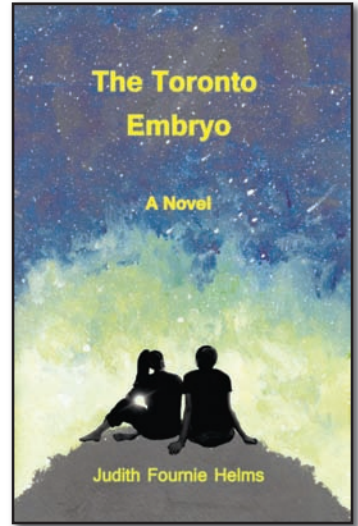
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## Books @ the FRONT >

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



### *Divisive balance act*

Hardy resident and author Judith Helms intended to write a young adult novel about a young woman facing a life-altering decision, but *The Toronto Embryo* (Snowy Day; 2018) became a very adult conversation about the abortion debate. The novel's mostly balanced approach serves to open a dialog – meaningful and respectful – between those with widely divergent, generally intransigent views on the issue.

The young couple at the center of the story (not-so-subtly named Adam and Eve) share a school-break romance culminating in a fairy-tale-ish night together. The young woman returns to her rather affluent life to find herself pregnant several months later. The soon-to-be mother ignores not only the father's right to help make the decision but even his right to know about the pregnancy at all.

Told in first person, Eve sees the world a bit rosier than it is, not recognizing the rift she has created for her parents, one of whom supports an abortion and the other who does not.

The book's impact comes from walking the thinnest of lines between pro-choice and pro-life factions. Young adult novels broaching this subject often fall squarely on one side or the other. Eve's battling parents expect her to research her options before deciding. While the conclusion is a bit pat – using a near-future projected third choice to wrap up the story line – it also

leaves the issue open ended enough for further development.

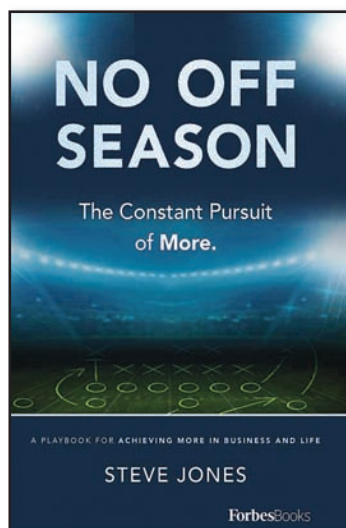
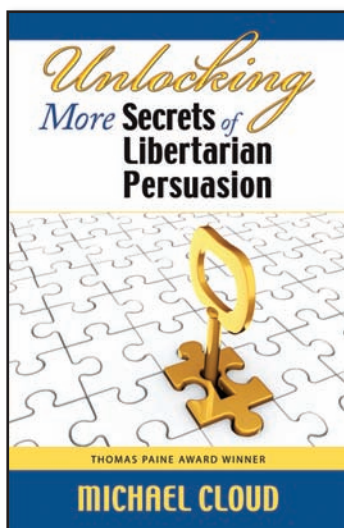
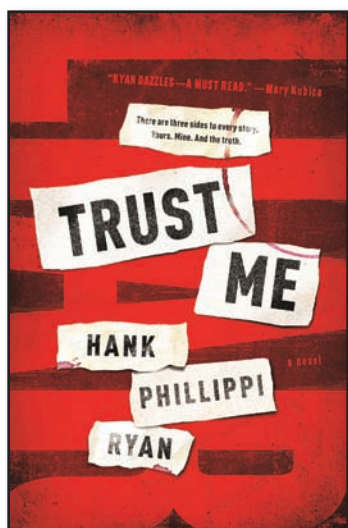
—Doloris Vest

### *Evidence lacking*

*Trust Me* (Forge; 2018) by Hank Phillips Ryan is a crime novel written from the perspective of an investigative writer's assignment. Not only is the book replete with references to the notorious 2008 "Casey Anthony" young questionable mom missing-murdered child case (and trial)... the analogies are constantly brought up. Along with "casting doubt" as the obligatory and principle defense strategy, our narrator-protagonist just can't seem to stop herself with the relentless second-guessing game. The attention on psychological is contrived and overplayed here where we get no thriller on what could have been a much better story. Kind of a shame, because there is some promising dialogue and character interaction.

The trust issue is indeed central to our experience, and Ryan does score a point for retaining us to the conclusion in case we get some surprising revelation; but it's a bit against our will with all the "is she—isn't she" repetitive rhetoric and constant mirroring to the much more interesting reality of Caylee Anthony's tragic demise ever-looming in the background.

—Tom Field



## Debate prepper

Michael Cloud's *Unlocking More Secrets of Libertarian Persuasion* (Advocates for Self-Government; 2012) is not so much a book as it is a coach-like playbook guide for advocating and defending libertarian philosophy. In fact, it is written in such "single bullet idea" three-minute chapter fashion, I see it better suited as an audio companion—such as providing solid-hitting sound-bites a speaker might need who's being interviewed on television.

Indeed, persuasive ideas... the kind you could pull out of your pocket when needed if you're of the limited government, free living, civil libertarian sort.

—Tom Field

## Head down, working

Steve Jones, CEO of the Allied Universal, a \$7B security services company in North America has authored a new book, *No Off Season: The Constant Pursuit of More* (Forbes; 2018). Jones – a former college football standout turned CEO – shares his successes and failures and the lessons he learned both on the field and in the boardroom. He details his injury-plagued football career, how he pushed through, and when he knew to move on. Though Jones had to shelve his dreams of glory in the NFL, he accrued countless lessons that translated into some of his greatest business tactics. He digs deep into his accomplishments as well as the

roadblocks he encountered and his message is straightforward: never give up, work harder – and longer – than anyone else, and you'll come out on top. Adhering to this philosophy, Jones held executive positions in multiple security service corporations before overseeing the largest merger in the history of the industry.

"Sometimes life deals you setbacks and puts you on a path other than the one you intended to walk," said Jones. "When that happens, the only thing you can do is to put your head down and keep working through." Spurred by the doggedness that made him a success on the field, he was not content to rest on his laurels. Jones knew "it was important to never give up on the vision we had to continue growing the company."

Throughout his story, Jones teaches readers his business principles, while also providing the ingredients for success beyond the boardroom. Jones is determined to give readers the tools they need to succeed, and the motivation they need to move forward. "In my mind, there is no greater satisfaction than exceeding your own expectations," Jones said.

—Nancy Thompson

The reviewers: **Doloris Vest** runs Book No Further book store at 16 West Marketplace in downtown Roanoke; **Tom Field** is a creative director and publisher; **Nancy Thompson** is a publicist in New York.



## Brought home the bacon >

Chef **Peter Radjou** of **Tazza** in Roanoke won the \$10,000 Bacon World Championship title in the World Food Championship at The Wharf in Orange Beach, Ala. with his "acorn squash stuffed with bacon and Fall vegetables" entry.



## Driving for clothes >

**Member One FCU** executives volunteered for a coat and shoe drive to help children enrolled in the **Community Youth Program (CYP)** at St. John's Episcopal Church in Roanoke and the credit union also provided financial support for purchasing items needed.



## The gong show >

**The Penthouse at Roanoke's Center in the Square** held "World Percussion Workshops & Sound Immersion Performance" featuring **River Guergerian**, visiting world music master of percussion, on Jan. 19, with beginner and advance classes, followed by a show.



## Ready, set, fail >

**Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC)** Tech & Toast morning meeting was held at Inn at Virginia Tech on Jan. 17; featuring Radford University's **Jane Machin**, marketing professor, who spoke on "Succeeding at Failing." Three exercises she suggested: write up a "failure resume," do some "improve," and intentionally seek out rejection to build up and hone your success skills.



## Oh, be civil >

**Transform Roanoke** held a community discussion entitled "The Great Divide: Local Strategies for an Effective Response" with political opposites William Sellari (Democratic campaign consultant) and Greg Aldridge (Roanoke Tea Party president) and moderated by Dale Thompson; the conversation at Jefferson Center, Jan. 10, addressed how we move ahead (or don't) even as our persuasions differ.

# FRONT'N ABOUT



Courtesy of CHC/NRV

## Open wide, wide open >

The **Community Health Center of the New River Valley** was awarded a \$148,400 grant from Virginia Health Care Foundation, which will be used to fund the salary and benefits for a full-time dentist at the newly opened and renovated Community Health Center office in Dublin.



FRONT

# Fixing up the ol' homestead >

The 10th Anniversary **Home & Garden Show** was held Jan. 11–13 at The Berglund Center in Roanoke, featuring over 100 exhibitors, including **Southern Trust Home Services**, **Rockfab**, landscapers, and more local product and service providers as well as franchise operations.



## Lunch after the gym >

**Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce** luncheon on Jan. 16 at Tizzone in Daleville Town Center included some spillover from folks attending the ribbon-cutting of the new YMCA just across the parking lot.



## MJ in the house >

Michael Jackson continues to hang out at Grand Home Furnishings at Valley View Mall in Roanoke. The store displays the former pop star's personal armoire from his bedroom, that still has a handwritten "Train, perfection" note on the mirror; it has been available for viewing by the public now for seven years... substantiating the good luck mantra (no broken mirror curse) and a nice reference to MJ's "Man in the Mirror" number one hit.

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

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT



Andree

**Don Andree** has been appointed city executive for Roanoke market at The Bank of Fincastle.



Staton

**Justine Staton** has joined as financial specialist at Pinnacle Financial Partners Roanoke / Hersherberger Road office.

## LEGAL FRONT

**Mary Kathryn**



Kozlowski

**Atkinson** has joined as associate with the personal injury team; **Ben Law** has joined as associate with the business and corporate team; **Christopher Kozlowski** has been promoted to partner at Gentry Locke Roanoke office

**Nancy Fuller Reynolds** and **Jay E. Spruill** have joined the Woods Rogers team of attorneys in Of Counsel roles.

## WELLNESS FRONT

**Angela Martin** has been promoted to medical director; **Chance Welfare** has been appointed chief administrative officer; and **Kevin Harvey** has been promoted

to patient services director at New Horizons Healthcare.



Lee

**Ryan Lee**, DACHE has joined as chief operating officer; and **Wendy Glass** has joined as vice president of human resources at LewisGale Medical Center.



Tobin

**Devin Tobin** with LewisGale Medical Center, has accepted the nomination to serve on the Hospital Corporation of America's (HCA) Ethics and Compliance

Advisory Committee.



Woodyard

**Chip Woodyard**, PA-C, has been appointed at the new Virginia Orthopedics in Low Moor.

## TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Tracy

**Amy Tracy** has been named corporate claims counsel for Lawrence Companies.



# YOU DESERVE THE BEST



## Have a career announcement?

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

### DEVELOPMENT



**FRONT** Vaughan

**Johanna Vaughan**, PG, with Draper Aden Associates earned her Professional Geologist license.



Landes

**Stephanie Landes**, CFRE, has been appointed director of marketing for Friendship Living; and **Brandon Evans** has been appointed administrator for Friendship South.

**Neil Conner** has been named president;

**Walter Grewe**, president-elect; and **Ashley Donahue**, vice president of Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors.



Price

**Chrissy Price**, ACoM, has been promoted to senior portfolio manager at Thalheimer's Roanoke office.

**Kelly Soriano** has joined the sales team at Long & Foster Roanoke.

### EDUCATION FRONT

**Dave Brat** has been appointed dean of the School of Business at Liberty University.

**Caitlyn Scaggs** has been hired as associate vice president for University Relations at Radford University.



Sutherland

**Jay Sutherland** has been hired as controller and director of finance at Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM).

**Nicole Doherty** of Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke has been named the state winner of Outstanding Teacher of American History Contest by Virginia Daughters of American Revolution.



Garrett

**Alphonso Garrett Jr.** has been appointed president of the Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Administration Officers.

Virginia Tech has announced that **Xiaowei Yue** and

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## Career FRONT



Yue



Yue



Kannan



Ruiz-Geli



Avery

**Hanumanthrao Kannan** have been appointed assistant professors in the Grado Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering in the College of Engineering; **Kelly Avery** has been named Residential

Property Management Advisory Board Professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences; **Robert Cohen** has been named head of Department of Biological Sciences at the College of Science; **Angela Anderson** and **Siobhan Craige** have been named assistant professors of human nutrition, foods, and exercise in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; **Jin-Hee Cho** has been appointed associate professor

in the Department of Computer Science; **Enric Ruiz-Geli** has joined as professor of practice in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies; **Cyril Clarke** has been named executive vice president and provost. **Katherine Brown**, **Jennifer Cleveland**, **Kristin Eden**, **Kristofer Rau**, and **Allison Tegge** have been recruited as assistant professors in the Department of Basic Science Education at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

**Astrid Shell** has been appointed dean of the Harry F. Byrd, Jr. School of Business at Shenandoah University.

### CULTURE FRONT

**Tony Pearman**, CEO and co-founder of Access, has been elected to Make-A-Wish Greater Virginia's Board of Directors.

**Kimberly Boyer** has

been appointed to the 2019 board of directors for Downtown Blacksburg Inc.



Ezelle

**Ray Ezelle** has been hired as vice president of sales and services for Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge.

### MUNICIPAL FRONTS

**Rebecca Owens** has been appointed assistant county administrator for Roanoke County.

**Don Samsa**, general manager at TMEIC, has been appointed to the U.S. Department of Commerce Renewable Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee.

*Compiled by Tom Field*




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# FRONT Notes

## *Industrial ringer*

**Ringgold East Industrial Park** in Pittsylvania County sold 53 acres to South Carolina real estate investment firm RealtyLink for \$1 million; pending an agreement to construct at least 250,000 square feet in facilities.

## *Historic property buy*

**Carilion Clinic** has purchased the downtown Roanoke iconic former First National Exchange Bank at 201 S. Jefferson Street.

## *Water service*

**Franklin County** is contracting with the Western Virginia Water Authority to provide water and sewage service for the 550-acre Summit View Business Park; an approximate \$5 million, 20 year shared cost project.

## *BOCO fit*

**Botetourt YMCA** has opened at the Daleville Town Center complex.

## *Bike bonus*

**Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission** (RVARC) was awarded the bronze-level Bicycle Friendly

Business (BFB) certification by the League of American Bicyclists.

## *Kāichē ahead*

**TORC Robotics** has been selected by Chinese electric car company Bordin Motor Corp. in the development of its line of self-driving vehicles.

## *We're number one*

**Business Facilities** magazine, a national publication directed to economic development agencies and company planners and facility managers, names Virginia its "State of the Year."

## *Bye dolphins, hello bikes and brews*

**The Blue Ridge Hotel and Conference Center** is the new name of Sheraton Roanoke Hotel and Conference Center; the restaurant also changed, **Hops n' Sprockets** replacing Shula's 347 Grill.

## *Bank on a lot*

**Pinnacle Financial Partners** has purchased the lot (that has been used for parking) at the high traffic, Roanoke downtown eastern entrance at the intersection

of Williamson Road and Campbell Avenue for a new headquarters and possible bank branch.

## *Apartment—the movie*

**Alam Design Group** has received approval to proceed with converting the old Lee Theatre on Williamson Rd. in Roanoke to an apartment complex.

## *Re-milled*

**White Mill** in Danville, the popular landmark and originally part of the Dan River Inc textile complex, is pending purchase by The Alexander Co historic re-use developers; a \$3 million deal approved by the Danville Industrial Development Authority.

## *Machinesmith*

**Smyth County Machine** is expanding and adding about 25 jobs at its facility in Smyth County; a \$2 million investment.

## *Look for the star*

**City of Roanoke** received the national Gateways for Growth award (along with 12 other communities) by New American Economy and "Welcoming America" for its plan on integrating immigrants, fostering

economic growth, and promoting inclusion for all residents.

## *Country country*

**WSLC-FM Star Country** radio station topped the most recent Fall 2018 Nielsen Audio ratings by a significant margin (11.7 share) in Roanoke-Lynchburg Metro listening market; the Number 1 ranked Star Country was followed by (in descending order) Q99, K92, ViBE, WROV, WYYD, WJJS, WSFF, WFIR, and WLNI to complete the top ten stations.

## *Exit here to eat*

**A Which Which Superior Sandwiches** franchise shop has opened at the Dixie Caverns exit off I-81 in Roanoke County.

## *Center for games*

**Roanoke STARCADE**, a 3,000 square foot facility with arcade games and competitions and rental engagements has opened at Roanoke's Center in the Square.

## *Melting pot*

**Virginia Medical Cannabis Coalition** has applied for official trade group status to

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lobby on state regulations; initial members include Columbia Care, PharmaCann, Dharma, Dalitso, and Green Leaf Medical (state's first limited license holders).

clinic at the Alleghany Medical Office building in Low Moor; services provided by Chip Woodyard, PA-C (a native of the area).

## Work it

**Crossfit Unwritten**, a fitness and workout center, has opened in Salem near the intersection of Electric Rd. and Roanoke Blvd.

## Italian scale up

**Lydia's Italian Kitchen** has opened in Salem, a renovated restaurant and upgrade from its former Pizza Pasta Pit near Apperson Drive and Electric Road intersection.

## Happy 50th, lovers

The "Virginia is for Lovers" slogan and motto for Virginia tourism celebrates 50 years of use in 2019; the concept presented by Martin & Woltz (now the Martin Agency) in 1969.

## Movin' on up

**Burns & McDonnell** engineering firm is expanding as has moved into the former Norfolk Southern building on Franklin Road in downtown Roanoke.

combined Lumos (Lumos Networks Corp) and Spirit Communications; the Lumos name to continue service in Augusta, Alleghany, and Botetourt counties.

distribution business, given the prime infrastructure on the 19 acre complex.

## Racing team

**Virginia International Raceway (VIR)** could become the recipient of economic development activities as the City of Danville, Pittsylvania and Halifax counties are looking into forming a regional industrial facility authority.

## Where the jobs are

**Virginia's New River Valley** (Blacksburg-Christiansburg-Radford) was ranked number 6 and Roanoke was ranked number 10 "Top Job Market" in the nation by Zippia, an online career development site.

## Scaling up and out

**The Advancement Foundation**, which runs the Gauntlet business development, mentoring, and competition program, has added technical assistance and proof-of-concept scaling services through its new Innovation Mill program.

## Home sales spike

**Roanoke Valley homes sales** in 2018 hit the highest number since 2006, a record 5,431 MLS listings, with average home sale at \$215,000.

## Animal chips

**Regional Center for Animal Care and Protection (RCAP)** received a \$5,000 grant for microchipping dogs and cats at the shelter.

## Dish out

The large 100,000+ square foot former DISH Network call center at Falling Branch Corporate Park in Christiansburg has been sold to Briar Oak Investments VII who will lease or build-to-suit for what could be a promising new, expanding, or relocating technology or

## Ortho PA comes home

**Virginia Orthopedics** has opened a new orthopedic

## Rename network

**SEGRA** is the new rebranded name of the

*Compiled by Tom Field*

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# Advertiser Index

AAF / Roanoke .....	59	Dr. Pepper Park at the Bridges ....	25
Ameriprise Financial .....	59	Entre Computer Center .....	62
Anytime Fitness .....	36	Freedom First Credit Union .....	2
Bank of Botetourt .....	22	Friendship .....	60-61
B2C .....	41	Garland Properties /	
Berkshire Health &		16 West Marketplace .....	4
Rehabilitation Center .....	23	Gentry Locke .....	37
Berryfield .....	59	Ginger's Jewelry .....	3
Book No Further .....	59	MemberOne Federal Credit Union ..	BC
Carter Bank & Trust .....	56-57	Penworthy / Rachael Garrity .....	59
Citizens .....	58	Proofing Prof .....	59
Community Foundation		RBTC .....	24
Serving Western Virginia .....	43	Roanoke CoLab .....	59
Creekmore Law Firm .....	29	Suggestion Mailbox .....	21
Davis H. Elliot Company .....	59	VCOM .....	35
		Virginia Business Systems .....	63

“ ”  
I'm finding my own path and  
I take a lot of online classes. — Page 40

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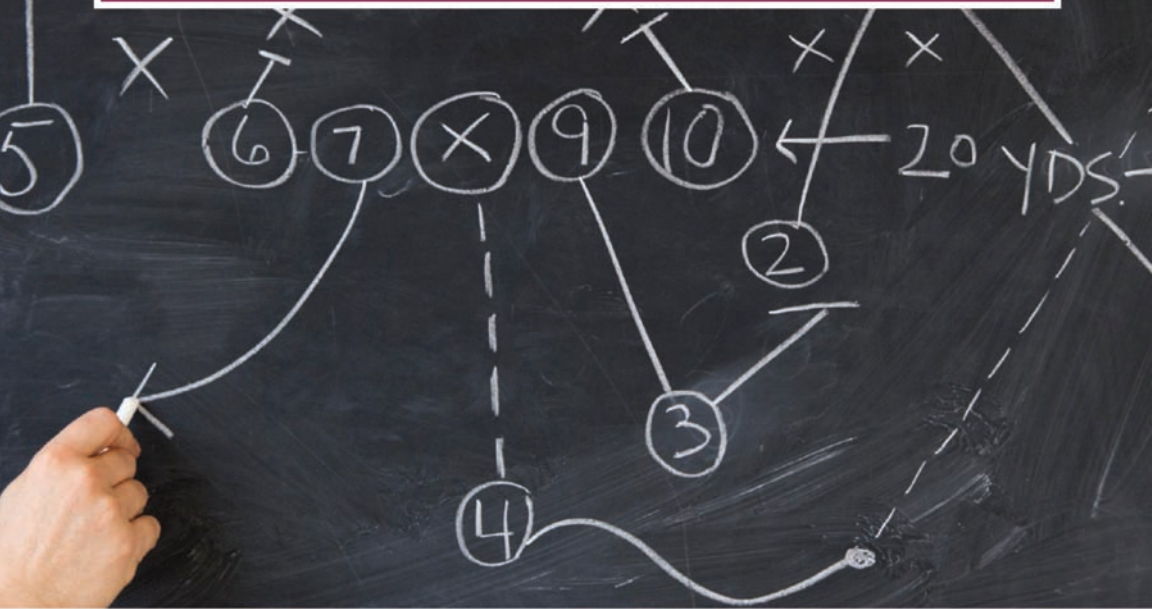
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