

Valley Business

FRONT

**VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**

ROANOKE/NEW RIVER VALLEYS & REGION

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Rolling in NRV

Andy McCready,
Pulaski County

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WELCOME to the FRONT

Every edition of FRONT is filled with information you can use. As a business owner, business professional, employee, community supporter or activist, an engaged citizen or just an individual who cares about what's happening in our region.

We call you a stakeholder. All of you.

But my goodness, just take a gander at this one October 2019 edition alone. I doubt there is a single reader out there in all of Virginia's Blue Ridge or throughout the entire western part of this state—who can't pick up something of use from our content-rich selection.

I'm not even going to mention the stories, the advice columns, the news and career blurbs in the back, the FRONT'n About happenings, the opinions...

There's a Table of Contents on the other side of this page, after all.

But we hope you dig in. Absorb away. And—when you think of something else, newsworthy or impacting our community, that you wish we would cover—by all means, let us know. Call or shoot an email to news@vbFRONT.com.

You're our valued stakeholder, after all.



Tom Field

“
You have to rely on
your superpowers

— Page 22



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We need to pump up the local interest — Page 19

Cover photography of Andy McCready by Tom Field.



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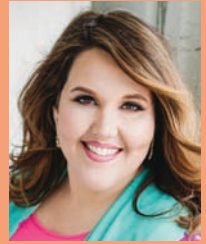
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OCTOBER



Michael Abraham



Beth Bell



Tom Field



Lesa Hanlin



Dan Smith



Nicholas Vaassen

Editorial Advisory Board

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

This board has been given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. "Members essentially have a red telephone at their hand," says publisher Tom Field. "They can inform us best on what is important, what is new, what impacts the greater community. Of course, our red phone reaches right back to them as well, for assignments and insight on our coverage. Although the members are encouraged to keep FRONT updated on their own industries and the key players, they aren't limited to their area of specialty, as all commercial enterprises ultimately collaborate to impact our quality of life here in this part of Virginia." An additional contribution by the Editorial Advisory Board involves direct input on the various FRONTLists we present throughout the year.

CONTRIBUTORS



Bruce Bryan



Jennifer Poff Cooper



Dan Dowdy



Mike Leigh



Gene Marrano



Tom Raub



Kaitlyn Van Buskirk



Sherri Winesett

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 52.

2019 Members

Nancy Agee Carilion (Wellness)
Laura Bradford Claire V (Retail)
Nicholas C. Conte Carilion (Legal)
Warner Dalhouse Retired (Finance)
John Garland Garland Properties (Development)
Nancy Gray Hollins University (Education)
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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.

“Seeing people get excited to make the community stronger is better than a paycheck

— Page 35

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FRONT

On the Move Again

Volvo Trucks in Dublin



Volvo's Latest Announcement >

Executive Summary:
There have been ups and downs—welcome to the world of manufacturing—but now the NRV's largest private employer is moving uphill once again.

By Michael Abraham

Don't tell T. C. Warner that America can't make things any more. "We take great pride in the quality of our product," Warner said. He works in the paint shop at Volvo Trucks North America, at their sprawling 1.6 million square feet assembly plant in Dublin. Volvo is the New River Valley's largest private employer, with around 3500 employees on a nearly 300 acre campus.

The plant is certified under the ISO 9001 quality, ISO 14001 environmental, and ISO 50001 energy standards. It recently announced a planned expansion (including a new 350,000 square foot building for truck cab welding operations) that will invest \$400 million and add another 750+ jobs (within six years or so), the largest single investment in Pulaski County history. Equipment upgrades, vehicle testing technology and improvements to the truck painting operations are part of the investment package.

The plant may be eligible for post-performance grants from a General Assembly program totaling more than



Volvo

T. C. Warner

\$16 million, based on job creation numbers and investment commitment.

With the company for 20 years, Warner says, "The growth from when I started has been unreal. We have a new multi-million dollar paint system. We built a 1.1 mile pre-delivery track." The plant opened 44 ago, originally by White Motors. White was acquired by Volvo in 1981, and the name "White Trucks" was eventually dropped.

"[This is a] monumental expansion project. Their investment and job growth will go a long way to ensuring this company continues to operate and prosper here in our community," said Pulaski County Board of Supervisors chairman Andy McCready when the investment was announced recently.

Vice President and General Manager Franky Marchand has lived in the New River Valley for the last 17 years. He said, "Technology is deeply engrained in the vehicle intelligence we manufacture. For example, Volvo Enhanced Stability Technology (VEST) is an advanced stability control system designed to provide both roll stability and over-steer correction (ESP) in a wide variety of driving conditions."

VADA, (Volvo Active Driver Assist) has been designed with technology partner Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems to provide warnings and assistance in interacting with vehicles in front of a truck. Most safety features are part of Volvo Trucks' standard offerings, like anti-lock brakes. "Safety is one of our three core values," Marchand continued. The company was founded in 1927. Sixty years ago Volvo

““”

This is a
monumental
expansion project.

— Andy McCready



Volvo



Volvo



Volvo

COVER STORY

invented the three-point seat belt “and then we allowed all our competitors to use it.”

The acquisition of White Trucks was driven by Volvo Trucks’ desire for a greater footprint in the USA. “We now have the first Volvo truck ever produced in this facility on display, built at the NRV Plant in September of 1982. In 1996, Volvo released its first truck solely designed for the North American market; the Volvo VN series.”

“The reality of our industry,” Marchand explained, “is ups and downs.” That includes employment numbers at the Volvo plant at times. “Here in North America, trucking is the main way for getting products moved. As any machine ages, it costs more in maintenance than when new. The industry of moving goods is linked to the economy. When consumers are confident in the economy and have money to spend, they consume more.

“Traditionally, trucking companies might use a truck for about eight years. When business for them is good, they may replace more often. It’s cyclical, but historically purchases have gone up. It’s a trend we hope will continue.”

Bigger trucking companies replace their trucks more often, selling them to other shippers. Volvo Trucks continues to improve its designs, providing better fuel



The industry of moving goods is linked to the economy. When consumers are confident... they consume more.

— Franky Marchand



Michael Abraham

Franky Marchand

Direct, indirect—benefactor



Just over the other side of Interstate 81 from the Dublin – Pulaski County's Volvo Truck plant, and up on the high ridge known as Newbern, Virginia, sits the volunteer fire department, and new home of an impressive shiny red fire truck. A truck donated by Volvo, delivered mid-September.

The firetruck makes a perfect backdrop and meeting spot for our FRONTcover model, Mr. Howard "Andy" McCready, Chair of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and the Massie District representative.

"We had to build another building just to house it," says McCready, speaking of the fire truck. He also volunteers for the fire department as an officer and EMT, and is

an obvious fan of the Volvo plant for more than one reason.

"Volvo is a tremendous community steward," McCready says often. Asked about how the County deals with the upticks and downticks that accompany the manufacturer when production orders change over the years, McCready doesn't skip a beat.

"You know, employees know the cyclical nature of the business," he says. "They understand it; and as far as the County goes, we welcome the business even as we want to diversify our economy. At the same time, we appreciate who brought us to the dance," he says, as the shiny Volvo grille emblem sparkles behind him.

efficiencies. Newer trucks have lower operating costs, something the owners measure and manage closely. Actual fuel economy is based upon a myriad of factors (e.g. terrain, aerodynamics, driver skill, load), but is typically 6 to 9 plus miles per gallon of diesel fuel.

Volvo Trucks today is the world's second largest manufacturer of heavy-duty trucks. "The engine has always been a key for us," said Marchand. "Every product we sell, from trucks to



"Andy," as the citizens and folks he works with, call him, says that for forty years, Pulaski County made progress in mining and machining; and today we're talking about industry sectors as diverse as nanotechnology and high tech agricultural production, such as Red Sun Farms. He hints at a new technology support business the County hopes to announce soon, but is obligated not to talk about it, yet.

You can tell he certainly *wants* to share the good news.

Business development is the supervisor's passion, as he owns and operates McCready Lumber Company and Wurno Warehouses,

all in Pulaski County. He seems to easily jump between private and civic enterprises as he has served on several boards with the County, the New River Valley Regional Jail, New River Community Services, and Virginia's First Regional Industrial Facilities Authority. Throw in a part time gig officiating high school sports, and you have an individual connected to just about every activity one could be in his home town—from work to play to public safety to citizen responsibility and engagement.

Volvo would have to build a pretty big truck to haul all of that.

—Tom Field

buses, to mining equipment to construction equipment, has our diesel engine in it. We do industrial transport solutions. We make more diesel engines than anybody else." Every Volvo truck bought and driven in North America is made here.

The Dublin location is an assembly plant, taking components, including those diesel engines, and assembling them into finished trucks. They do robot welding of panels, painting, and assembly.



Volvo

**New River Valley
production plant.**

“

When my grandkids see a Volvo truck, they know their papaw made it.

—TC Warner

Adds T.C. Warner, “work has stayed steady. The pay is good and benefits are great. The company has cookouts and family days. People are happy, friendly. Everybody’s got everybody else’s back.” “When I see a Volvo truck on the road,” Warner continued, “I know my shopkids see it. I want to feel proud of it. Even when my grandkids see a Volvo truck, they know their papaw made it. I take a lot of pride in my job. We don’t let anything out of here that isn’t right.

“American workers take pride in our work. We love our jobs. If someone can learn a trade, he or she can make a good living. I was smart enough to get a trade that got me this job. I have a painting qualification. Plumbing. Air conditioning. Welding. The country needs people who can do these things. American manufacturing is coming back.”

Plant manager Marchand added, “The work ethic, the passion for excellence in the brand and the work we do, is strong here. We have a beautiful new customer center. We want our customers to interact with our employees. We want our employees to know personally the people they’re building trucks for. We found that our employees were craving the interaction with our customers. Our employees are busy and they need to pay attention, but taking 30 seconds to speak with a customer really brightens their day.

Speaking of plant tours, U.S. Virginia Senator Mark Warner made the rounds after the investment was announced by Governor Northam’s office. Warner took the plant “nickel tour,” held a town hall meeting with employees and ventured out to visit with some of the surrounding businesses that support the Volvo plant. “I’m very proud of the fact that when I was Governor

COVER STORY

we helped make one of the earlier expansions take place. This facility will be here for decades to come,” said Warner, who also liked the way Volvo takes care of its workers. “This is a company that provides great healthcare [and] on site medical care.”

“You can’t hide my trucks,” notes Marchand, “our employees see them on the Interstate every day. Customers are proud of putting their names on our trucks. Why not put a face behind that name?”

From a product standpoint, the greatest threat Marchand feels is failure to anticipate customer interests and desires. “It’s not our competitors. We are a premium truck manufacturer. We’re large enough to be at the forefront of technology. We’re releasing a fully electric truck called Vera that is an autonomous (self-driving) vehicle for short distance transport in places like ports and larger logistics areas. We believe the first application of autonomous vehicles is in controlled environments. We have no intention of being left behind.”

The employees are unionized, but Marchand seems to appreciate the partnership his company shares with the union. “Generally, a company that has a union has more rules. There must be rules in a large operation like this.

U.S. Virginia Senator Mark Warner tours the Volvo Truck plant and celebrates the expansion announcement.



Senate Office



But we work with our partner to achieve the best results. Both parties need to understand the partnership arrangement. The companies that see unions coming in are sometimes afraid. When you treat your partner the right way and you're working together for the common call, it's pretty simple. This is modern manufacturing. The dinosaurs are dying.

"I am a manufacturing engineer by education and profession. My whole professional life is manufacturing. What is my aspiration? My passion is to build a product





I can associate with, that has value added, and that has awesome characteristics. That's my mindset.

"I would like to think we're a good neighbor," Marchand said. "Environmental care became a core value in 1973. We have twice won the governor's award for environmental excellence. Our neighbors can rest assured that we're not polluting their air or streams. It is part of our culture; it's simply the way we work and applies to every plant we have, everywhere in the world. It is the right thing to do."

Spencer Hash is a new employee, less than a year on the job. "I've had family here and I always wanted to get here." He's a final line assembly technician. "We see trucks on the highway every day, but I've learned how they get built."

Hash has worked in other manufacturing jobs, but "here, it's about enjoyment and safety. It's a nice environment. It's welcoming and employees are appreciated more than any other place I've worked. In order for your company to grow, you have to have the people in the job be appreciated. I tell my kids when we see a Volvo truck that I helped build it."

"We work with all our partners to be strong and successful," Marchand concluded. "We have to be innovative, competitive, and forward-thinking. It's that simple. Together we will find ways to grow. We're happy where we are. We have a huge responsibility, but we're never complacent." The recent expansion announcement disproves any notion of complacency it would seem for Volvo Trucks North America in Dublin. 

**Customer Center
at sunset.**

“ ”

The work ethic, the passion for excellence in the brand and the work we do, is strong here.

— Franky Marchand



all photos: Dan Smith

Doloris Vest takes care of a customer in the book store's main room.

A downtown Roanoke tradition returns >

Executive Summary:

Book No Further is two years old and just beginning to exert its influence.

By Dan Smith

Roanoke entrepreneur Jim Lindsey once pronounced a good bookstore to be “a vital part of downtown” Roanoke. Lindsey, former publisher of the Blue Ridge Business Journal (predecessor to the FRONT), would know. He amplified the trend in the 1970s with Captain Books on City Market and it progressed through Eclectic Books, Cantos Book Sellers, and Books Strings and Things.

The latest iteration of Roanoke’s independent bookstore standard is Book No Further, which Doloris Vest and her environmental engineer husband Craig Coker opened two years ago this month in a 600-square-foot cubbyhole at 16 West Marketplace on Church Avenue.

They moved to twice the space and nearly twice the number of books (6,000) at 112 Market Street in the heart of Roanoke’s Farmer’s Market in March

of this year. It’s a bigger, better bookstore with three levels, space to sell used books and an expansive list of authors from this region, which is rich in nationally-known writers.

Book No Further is one of two independent bookstores selling new books west of Lynchburg and south of Lexington, Vest says. The other one is in Wytheville. Vest has had a varied background in communications, working in journalism, university marketing and PR, corporate marketing, for a workforce board, and the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce.

Doloris Vest, co-owner of Book No Further.



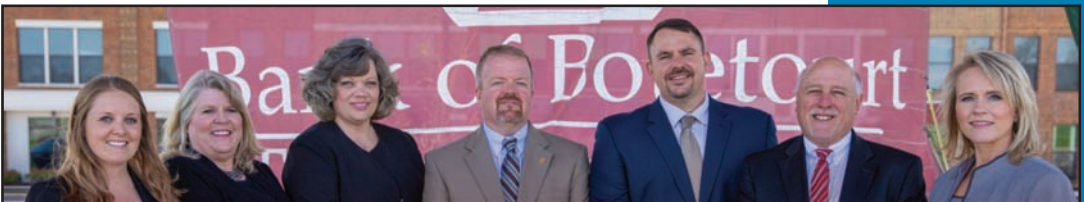


Upstairs is a children's section at BNF.

The new space includes room for about 25 people for author signings and talks, and if more room is needed for a better-known writer—say Beth Macy, Sharyn McCrumb, Rod Belcher, CeCe Bell or Roland Lazenby from the Roanoke Valley - Community High School just down the street on Campbell Avenue has offered its large halls. Book No Further has a three-year lease in its space across the street from the City Market Building. Vest says she and her husband will reevaluate where they are and what they want at the end of that term.

Already she's looking into publishing and offering services like coaching through self-publishing and project management. She has a history of Roanoke on the drawing board for serious consideration. "A lot of people seem to want that," she says.

The clientele for Book No Further, says Vest, is about 50 percent tourist, 50 percent local and she declares, "we need to pump up the local interest" for the winter months when tourism declines. Roanokers, she says, are about evenly divided in reading



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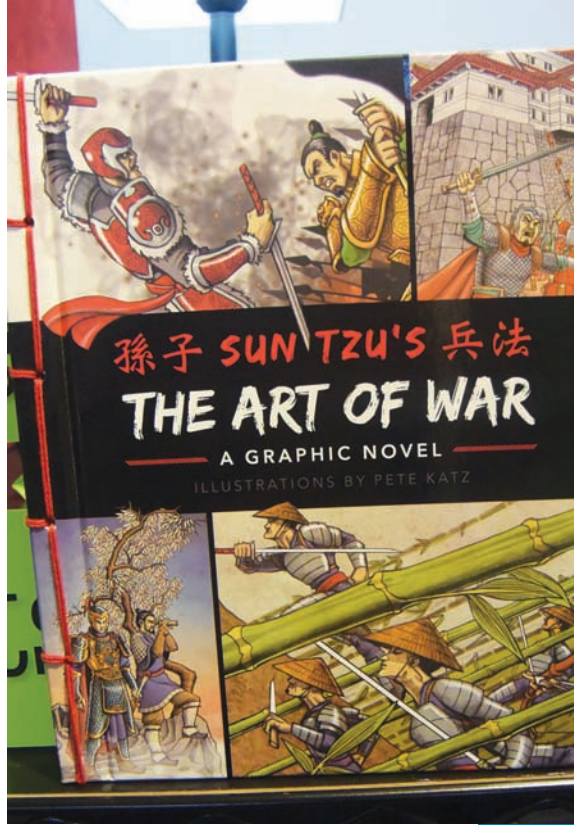
Downstairs is where book signings are held.

preference between fiction and non-fiction. Sales of biography and history are strong. Young people like science fiction, she says, and Book No Further even has a few graphic novels for sale (*The Art of War* by Sun Tzu and *To Kill a Mockingbird* among them).


There is strong presence from locals, but Vest is selective with the self-published books she houses. "They need to be good quality books," she says, and that is not limited to being good reads. They have to look the part. "We turn down books that aren't properly done."

BNF has increased its online presence at booknofurther.com and is selling where "our out of town customers can buy from home," says Vest. The store also has new institutional customers, including the Commonwealth of Virginia, which "has been encouraged to shop local and small." It has also started a podcast series of interviews with notable Roanokers to boost the store's profile in part.

Book discussions/signings remain a solid marketing tool, and it is a profit center. Vest charges some independent writers for their signings, but if they bring a sizable crowd book sales pay for the event. She does not charge those authors with commercial publishers, who take care of the expenses.



Graphic novels have a place.

The store has the classic look and feel of a neighborhood bookstore from the 1940s or 1950s. That's the kind of nostalgia so many people who still read books printed on paper prefer. As Doloris Vest might add, Book No Further, if that's the case. 

A great gift idea.

[for yourself ♦ for others ♦ for your organization]

Just in — from the publisher of Valley Business FRONT and your favorite etiquette columnist. A compilation of advice and instruction that matters now more than ever!

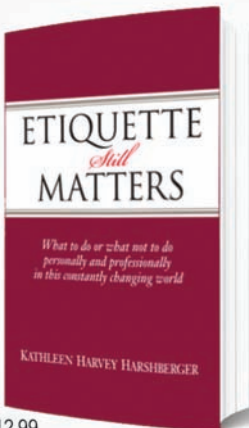
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Influence without authority >

It's easy to identify someone with authority. They are your boss, a police officer, a school teacher who can award you a grade, a parent, or a doctor. Most of our relationships, however, involve influence without authority. Every day we interact with a variety of people over which we have no real authority such as neighbors, co-workers, siblings, or your book club. The most influential of us are skilled at networking, building coalitions, persuading, and negotiating. Leadership author Ken Blanchard says, "The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."


To navigate successfully through all your professional and personal relationships, you have to rely on your superpowers that give you influence. Here is a starter list:

1. Charisma
2. Effective listening
3. Energy
4. Open-minded ness
5. Vision
6. Consistency
7. Dedication
8. Flexibility
9. Integrity
10. Knowledge
11. Likability
12. Persuasiveness

Do any of these resonate with you? Who changes your mind? What characteristics does their power come from?

There are dozens more characteristics that build influence. See more at Grindstone Development's web page <http://grindstonedev.com/personal-power-self-assessment/>

Influence can be both positive and negative. People who are controlling are less influential than those who are achieving. Think of a sports parent who acts like a boss versus one who acts like a coach. Some people lead by wielding power (sports parent boss = military general) where others lead by serving (sports parent coach = Mother Theresa).

Jim Rohn, one of the most insightful leadership authors, says "Never mistake the power of influence." Influence is truly critical in today's society. Author Mario Moussa believes "when we have to use our formal authority to get things done, our leadership has failed". Challenge yourself to reflect on your own superpowers and identify situations that are appropriate for their use. Next, challenge yourself to develop new superpowers. Then act in good faith. That's the path to influence without authority. 

Professional Development

By Lesa Hanlin

Executive Summary:
How to cultivate your professional and personal relationships.

How to build a business model that works >

Do you have an idea or an early start up and you are wondering how to get it off the ground? A great tool to give you clarity and provide direction is the “business model canvas.” The canvas can help validate a path to success and shorten the time it takes to get there while avoiding costly mistakes. The key is to validate the model by gathering massive amounts of customer and marketplace feedback.

The canvas has nine building blocks and some questions that will allow you to assess and design the future model that is needed to grow your enterprise.

1. **Customer Segments** - Who you serve. Who is the value being created for? How many customer segments are there? Who are your most important customers?
2. **Value Proposition** - Problems you are solving and the needs you are satisfying. What needs are you satisfying for each customer segment? Is your value quantitative or qualitative?
3. **Channels** - How you communicate and reach customer segments to deliver your value proposition. How do your customers want to be communicated with? Which channels are working best and are most cost efficient? How will you integrate the different channels?
4. **Customer Relationship** - Types of relationships established with each customer segment. What type of relationship does each customer segment expect? Which are established? How are they integrated with the rest of the business model building blocks?
5. **Revenue Streams** - These are a result of the “value proposition.” What are your customers willing to pay? How would they prefer to pay? How much revenue is generated from each customer segment and what does it contribute to the overall revenue?
6. **Key Resources** - The assets required to offer and deliver what is required to make the business model work. Who are your distribution channels? Are they intellectual, human, financial, physical?
7. **Key Activities** - The most important things that need to be done to make the business model work. What activities are required to deliver your value proposition, maintain customer relationships and ensure distribution channels?



Small Business Tool Kit

By Sherri Winesett


Executive Summary:
Our newest semi-monthly column with tips from a seasoned professional on getting your enterprise up and running starts with a lot of questions to ponder.



Get 'out of the building' and ask your customers and key partners if your theories are in fact true. Go validate your business model.

8. Key Partnerships - Your network of suppliers and partners to make the business model work. Who are your key partners and what resources do they provide? What key activities are they performing and is there more activity required to produce more value from the partnership?

9. Cost Structure - All costs incurred to operate the business model. What are the most important costs to support the business model? Which key activities and resources are most expensive? Are these costs value-driven? What are the economies of scale or scope?

Now that you have answered all the questions, get "out of the building" and ask your customers and key partners if your theories are in fact true. Go validate your business model. 

Resources: see the Virginia Western Community College website RAMP link. Take a free online course on building a startup at udacity.com.

Book: Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers by Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur

Sheri Winesett is currently the Chief Innovation Officer at the Innovation Mill in Vinton. She is also adjunct faculty for Virginia Western Community College teaching Business, Entrepreneurship and Leadership. Reach her at 202.253.2830 or sheri@sheriwinesett.com



A great tool to give you clarity and provide direction is the 'business model canvas.'

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We want you to come to us with your problems and questions as soon as they arise, rather than allowing a problem to fester and grow into a legal disaster. That's why we've developed The Small Business Plan. So you can feel free to call us any time, and ask any question you want about your small business, without fear of excessive and unexpected legal bills.



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Tony Dahbura

Frisbee and Fate? VCOM student saves life during game >

Executive Summary:

*Fun and games isn't always
just fun and games*

Special FRONTreport

Anton "Tony" Dahbura almost skipped his customary weekly Thursday Ultimate Frisbee

game. Thanks to his change of heart, one young man still has a heartbeat today.

For Tony, a second-year student at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM)-Virginia, Ultimate Frisbee can be a reprieve from the rigors of medical school. "You try not to lose track of why you are here — of course, a lot of studying. I don't see my family as much anymore, and my friends will reach out to see how it is going, but it's weird to not have any life updates for them. I don't have the time for a lot of other things."

Even though the sport can be a welcome diversion, it was his medical knowledge



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and not his Frisbee throwing ability that would be valued during this particular Thursday. Between games, he and a teammate, nursing student Alexis Gliniecki, were warming up when they heard a scream. They ran over to find a young man unconscious on the ground having convulsions - and then ceasing to move. Tony knelt to feel for a pulse, finding none. He asked someone to call 911 before pouring cold water on the man's neck due to concerns of heat exhaustion. He then began giving CPR, with Alexis giving breaths between his compression cycles. At first, they were unable to give breaths because the man's tongue kept blocking the airway. After an adjustment, Alexis held the airway open while Tony continued with compressions.

Two weeks earlier a group of high school students was on the VCOM-Virginia campus doing CPR training as part of the Summer Enrichment Experience (SEE) Program. The annual program is an opportunity for area students to experience medical school first-hand and meet current VCOM student mentors. One of these VCOM student mentors was Tony Dahbura. The CPR training is held in VCOM's Simulation Center using manikins with state-of-the-art technology that measures compression depth and pace, oxygen intake, and the likelihood that the CPR is working. Tony now realizes how lucky he was to be a part of teaching that course.

"I'm not anyone who necessarily believes in fate, but I found it to be incredibly lucky that just two weeks ago, I was helping those students. I've been certified in CPR for many years, but I never had to give it before. I was more confident in my CPR abilities because of that," said Tony.

Alexis, the nursing student, assisting Tony

on the Ultimate Frisbee field, also recognizes how prior training helped that day. A former lifeguard, she had given CPR just once before as a 17-year-old. She was invigorated with the opportunity to help someone in need. "Feeling that rush of going into action and being able to help, it was a good feeling."

Back at the ultimate Frisbee field, Tony and Alexis had gone through several rounds of CPR and still could not find a pulse. According to the American Heart Association, CPR, especially if administered immediately after cardiac arrest, can double or triple a person's chance of survival. According to 2014 data, nearly 45 percent of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest victims survived when bystander CPR was administered. But with brain damage occurring in as little as four minutes without oxygen, Tony and Alexis knew time was not on their side. They began another round of CPR.

Helping the high school students two weeks prior helped Tony with his technique, but his mental state under pressure was honed during an even earlier serendipitous event. When students enter the VCOM classroom for the first time, they are asked to choose a seat. This will become their spot for the next two years of medical school. Tony unknowingly decided to sit next to a young woman who would become the president of the VCOM Emergency Medicine club. On his other side sits a student who had delivered a baby before attending VCOM. For the next year and a half, he heard their experiences and absorbed their advice on acting calmly under pressure.

"I know listening to my close friends who are interested in emergency medicine and their prior experience is what helped me."

On the playing field, Tony and Alexis completed



another cycle of CPR. It's now been close to two minutes without a pulse. They both knew they must keep going until EMS arrives or it's unlikely the man will survive. They complete the cycle and feel for a pulse and finally find one. The man gasps for air unconsciously and then, after a few moments, opens his eyes.

Tony knows they were very fortunate to get a pulse back, and that in similar situations it is unlikely medical students or doctors will be nearby. Even if someone has no medical training, Tony stresses just how vital it is to act.


"If you do nothing, the person is already dying. Was I worried about cracking his ribs? Yes. Ribs can heal, but the heart is dying. I would tell people who experience a similar emergency to not be a part of the bystander effect and crowd the victim. If you're not part of the save, be the one who gets people to back away, or who leads the EMS workers to the scene."

The young man was transported to a local hospital with Tony, Alexis, and other close friends following close behind. Later that night, he was able to meet the ER doctor, Brian Ekey, DO, an Assistant Professor for

Emergency Medicine at VCOM-Virginia.

"Dr. Ekey was asking us if we had any questions, and I asked if they were looking for HOCM (Hypertrophic Obstructive Cardiomyopathy), and he was pretty impressed. He said wow how do you know about that? And I said well, Dr. Ekey I'm one of your students."

"This entire experience has really energized me and reinforced my belief that I am in the right field. Everything seemed to all fall into place, from the CPR training with the SEE program to sitting next to EM students, having Alexis a nursing student there with me, and seeing Dr. Ekey at the hospital... you're never going to be ready for it, but you just have to do it. I mean this guy was dying in front of us, and someone had to do it."

Tony Dahbura will have many exams before he becomes a doctor of osteopathic medicine. He will go through many tests to determine his knowledge and readiness to enter the medical field. But during a game of ultimate Frisbee on a hot summer day in Blacksburg, Virginia, he passed a test he will not soon forget. 

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Mutual success >

"When you help someone's boat across a river, you'll find your own boat has reached the shore too."

I'm not sure where this originated, but I first heard this saying from one of my mentors. This simple saying is incredibly powerful because it summarizes a key ingredient for business success.


I've spent my entire 30-year career managing others, leading a department, or improving business processes. In those years, I have studied and experienced many different philosophies and theories on how to help an organization become more successful. In one form or another, all of them encourage helping others before self. Maybe you've heard some of these terms and phrases:

- Customer-centric service
- Servant Leadership
- Patient Centeredness
- Win-Win

Let's face it – most of us are self-centered to some extent. In business, this attitude is reflected when a leader, a team, or a department puts too much focus on what's best for themselves instead of what's best for their internal and external customers and suppliers. It's hard to grow when you focus on yourself.

Your personal and professional success depends on the support of other people. A restaurant can't be successful without good reviews from their patrons. Team members won't be engaged and motivated unless leadership takes care of them and helps them achieve their goals. Suppliers won't be there for you in a crisis if they feel you are always trying to take advantage of them.

I recently shared with one of my clients that I've had good success with the recent team members I've hired. She asked if I had any words of advice for her as she was about to hire a new staff member herself. My advice was simple: make sure that you understand how the candidate's goals will be accomplished by joining her team. In other words, worry less about how the candidate will help you, and more about how you will help the candidate. The better your organization can fulfill the needs of your employees, the greater their engagement, motivation, and retention.

The only hurdle between you and your goals is the support of others. You will have greater success and satisfaction by helping others to succeed with you! 

Send your questions or comments to Mike@OpXSolutionsllc.com

Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

Executive Summary:

It really does work better when everyone feels that "win-win" component.

It's smart to plan >

Systems4Everything

It's an observation and it isn't the case in every circumstance.

For more than two decades I managed sales departments in the television advertising industry. Most of the prospects we spoke to didn't have any kind of advertising budgets or plans in place. They'd often select their buys based on their current circumstances: how they felt at the time, how their cash flow was, or if they needed to make that extra sale.


Now, as an Advertising Czar, I've spent the last ten years working with a lot of business owners – smart people – who have plans in place for everything from time tracking and human resources, to financial reporting and operations. They pay close attention to how their systems keep products or services moving through their processes and wouldn't think of ignoring a monthly report or a problem with production. Yet their marketing and advertising is so often left to chance.

Why Not Plan4Your Marketing?

It's probably because business owners don't understand the power of advertising or marketing. Maybe it happens due to the fact that these parts of a growing business are at times hard to quantify. Whether it's one of these reasons, or it's the result of something else, there's no doubt a smart organization needs to have some sort of a marketing system and advertising plan.

The first step? You start.

It's as simple as that, really. Figure out who you want to speak to, what you want to say, and take the leap. The thing about systems and plans is that you can always improve them. The failure happens when, like many companies, you don't have anything in place at all. Even if you aren't an advertising expert – you have to start somewhere. A business can always make its processes better, but it can't improve anything until that system is in place.

Market (and advertise) away, people – THEN get better at it. 



You have to start somewhere.



A Little Insight

By Bruce C. Bryan

Executive Summary:

Take the leap of faith in your business and invest in a marketing plan.



Radford President shakes things up with school's new presence in Roanoke >

Executive Summary:

The conversation started shortly after he took office says Brian Hemphill.

By Gene Marrano

Just over three years into his tenure as Radford University's seventh president, Brian O. Hemphill Ph.D. presided over a ceremony formally bringing what was Jefferson College of Health Sciences into the family as Radford University Carilion, the end of merger process that was announced in January 2018.

No Jefferson College faculty or staff would lose their job in the transition to RUC Hemphill said in late August, as he was joined for a celebration of the school's inaugural semester by outgoing JCHS President NL Bishop (he's gone back to working for Carilion, which previously operated the school for health care students in nursing and a wide variety of other fields). "It's a team effort – I can't take credit for this," Hemphill said after the changeover was made official, but then he adds that "this conversation started about six months after my arrival."

Hemphill earned his Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of Iowa, after earning a Master's in Journalism and Mass Communication at Iowa State University of Science and Technology – yes, a career in journalism was briefly on his radar screen (more from an academic standpoint) – and a bachelor's degree from Saint Augustine University.

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EXECUTIVE PROFILE

He's a published author with a focus on gun violence and threat preparedness, which are major news stories nationally it seems now on a weekly basis. One reason – Hemphill was a Vice President at Northern Illinois University in 2008 when a lone gunman killed five students and injured 17 others before taking his own life. "It became a part of my passion, a part of my research and of my work, to look at how we can stem the tide of gun violence."

STEM and college student financial concerns are other topics he has written about. If there's not a focus on the economy through preparing students for the real world and jobs, "then what is our purpose?" asks Hemphill. RU will "become a stronger economic engine," in high demand areas he declares. That includes growing the size of the school's student body.


Partnering with Carilion at the school will help leverage that work force development mission. Hemphill lauds Carilion President and CEO Nancy Agee and Executive Vice President Jeannie Armentrout for their support as the JCHS to RUC organizational move became a reality. "Together we're very much forward-focused," said Hemphill from the podium on the official handoff day, as he singled out Agee for her vision and leadership on the merger. Armentrout did much of the legwork on the Carilion side of the equation he noted. Hemphill also recognized local General Assembly members like Nick Rush and John Edwards for their support in Richmond. The Commonwealth of Virginia and accrediting organizations had to sign off on the blending of the two schools.

With so much emphasis on workforce development and with the health care

field seemingly always in a hiring mode, Hemphill said absorbing Jefferson College was a "logical move. We can do so much more together ... to really be able to meet the needs of this region and across the Commonwealth." Radford's existing nursing program already had students at the downtown Roanoke school, sharing space and other teaching technology there with JCHS and Carilion.

There's a multi-year plan in place to bring tuition rates down for the former Jefferson College students, who were typically paying much more than were nursing students at Radford. "By year five it should be totally normalized," says Hemphill. There are around 1100 students taking classes this fall at Radford University Carilion.

Dr. Marisela Rosas-Hemphill – Radford's "First Lady" if you will - and her husband have young twins; Brian Hemphill has two other children, including son Jordan, who will play basketball for the Highlanders after sitting out a transfer year following a move from the University Central Oklahoma. It's been an eventful few years as Dr. Brian Hemphill works towards a vision described on the RU website as transforming Radford University "into an innovative, premier university ... with a keen focus on teaching, research and service."

As for welcoming Radford University Carilion to the RU family this summer: "this was not on my mind when I became president," admits Hemphill, "but this was a natural progression when you think about the long standing partnership and over three decades of working together. I'm beyond excited. This is a great day in the history of Radford University." 



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Mindful Business

By Beth Bell

Executive Summary:

Basically, be a good friend – and do it face to face on occasion.

Make time for relationships >

As busy humans, we get caught up in schedules, to do lists, and our business goals. Much like our personal relationships, we forget to be intentional in keeping our strategic business connections close. The key to maintaining a viable center of influence is staying “top of mind” by nurturing your relationships, much like you would any relationship that’s important to you.

Here are a few ideas for nurturing and maintaining the relationships in your circle.

Quality Time

Facetime will never go out of style. Schedule a monthly in-person coffee meeting or lunch with the connections most viable to your business. Always lead with what’s new for them, a challenge they are currently facing, or a connection you’re going to make for them. Every chance you get, reinforce your value proposition by sharing good news about whom you have helped recently.


Collaborate

Collaborate on a dinner or social outing for mutual prospects and guests. Get together with 3-5 non-competing members of your centers of influence to host a fun outing for several of your clients and guests (new prospects). Regionally, a private wine tasting at a local vineyard, a food or history tour, a spectator sports outing or VIP tent/table at a local event are all fun options.

A few things happen with this type of event. It’s an easier “ask” than a sales presentation, so you are more likely to have a great turnout. Clients and prospects see that you are actually friends with the others in your circle of influence and they will “like, know and trust” them faster for their own business as well. The same will happen for you with their clients.

Reciprocate Referrals

Reciprocate referrals like it’s your job. Gauge your client’s needs for specific services and ask permission to connect them with one of your peers. After you gain permission, send an introductory email to bridge the connection.

The ideas I shared above are meant for your strategic circle of influence, not every person you exchange business cards with. You should also stay in touch via text, email, and phone by sending “I thought of you” messages about a new connection, helpful business articles and tips. Basically, be a good friend. 

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

Community Christmas Store brings holiday cheer to more >

For many of us, the upcoming holiday season truly is the most wonderful time of the year. From decorating cookies, exchanging gifts, and enjoying time with our family and friends, it is a time that instills a feeling of joy and peace. Yet, we often find ourselves easily distracted with the endless shopping lists, holiday parties, and constant cooking. We forget that others right down the street could be struggling and need our help to make their holiday less painful and more enjoyable.

Some parents in our community are struggling to pay their utilities and keep food on the table. They feel an immeasurable amount of pressure to give their children an unforgettable holiday, but simply lack the financial means. No parent should be faced with the decision to either keep the heat on or give their little girl a new winter jacket, which is why the Community Christmas Store was created.

Since 1993, The Community Christmas Store of the Roanoke Valley has been serving families in need during the holiday season. Every year, they help hundreds of families and bring happiness to thousands of children and adults. The organization is operated solely by volunteers who work tirelessly to create a spectacular "store," welcoming pre-qualified families to shop for their particular needs at no cost. Each year, volunteers find a large, vacant space in town to set up the store. Last year alone, the CCS served over 400 families during just two days of operation.

This year, the organization's goal is to provide presents and other necessities to 600 families in our community. They are always looking for more volunteers, so if you are able to help they would love to have you on their team. Most people can say that they have given a gift to someone they know and love - but fewer are able to know that they made a difference in a stranger's life. Thanks to the mission and volunteers at the Community Christmas Store, hundreds of families and donors will experience the wonder of giving and receiving. 📺

Kaitlyn H. Van Buskirk is a Grants Associate for Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia (Formerly Foundation for Roanoke Valley) see cfwesternva.org



Good Work

By Kaitlyn Van Buskirk

Executive Summary:

Because we all need a little Christmas in our lives, the CCS hopes to expand its reach this season.



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Back on track >

Executive Summary:

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce has fully emerged from a rough patch with renewed energy - and now a new home.

By Jennifer Poff Cooper

Sharon Scott loves her job 98% of the time*. Moving from volunteer in 2011 to Executive Director in 2013, Scott has helped steer the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce past an embezzlement scandal to construction of its new home.

With a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech in human resource management and leadership training and development, Scott was a natural fit when the previous Executive Director, Catherine Sutton, resigned. Scott took the interim position offered because she had found her volunteer work there gratifying, but she had no intention of applying for the permanent job.

However, when she saw the “outrageous demands” applicants made — six-figure salaries, country club memberships, Hokie football tickets — she became angry. She knew that with the chaos the Chamber had been through after the 2003-2009 President and CEO was accused of mismanaging funds,

it could not meet such terms. So she decided to throw her hat in the ring.

Six years later, Scott still bubbles with enthusiasm. Scott credits Sutton with rebuilding trust, “stopping the hemorrhaging of members,” and getting the Chamber past “doom and gloom.”

Now the Chamber’s biggest asset is a “phenomenal” board and staff, Scott said. The board is selected by other board members to represent different sectors and demographics. Because the concentration of power led to trouble before, said Scott, there are now checks and balances. There is always someone on the board who served during the “dark time,” she said, who could raise a red flag if mistakes were repeated.

Sharon Scott





Similarly, the Chamber staff “works with not for me,” said Scott. Regarding the other three employees, “we have great chemistry.”

Scott touts Leadership NRV as a “stellar” program which has been recognized at the national level. She recognizes that companies investing \$900 for an employee to participate need a return on their investment. The program, therefore, focuses on making connections, developing skills, and providing new business prospects for each of the year’s 27-30 graduates. “That’s the secret sauce,” said Scott.

There will be 90 programs delivered in 2019, including the popular Eggs & Issues breakfast talks and Business After Hours, both of which are outgrowing their spaces, said Membership Chair Henry Bass.

The tagline of “Connect. Engage. Prosper.” encourages symbiotic relationships. But Scott has drawn a hard line, she said, on the purpose of the Chamber; it is to be a nexus of business connections - not a simply a social club.

“Sharon turned it around. She encouraged the board to fill seats with engaged business leaders, not just social folks who happened to own a business. The result is that Chamber events now attract leaders who want to grow, and see Montgomery County grow,” said Bass.


There have certainly been challenges.

Initially Scott said, the budget was “what woke me up at 3 a.m.” She wanted to pivot from spending an hour at board meetings discussing financials and membership levels to serving the needs of members. Still, Scott would like to see retired the remaining \$10,048 debt of the \$75,000 borrowed in 2010 to keep the Chamber afloat.

This debt concerned Scott about the Chamber’s new building, but she said the board recognized the future cost of not moving quickly on an opportunity. She loves that the property on Laurel Street is centrally located, just nine minutes from downtown Christiansburg and Blacksburg.

Scott prefers to discuss the Chamber’s “direction for the future” as opposed to a “plan,” which she feels is too rigid a description. Being flexible and able to move swiftly, to deliver on promises to members is important. Just like a business some might say. The Chamber will continue to advocate for members. Sometimes that means simply providing members facts, and sometimes it means addressing the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors to ensure it considers businesses’ needs.

The story of rebuilding and rebranding the Chamber continues under Scott: “seeing people excited to make the community stronger is better than a paycheck.”

**The 2% Scott dislikes? Time spent doing minutes.* 



On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:
*Autonomous technology
and artificial intelligence
are all the rage; humans
need not apply.*

Hello, Jetsons >

Here's a serious question: What can't be automated?
Or maybe the better question: What won't be automated?

Our FRONTcover story features an industry where this question is already being answered. Autonomous vehicles are already on our roads, and for the trucking industry, there is a lot of promise for freight moving efficiency, transportation safety, and economic progress.

Unless you're a truck driver or owner-operator. Your economic progress has been threatened.

But it's not just the roads and distribution that will change.

Heavy equipment in mining and construction will likely adopt autonomous technology in more comprehensive fashion way ahead of the over-the-public-road applications. (And for the record, the military gets to put these technologies into practice before everything else as well.)

In any case, the future is vehicle operation—without operators.

It's precisely this kind of technology that can step in and help us overcome much of our crumbling infrastructure. Autonomous technology could eventually rebuild our roads and repair our bridges... essentially "the robots would be developing their own systems."

Where have we heard that before?

As this autonomous transportation and equipment sector advances at a pace where we have no idea when the majority "cutover" happens, we have a much bigger question to answer.

Just what is happening to labor?

What will happen to the job pool for those who don't design, build, or operate the technology? (And of course, our minds are really blown when we consider A.I. — as artificial intelligence could conceivably replace even those positions.)

The question nags at us because the exchange of labor for all of our sustenance is how our current society is defined. Without sounding too sci-fi, are we going to be able to just sit back and let the "robots" take care of us?

Non-human operation of our roads, airways, waterways, farms, and factories is as exciting as it is concerning and surreal. When folks realize that scary machine just repaired

continued on Page 39

The Brew Wars: who's hot who's not? >

Unless a miracle occurs by the time you read this Ballast Point will have shut down its gleaming, scenic showcase tasting room and restaurant at its Botetourt County beer production plant, which is remaining open. Rather, it may have been the parent company, publicly-traded Fortune 500 Constellation Brands, which has a duty to provide the utmost value to stockholders. Shutting down the tasting room/kitchen – a former employee told me the restaurant had not been a money maker except for the first few months after it opened in June 2017 – might have been easier than fixing it.

Or maybe Ballast Point was just too far away from the major population base in Roanoke. Perhaps craft beer lovers found what they need elsewhere – better tasting beers in styles they like more – like New England IPA's at Big Lick and Olde Salem Brewing, or some interesting sours at Starr Hill. In fact in the news release Ballast Point sent out explaining the tasting room closure it cited that, "growth in craft beer is being driven largely by local brands. With that, we are appropriately reallocating Ballast Point investments."

Big Lick Brewing Company's Chuck Garst said he hated to see that 30 or more people might lose their jobs at Ballast Point, but added that "some of the regional large breweries are getting the hurt put on them by us little guys that are popping up in the neighborhoods everywhere."

Perhaps the expanding number of small-batch brews Martin Keck is offering at southwest Roanoke County's Barrel Chest – along with beers from a variety of other craft brewers – made the 5-10 minute drive there more enticing than the half hour trek to Ballast Point in Daleville. There were also grumbles that the food was overpriced, service was slow and some didn't like having to order at the counter for meals that were not fast food-priced.

So no tasting room any more but a major production facility for Ballast Point; meanwhile Deschutes may never build a plant as planned in Roanoke – but it's ideally located downtown tasting room appears to be crowded most of the time. It also seems to me as a beer fan that Deschutes has picked up its game recently and created some more diverse, better beers that fit the market here. There's also Three Notch'd, Parkway and Soaring Ridge locally.

There have been casualties: Roanoke Railhouse, Flying Mouse and Ober Brewing Company are gone (all suffered from poor locations for starters). Meanwhile by late Fall perhaps Twin Creeks Brewing Company plans to open a second location inside the historic Brugh Tavern at Explore Park. Stay tuned; I will continue to do my, ahem, field research. 🍷



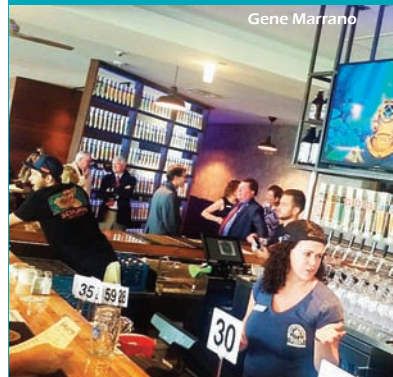
Gene Marrano

There's something happening here

By Gene Marrano

Executive Summary:
Winners, losers and the walking wounded on the local craft beer scene.

**Ballast point Opening Day
June 2017**





Guest Commentary

By Tom Raub

Executive Summary:
At a Business Roundtable, more than 180 US Companies concluded that Corporate America has a responsibility for providing economic benefit to all stakeholders, not just its investors; here's a local business operator's response.

Expanded responsibility >

Last month the Business Roundtable released a statement redefining the purpose of a corporation. It was met with both applause and derision. I am one who is applauding and find the derision myopic.

In 1988 I completed my undergraduate work with degrees in Economics and Political Science at the University of Richmond. A short time later I entered Virginia Tech's MBA program, which I completed in 1992. In terms of macroeconomic theory, my education was guided by the Chicago school of thought led by Milton Friedman. As an impressionable young man, I believed it when I was taught the sole purpose of a corporation was to maximize shareholder value.


As I left Virginia Tech and began my journey in corporate America, I carried Friedman's admonition with me. After several years I reached a point where I realized something just wasn't right. I couldn't really put my finger on it, but I had this innate suspicion there had to be more to it than what we were doing. Don't get me wrong. I worked for a good company that did many good things, but I knew we could do better. I left corporate America to search for that something better. My search led to the discovery and personal adoption of two life-altering concepts: Servant Leadership and Conscious Capitalism.

According to Robert Greenleaf, who coined the term Servant Leadership in his classic essay of 1970, *The Servant as Leader*, "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature." For too long corporate America has been controlled by the "leader first" mentality.

Operating hand-in-hand with Servant Leadership, Conscious Capitalism operates on four primary tenets: higher purpose, stakeholder integration, conscious leadership, and conscious culture and management. In their 2014 book, *Conscious Capitalism*, John Mackay (of Whole Foods) and Raj Sisodia write, "Conscious Capitalism is an evolving paradigm for business that simultaneously creates multiple kinds of value and well-being for all stakeholders: financial, intellectual, physical, ecological, social, cultural, emotional, ethical, and even spiritual. This new operating system for business is in far greater harmony with the ethos of our times and the essence of evolving beings."

It was with great surprise when I read the Business Roundtable's statement on the purpose of a corporation. While the statement did not specifically mention Servant Leadership and Conscious Capitalism, it was in essence an affirmation of these philosophies.

While it may sound such, these philosophies are not some "touchy feely" approach, however they are a more human approach. Fiduciary responsibility and team member accountability are of paramount importance to both. For those that met the Business Roundtable's statement with derision, believing shareholders will be relegated to some lower status with a stakeholder maximization approach, the numbers simply don't support their fears. As Raj Sisodia, David Wolfe, and Jag Sheth note in their 2014 book, *Firms of Endearment*, their study of financial returns over a ten-year period showed firms of endearment outperforming the S&P average annual return by 13.1% to 4.12%. The stakeholder model is better for shareholders, and ultimately for society, because it takes a long-term view of profit maximization in which caring for all the stakeholders ultimately leads to better financial performance.

While I find some irony that Jamie Dimon, CEO of JP Morgan Chase, was the primary spokesperson in the statement's release (JP Morgan Chase and other Wall Street banks and hedge funds have been the primary drivers of the short-term profit maximization approach this statement rejects), I applaud the Business Roundtable in their principled stand in support of a better way to conduct business. Businesses, not government, are the real change agents moving society positively forward. It's time we take that responsibility seriously and this new paradigm is just what we need. 

Field / On Tap

from Page 36

a patient's heart with precision no human surgeon could ever match, we'll appreciate the incredible advancements our future holds. And when an entire country is destroyed by an incredible non-human programmed military strike, we'll long for the good old days.

And to think there are people who are upset because their favorite fast food restaurant installed a kiosk for taking orders.

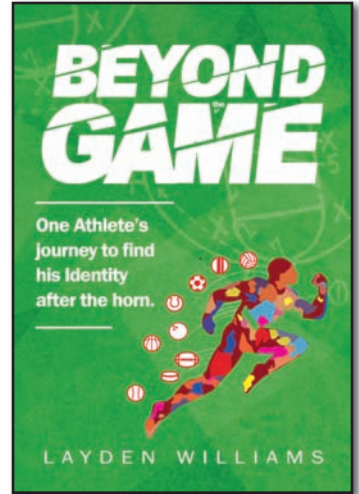
The robots are laughing. 



My search led to the discovery and personal adoption of two life-altering concepts: Servant Leadership and Conscious Capitalism.

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



Switching gears

Layden Williams was Donzell Williams when he was a high school basketball standout at Glenvar. Then he played at Catawba College and even had a pro tryout with the Roanoke Dazzle. After graduate school at Radford it took him time to figure out what he wanted to do. Williams has now penned a new book on that subject, *Beyond the Game: One Athlete's journey to find his Identity after the horn*, (Itasca, 2019) which he says you don't have to be a former athlete to relate to. It's available on Amazon. "I still wasn't sure what my passion was, what my next step would be," Williams said just before a book signing at 202 Social House last month that he said went "very well."

Now living in Charlotte, Williams is transitioning to a role where he will help other ex-athletes make that move to another career and the rest of their lives. "At the end of the day you're going to have to be good at something besides your sport – or whatever it is that you're known for, whether that's a sport, or cooking or dancing. You don't want to be boxed in." Williams was back in Roanoke again recently, to record a podcast with his cousin Xavier Duckett, an entrepreneur working out of the new 601 Inc. business incubator in Northwest Roanoke and a community activist.

—Gene Marrano

Grumpy old man

I'm sure you've met Mary Miller's protagonist narrator in *Biloxi* (Liveright; 2019). He probably lives down your street. The divorced, retired, cynical 63-year old skulks about his house, waiting for an uncertain inheritance check and

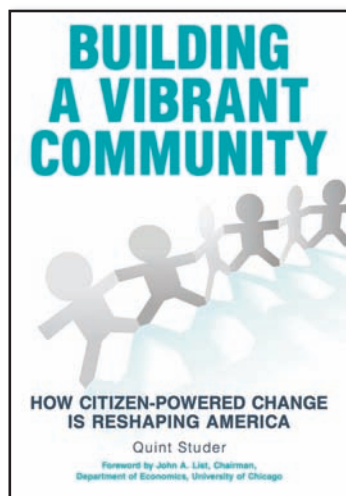
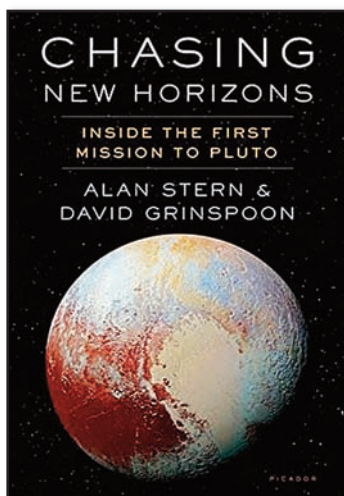
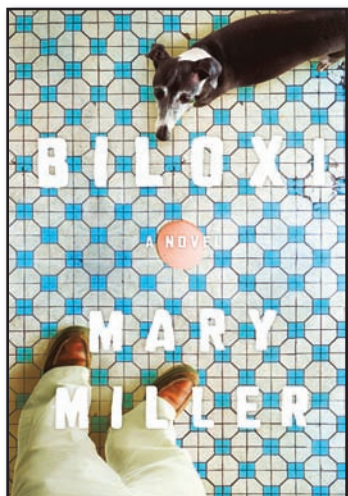
occasional Chili's leftover meal from his ex-brother-in-law. To infuse at least one noteworthy event in his current state, he adopts a dog. He meets a woman or two in the briefest encounters, attends his granddaughter's birthday at the end—and the rest of our story... is as mundane as real life for so many of our ordinary souls. And yet we still have a story. Without adventure, dynamic climaxes, or melodrama.

Louis McDonald, Jr, admits he's going through "a three-quarter-life crisis," because it was too late now to be a mid-life one. He sums up the essence of his life's great observation when he exclaims, "Dogs would escape and bank accounts would dwindle and women would leave, f*** you every which way, and you would get new ones, or you wouldn't. It didn't matter in the end." But despair not—in *Biloxi* we might just exit stage right with the tiniest redemption. And that's something, yes?

—Tom Field

Perseverance pays off

From the time it was first conceived and championed until the time New Horizons actually completed its flyby of Pluto – taking some stunning pictures and other visual measurements of what is the outermost known planet in the solar system – the thousands of people who worked for NASA and other related parties had to endure a journey of almost 26 years. *Chasing New Horizons: Inside The Epic First Mission To Pluto* (Picador, 2018, now in paperback) details the determination not to let the dream of exploring Pluto die – even after it had been "demoted" to dwarf planet status.



The team led by NASA's Dr. Alan Stern, also the book's co-author with Dr. David Grinspoon, pushed for New Horizons, changing the mission's scope and spacecraft design often as its budget decreased – after beating out several other more experienced teams for the right to pursue their dream. After all they reasoned, NASA had already been to every other planet in the solar system – so why not Pluto? A dream perhaps that recalled the drive to send men to the moon via Apollo.

It took New Horizons 9 years to reach Pluto after its 2006 launch. Then teams on the ground had four hour lag times each way when sending and receiving messages or data from the spacecraft. *Chasing New Horizons* is a fascinating story for those with a technical bent, or perhaps from a manufacturing background where course corrections are often the norm. Not to mention stunning photos of the icy Pluto surface, its planetary partner/largest moon Charon and several smaller moons. Fun fact: it took New Horizons a year to send back all of the data it collected from Pluto as it flew off into deeper space after the close flyby.

—Gene Marrano

Downtown traffic

Downtowns are hot right now. A great walkable, livable downtown attracts young talent. (These days they want to work, live, and play in the same place.) It boosts the tax base. It gets citizens engaged and activated and generates enthusiasm for further growth. It's the heart and soul of a growing, thriving community. So if you've got revitalization on your mind, Quint Studer says you must start by building a vibrant downtown.

And the first order of business is non-negotiable: *programming*.

Essentially, programming means creating activities that drive people downtown.

"You want to get citizens and visitors alike to hang out downtown so they'll shop, eat, drink, and maybe stay overnight," notes Studer, author of *Building a Vibrant Community: How Citizen-Powered Change Is Reshaping America* (Be the Bulb Publishing; 2018) and founder of Pensacola's Studer Community Insti

Of course, programming is just one ingredient of a thriving downtown. The others are retail/entertainment, office space, and residential. But if you don't begin with events that draw people downtown in the first place, you'll never get to the stage where they want to shop, work, and live there.

A few tips to help you effectively program your downtown include: creating a regularly occurring public event that showcases your downtown business; inexpensive ways to drive traffic during the off-season; permanent structures to accommodate outdoor open markets; public gathering places that make people feel welcome; street musicians playing on weekends; downtown playground or interactive water feature; marketing activities and the feelings they create; downtown bike share program.

—Dottie DeHart

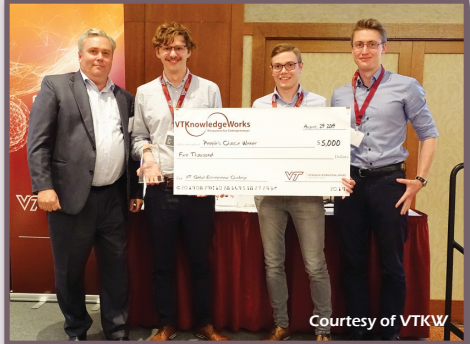
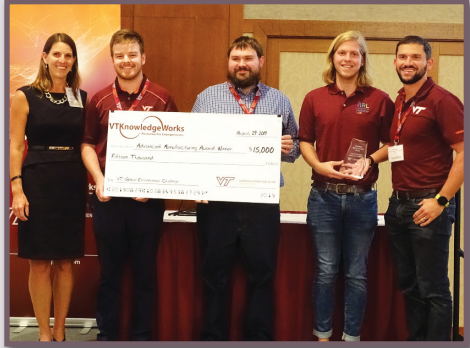
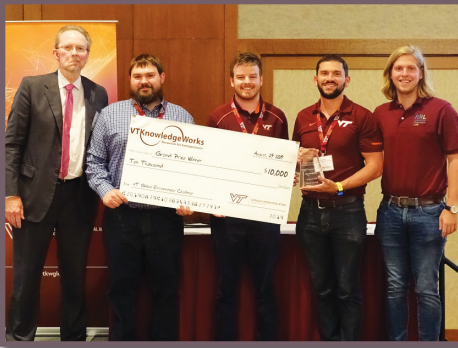
The reviewers: **Gene Marrano** is a news journalist and editor of FRONT; **Tom Field** is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; **Dottie DeHart** is a publicist in Hickory, NC.



Scenes from the porch >

Front Porch Fest was held Aug. 29–Sep. 1 at Spirithaven Farm in Stuart County; a music festival featuring Americana, rock, jazz, funk, eclectic, and other independent genres from bands like Donna The Buffalo, Marvelous Funkshun, Dirk Quin Band, and Striking Copper (shown above), Big Daddy Love, The Larry Keel Experience, GOTE, Dangermuffin... over 30 groups to a well-populated, but intimate feeling crowd (in fact, staff shirts were printed with "Family") who enjoyed perfect weather on the farm/camp-like rolling hill setting, accommodating four stages for the decade old event.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



Global ideas >

VT Global Entrepreneur Challenge held its awards banquet on Aug. 29, showcasing teams and their ideas, including the grand prize winner (\$10,000) and advanced manufacturing winner (\$15,000) Maroon Assistive Technologies (Virginia Tech) and its non-motorized exoskeleton product; information technology winner (\$15,000) Caressoma (Zurich University) sports injury prevention system; and people's choice winner (\$5,000) Real42 (Vienna University) interactive floor plan and property staging visualizations. The competition was part of a 10-day student entrepreneurship program, with international hosting, workshops, recreational and educational visits, and the presentations.



Sans gluten >

Beliveau Estate in Montgomery County celebrated its new gluten free beer release and brewery on Sept. 11 with a ribbon-cutting. The popular winery, bed and breakfast, event venue added the brewery, which currently features an IPA, an English Bitter, and Brunette Ale to complement its offering and diversify patrons. Proprietors Yvan and Joyce described the process and benefit of gluten free, emphasizing individuals with intolerances; and because the brewing must be kept separate, a traditional option would also be available, provided by Parkway Brewing.



Tech trek >

RAMP regional accelerator held its annual Demo Day on Sept. 9 at Virginia Western Community College, where new venture startups or expansions (with a tech-focus) were presented to a near full auditorium. This year's cohort included five members: Prescription Soil (soil testing); FAVE (autism and other communication/intellectual disability inclusion support for business); Point 93 (retail pricing / customer data capture system); MicroHarmonics (tech components for testing, measurement, telecom, security sector); and Ticket Spicket (event ticketing platform). Over 50 mentors guide the entrepreneurs.



Derailed >

Norfolk Southern has furloughed around 130 employees from its East End shops and Shaffer's Crossing maintenance barn in Roanoke, after announcing a corporate plan to become more streamlined and operate more efficiently earlier this year. The move had long been rumored locally and a downturn in the coal hauling freight business may be one reason. Across from the East End shops where locomotive

engines are repaired, Freight Car America will shut its production down completely in November – moving that work to its hub in Alabama and to a new facility it intends to build in Mexico.



Major food donation pledge >

Food Lion is picking it up a notch across its ten-state footprint in the battle to end "food insecurity." After meeting its goal to donate 500 million meals to Feeding America-Southwest Virginia and other programs 18 months ahead of schedule, the North Carolina-based grocery retailer will now aim to donate a BILLION meals

by 2025. Roanoke area director of Operations Rob Ward (pictured) made that announcement recently with Feeding America President and CEO Pamela Irvine (at podium) on hand.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



5 points, 2 years >

5 Points Music Sanctuary (and its Foundation) throws open its doors on the little repurposed church on Roanoke's Maple Avenue on Sept. 13 like it has done over and over, to the point making it difficult to believe the venue has been operating only two years. Roots of Creation plays tonight, and founder / director Tyler Godsey repeats his nightly reminder of the mission of 5 Point for music therapy, education, and hearing loss advocacy. Subpac Initiative allows audiences to "pursue the power of sound in all its glory" with a multisensory experience.

More LOVE >

The new **Black Dog Salvage** outdoor music venue they've christened as "The Dog Bowl," has its own LOVE sculpture, which also honors the 50 year old Virginia is for Lovers campaign. It is fashioned out of – what else? – recycled materials.



Catherine Fox

New season >

The **Roanoke Symphony** kicked off its 2019-2020 season of Masterworks and Pops concerts with a "Symphony Under the Stars" at Elmwood Park in late August. The free event was also the finale of the first-ever Star City Arts Festival. The RSO season offerings include Mozart, Strauss, Beethoven, Gershwin - and pops concerts that feature Sinatra and Sting.





Old yellow stuffing >

United Way of the New River Valley finishes another year of Stuff the Bus with a mission to send kids back to school prepared to learn. This year the organization served over five hundred kids in the NRV; loading up school supplies in buses at Christiansburg WalMart and other drop-off locations.



Hatchet job >

Axe throwing is the latest craze, somersaulting its way into public venues like bars (and their own spaces such as the new opening of Blue Ridge Axe Throwing on Shenandoah Ave in Roanoke). Here, contestants try out their skills at a popup event at Awful Arthur's seafood restaurant at Olde Salem Days festival Sept. 14 (oyster shells are from the smoker).



Standalone STEM >

Virginia Western Community College has opened its new, \$34 million (including new state of the art equipment) 72,000-square-foot STEM Facility on Colonial Avenue. Students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics classes were taking classes in the new building when it opened at the end of August. School president Dr. Bobby Sandel, STEM dean Amy White and other VWCC officials helped open the facility.

Train spotting? >

The **New River Train Observatory** in Radford was dedicated last month - a railroad viewing platform designed and built by Virginia Tech graduate students on the grounds of the Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery. It is described as a project that "brought together community members, the wood products industry and university faculty and students to create a concept that merges economic development with history and tourism."



Blue Ridge Beverage matriarch honored >

Roanoke College has recognized former president and current chairman emeritus of Blue Ridge Beverage Company, **Regine Archer**, for her contributions to the city and college communities. The award is given each year to a Salem resident who has made significant professional and civic impacts. It is named for Dr. Charles Brown, the College's first dean and a former mayor of Salem. Archer was born in Poland and hid from the Nazis during World War II. After emigrating to America in 1950 she and her late husband James Archer purchased Blue Ridge Beverage Company and helped grow it into one of the largest whole beverage distributors in Virginia. Regine Archer took over as company president after James' death in 1972.





New home for seniors >

The **Woodland Hills Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care** on Ogden Road in southwest Roanoke County is now open. The mammoth building stands on a lot that was vacant and for sale for many years. It's the 9th community for Retirement Unlimited Inc. and features care levels for independent living, assisted living, and Inspiritás, what RUI calls its vision and adaptation for memory care. Woodland Hills features almost 100 studio, one and two bedroom units, along with a theater, library, bistro and walking trails.



Food for Good >

One of the region's largest employers – **Kroger** - teamed up with **Habitat for Humanity** of the Roanoke Valley for a first time event called Happy Homes, Happy Fridges, in late August – offering \$100 Kroger gift cards to every homeowner who has ever had a volunteer-built house built for them. Since 1986 local Habitat teams have constructed almost 250 homes, mainly in low income neighborhoods.



Heart-pumping bike rides >

The **Go Cross** cycling event returned to Fallon Park in southeast Roanoke City over the Labor Day weekend, taking place on what is billed as the only permanent cyclocross course in Virginia. Around 1000 amateur and pro cyclists of all ages and skills – many from outside the valley - were expected to race around and around on a closed loop course that included grass, gravel, mud, a flyover ramp and manmade barriers. A healthy turnout of spectators were on hand as well.



Warner on healthcare >

US Senator **Mark Warner** toured several units at **Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital**, then met with Carilion Clinic executives, local non-profit leaders and other invited guests at a healthcare roundtable. Tweaking – not ending – the Affordable Care Act, putting an end to high dollar “surprise billing” and lowering the cost of prescription drugs were on the senior senator’s agenda.

Advertising now >

AAF Roanoke advertising club held a “State of Advertising 2019” panel at the Roanoke Higher Education Center on Sept. 18 with Lance Morgan, Anstey Hodge Advertising Group; Phyllis Weber, The Roanoke Times; Todd Marcum, Access Advertising / PR; Renee Alarid, Moss Arts Center Virginia Tech; and Connie Stevens, United Way of Roanoke Valley. Panelist spoke on the new challenges and opportunities in digital, pros and cons of some of the latest design trends, and how to navigate an entry into the advertising profession.



Eye-opening stroll >

On the opening day of classes, Associate Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine Dean **Dave Trinkle** led many of the 43 first year students on a “health walk” to visit Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and non-profits like the Bradley Free Clinic. The greenway system was employed as well to get around and the goal was to familiarize new students with Roanoke – and with some of the ways health care is delivered in the valley. There was also a half-way stop at Blue Cow Ice Cream on a hot day.





Flashback Friday fun >

The Tom Petty tribute band **Wildflowers** was back at **Dr. Pepper Park** in Roanoke last month, their third year at the outdoor venue, playing nothing but Petty favorites. Park president Waynette Anderson says the Flashback Friday series of tribute bands has been so successful this year she will add more dates when the park returns in 2020. **Valley Business FRONT** sponsored the gig and commanded the VIP Skybox.



New housing at Hollins >

The first new student housing to be built on the **Hollins University** campus in 50 years are the four buildings in Phase I of a two-phase project. Phase I will house 40 students. The new multi-room housing was built where faculty and staff homes were torn down. The architectural firm Hanbury of Blacksburg worked on the planning and designing of the student village, which opened in time for the new academic year. The project is described as being eight years in the making, from planning to fundraising to construction.



Summit View takes off >

Construction is underway at the 550-acre **Summit View Business Park** in Franklin County off US 220 south of Boones Mill. ValleyStar Credit Union broke ground last month on its \$7 million, 19,000 square foot administrative campus, calling it Phase I of a two-part build. Before the ribbon cutting ValleyStar President/CEO Lee Morgan was presented with a mountain bike he can use to get around the site, which is largely mounds of earth as the former farmland is prepped for future tenants. When it's filled – that could take well over a decade - Summit View may bring more than 2000 jobs to the county. Board of Supervisors chairman Cline Brubaker says Franklin County is now a "major player" when it comes to attracting businesses to the region. A second company, Stik-Pak Solutions, will soon begin building a 100,000 square foot \$14 million facility at the park, which will also feature recreation amenities and a community pavilion.



Helping hungry students >

With a check from Kroger and assistance from Kraft Heinz, **Virginia Western Community College** has opened a food Co-op in the Student Life Center, where students who are struggling to make ends meet can find grab and go items they can heat and eat while at school – or food they can bring home to prepare for a family meal. It's free, operates on the honor system and is actually open to all VWCC students. Amanda Mansfield, Virginia Western's Philanthropy Director, says, "we truly believe that if we can fuel their bodies, we can fuel their minds." The Educational Foundation will raise money to keep the Co-op pantry stocked.

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Abraham is the owner of The Threshold Center, an industrial shell facility in Christiansburg and co-owner (with his wife Jane) of publisher Pocahontas Press. He has written eight regionally themed books (four each fiction and non-fiction), the latest of which is *Chasing the Powhatan Arrow*, a travelogue in economic geography from Norfolk through Roanoke to Cincinnati. [rmichael@mabrahamauthor.com]

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Nicholas Vaassen is a graphic designer with 18 years experience, specializing in publications. His design projects include FRONT, lifestyle, real estate, municipal, classified sales and cultural organization magazines in Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets. [nvaassen@berryfield.com]

Kaitlyn Van Buskirk is a grants associate with Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia. Her experience includes development, planned giving, philanthropy, and fundraising roles with nonprofits and community service organizations, and she has a BA from Sweet Briar College focused in business, management, marketing, and related support services. [kaitlyn@cfwesternva.org]

Sheri Winesett is currently the Chief Innovation Officer at the Innovation Mill in Vinton. She is also adjunct faculty for Virginia Western Community College teaching Business, Entrepreneurship and Leadership. Reach her at 202.253.2830 or [sheri@sheriwinesett.com]

“

Most people can say that they have given a gift to someone they know and love—but fewer are able to know they made a difference in a stranger's life. — Page 33



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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT



Johnson

Freedom First Credit Union has appointed **Linda Johnson** as Chief Financial Officer effective March 2020. She currently serves as Senior Vice President of Accounting/Finance to the CFO. She will take the place of retiring CFO Keith Rickoff. Johnson has been with Freedom First since 2008 in several leadership roles.



Orr

Wells Fargo has named **Michael Orr** Vice

President for Commercial Banking in Southwest Virginia. Orr will be responsible for acquiring and managing a portfolio of large-sized business customers in the region. Orr joined Wells Fargo in 2006.

LEGAL FRONT



Poarch

Salem-based Immigration and Adoption Attorney **Christine Poarch**, has been named a "Best Lawyer in Immigration Law" for the 2020 Edition of The Best Lawyers in America. Poarch's work as an Immigration and Adoption attorney has spanned almost two decades. She is a frequent speaker at national, state, and local conferences, and

is a go-to source by local media outlets on immigration and adoption law

William "Bill" Callahan has joined Gentry Locke's Roanoke office as a partner. Callahan will practice with the firm's Business Litigation group. His background involves bankruptcy and creditors' rights work for clients in various industries.

TECH/INDUSTRY FRONT



Talmadge

Seth Talmadge has joined Dewberry, a professional services firm in Roanoke, as the design manager for plumbing and fire protection products. Talmadge has more than two decades of experience in the field,

where his projects include work at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Virginia Commonwealth University, and a variety of projects for the Federal Bureau of Prisons.



Phillips

The Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) has appointed **John Phillips** as its new President. Phillips is a former entrepreneur and Army veteran. He's worked in various roles in Roanoke and the New River Valley and led the economic development office at one time at Virginia Tech – where he also earned an MBA.

Todd Lowe has been named Director of Information Technology for Friendship. Lowe



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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.



Lowe

had been with Newbold, where he managed the technology services division.

Mary Beth Vitale has joined the Luna Innovations Inc. Board of Directors. She is Co-Founder and Principal of Pelleria, LLC, a strategic communications and board development consulting firm. Luna is a Roanoke-based optical technology company rooted in fiber optics.

WELLNESS FRONT

Friendship health therapists **Megan Broce**, OTR and **Leanne Spangler**, LPTA are now Certified Lymphedema Therapists (CLT). Lymphedema is best described as



Broce



Spangler

chronic swelling or edema. Broce is based at Friendship South (southwest Roanoke County), Spangler at Friendship North (Roanoke City). "This is a very rare certification in Skilled Nursing Facilities," said Jennifer Maxey, Manager of Rehabilitative Services

at Friendship Health South in a news release.



Mallory

The Community Health Center of the New River Valley (CHCNRV) announces **Rebecca King-Mallory**, M.D., has joined the Pulaski/Radford Center in Dublin. Dr. King-Mallory will provide primary care for patients of all ages. She received her Doctorate of Medicine from Marshall University School of Medicine in Huntington, WV

Warm Hearth Village (WHV) announces that **Molly Nevitt**, CPA,



Nevitt

CGMA has been chosen as Warm Hearth's new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). She will replace Wayne Howell, who will retire after 13 years of service. Nevitt was recently with Advanced Logistics Industries in Blacksburg where she was the CFO.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Kent Rosenberger, RPA has joined Poe & Cronk Real Estate Group as a Vice President and Director of Property

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Career FRONT



Rosenberger

and Facility Management Services.

EDUCATION FRONT

Garry Mason's "Legends of the Outdoors" has inducted long-time National Wild Turkey Federation board member Sherry Crumley of Buchanan into its hall of fame in recognition of her dedication to preserving our hunting heritage and furthering conservation efforts. Crumley is serving a fifth term on the NWTFF board of directors. She has since served as president of the Roanoke Valley Chapter and served on the national board from 1994-2000 as well as 2012-present day. Mason established the "Legends" Hall of Fame in 2002.

Ernie Caldwell, president of G.J. Hopkins, a subsidiary of the Roanoke-based Branch Group, has been appointed by the Northam Administration to serve a four year term on the Virginia Board of Workforce development. Caldwell's term runs until July 2023.



Watford

Bev Watford is the first associate dean of equity and engagement at the Virginia Tech College of Engineering. She had served as associate dean of academic affairs for the College of Engineering and director of the college's Center for Engineering Enhancement of Diversity

Two students at New River Community College have been named Davenport Institute

Early Childhood Development Fellows.

Susan Estes of Newport and **Vicki Horn** of Floyd will receive up to \$7,500 for college expenses and travel related to professional development. Fellows also participate in legislative advocacy to promote early childhood development education and complete 20 hours of volunteer service.



DeCausey

Barbara DeCausey has joined Virginia Tech as director of its Human Research Protection Program, which deals with safety and compliance entailing ethical human research. DeCausey comes to Virginia Tech after a decade of management experience with the federal Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia

CULTURE FRONT



Scozzari

Roanoke Children's Theatre (RCT) has hired **Brynn Scozzari** as Director of Education. Scozzari will fill the role previously vacated by Brett Roden, who has assumed the duties as Producing Artistic Director for RCT in September. That position was vacated by RCT founder Pat Wilhelms, who will now focus solely on being the resident stage director.

Roanoke angler **Rick Hawkins** brought in 10 bass over a two-day period at Smith Mountain Lake during the T-H Marine FLW Bass Fishing League Piedmont Division



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.

Today, with just over 60 employees, Citizens continues to be a leading-edge technology provider offering services that complement its core services of voice, video, and data. Citizens has grown from a local telephone company to the technology company of the future. With full-service offerings for residential, small and global businesses, Citizens brings it all together for you.

Citizens lets you Bundle **YOUR** Way! Get the best prices on the most reliable services for your home and business.



DCJS #11-9804

super tournament Last month. Hawkins earned almost \$4700 for his first-place prize. His winning catch totaled 31 pounds.

NON-PROFIT FRONT



Richerson

Dr. Stephen Richerson has retired as the president and executive director for HopeTree Family Services, based



Morris

in Salem, after 17 years. Richerson is succeeded by **Jon Morris**, who leaves his position as CEO/State Director for Family Preservation Services of Virginia. HopeTree provides residential and support services for adults with intellectual disabilities, at sites around the Commonwealth.

*Compiled by
Gene Marrano*

Got A News Tip?

A Response To One Of Our Articles?

A Suggestion On What We Could Cover?

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Active seniors take note

A recent **SmartAsset** study ranks Roanoke in the Top 25 cities in the country that are compatible with an active lifestyle, landing at number 22. Boynton Beach FL is one spot ahead, Portland OR one back. Wilmington DE is number one. Of course the Star City has been working hard in recent years to attract a younger demographic; Roanoke has been ranked for years as an ideal retirement spot due in large part to a lower cost of living

Up, up and away!

Through July 2019 passenger traffic at **Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport** was up almost 8% over the first seven months in 2018. More than 400,000 passengers utilized the airport in 2019 through July. Airport officials are talking to Allegiant Air about adding flights to several more Florida cities – and perhaps to Las Vegas.

Really? Number 2?

The **Reason Foundation's** 24th annual report that ranks each state highway system in 13 categories – based on data submitted to the federal government – has ranked Virginia's highway system second in the nation for overall cost-effectiveness and condition. It represents a 25 spot jump from the previous report for the Commonwealth as well. Virginia ranks 12th in overall spending per

mile, in the state with the third largest highway system. Best rankings were for rural road conditions and low urban fatality rates; urbanized area congestion was listed as an area needing improvement.

Rx prices keep rising

AARP Virginia has released data claiming 26 percent of Virginians stopped taking certain drugs in 2016 due to the rising cost of prescription drug medicines, commonly used to treat cancer, diabetes and heart disease. AARP also says between 2016 and 2017 consumer costs for medicines like Revlimid, Lantus and Aggrenox went up sharply, forcing users to make that choice.

New LewisGale treatment center

LewisGale Hospital Pulaski has opened a 16-bed adult inpatient "Transitions Behavioral Health Unit", to support area residents with mental health and substance abuse issues. LewisGale cites a growing need throughout southwestern Virginia for such an inpatient facility.

Scooting around

There are now 300 e-scooters available for students to get around campus in Blacksburg with, using the Spin app to rent them. The **Virginia Tech Transportation Institute** is equipping 50 of them with cameras and other equipment that will be used to measure rider behavior, interaction with

other road users and other safety-related data.

Greener power

Appalachian Power is now offering its customers a 100% green option – with an extra monthly charge for those that want to rely on renewable energy sources. The Wind, Water & Sunlight (WWS) service was approved earlier this year by the State Corporation Commission, with the energy coming from the utility's own hydro, wind and solar projects. The Grandin Theatre in Roanoke is already on board, with a grant from Clean Valley Council paying the extra monthly WWS premium (about \$70 a month for the Grandin) for the first two years.

Good (Newport) News

Saint Francis Service Dogs in Roanoke has received a grant from Newport News Shipbuilding, which will be used to train and place a service dog with a child or adult with a disability in Hampton Roads. Since 1996 St. Francis has trained and placed more than 140 dogs with people dealing with a wide range of physical challenges

Something good cookin' for Roanoke Chef

The head chef at **Roanoke Catholic School** and at the **Taaza Indian Restaurant** finished second in CNBC's Creole Challenge cook-off on a special "Food Sport" episode that aired in late August – The

Final Table: New Orleans. Radjou won the Bacon World Championship in 2018 at the World Food Champions "Main Event" to qualify for the Creole Challenge. He's also a regular winner of the juried competition at Bacon Fest in Roanoke.

Money for Space

The **Virginia SmallSat Data Consortium**, a research center co-led by Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University, has been awarded a \$1.5 million grant by the Virginia Research Investment Fund. The grant is focused on stimulating economic growth in the aerospace sector. The two-year grant actually launches the consortium, which also includes the NASA Langley Research Center and the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority.

Burial naturally

Forest Rest Natural Cemetery in Boones Mill has received the Green Burial Council certification, becoming the first "Approved Hybrid Cemetery Provider" and the only cemetery in southwest Virginia for natural burial. That means no vaults, vault lids, concrete boxes, slabs or partitioned liners. Nor are decedents embalmed with toxic chemicals and there is a on burial containers not made from natural or plant-derived materials.

Human-friendly high tech?

Virginia Tech has launched a program it

calls Tech for Humanity, described as human-centered approaches that address “the societal impact and governance of technological innovations.” Tech for Humanity will impact all nine of VT’s schools in Blacksburg, Roanoke and Northern Virginia, and includes a research component.

VT diversity

Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering has received the Bronze Award from the American Society for Engineering Education for its Diversity Recognition Program. The ASEE program was created

within the past year to recognize schools that make measurable progress when it comes to inclusion and diversity, for engineering and engineering technology colleges.

Sands address

Virginia Tech president **Dr. Timothy Sands** delivered his fourth State of the University address in early September, a high-tech affair where remote speakers from other Tech campuses outside of Blacksburg took part by explaining ongoing research projects. Sands talked about expansion plans for Blacksburg, as well

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as progress at the Virginia Tech Carilion complex in Roanoke. He also gave an update on construction at the Innovation Campus taking shape in northern Virginia.

Getting closer to magic number

Visitor’s to **Virginia’s Blue Ridge** spent 892 million dollars in direct

spending in 2018, up from \$850 million in 2017. Visit Virginia’s Blue Ridge president Landon Howard estimates that the region could reach 1 billion dollars annual in direct visitor spending within the next three years or so. In 2018 regional tourism supported over 8000 jobs and contributed \$64 million in state and local tax collections.



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FRONT Notes

"We are reaching new heights for VBR as a destination," says Howard.

TAP award winner

Total Action for Progress has announced Reverend Dr. Kathy O'Keefe as the 2019 recipient of the Cabell Brand Hope Award, named for the late founder of the Roanoke-based non-profit. O'Keefe is pastor of Kingdom Life Ministries, founded the CAFE (Cultural Arts for Excellence) afterschool program in northwest Roanoke and oversees five churches in Ghana. She will formally accept that award at the TAP annual lunch in October.

State of the City

Roanoke Mayor Sherman Lea Sr. led off his fourth State of the City address by touting the "Innovation Corridor" anchored

by the Virginia Tech Carilion campus and other assets like the RAMP business incubator, at the annual breakfast meeting hosted by the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce. He also advocated for public-private partnerships to help tackle systemic problems like homelessness.

CHCNRV award, grant

The **Community Health Center of the New River Valley (CHCNRV)** was awarded the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) 2019 Quality Improvement Award along with other health centers across the country. It recognizes the work that health centers do to address health priorities as they provide quality, value-based community care. Along with the designation, the CHCNRV was also awarded \$64,000

to support quality improvement efforts.

Radford moving up

The **U.S. News & World Report 2020** Best Colleges rankings lists the school as the No. 12 Top Public School-Regional Universities South. That's up from No. 18 in 2018. Radford president Dr. Brian O. Hemphill called it "measurable data demonstrating our continued forward momentum." (See the story on Hemphill in this issue.)

Start digging

The **Appalachian Regional Commission** has approved a grant of \$364,000 for site preparation at the New River Valley Commerce Park. 9th District Congressman Morgan Griffith said of the news, "the New River Valley Commerce Park has the potential

to bring manufacturing and investment to our area. [The] grant ... will enhance the site's ability to draw new businesses and jobs."

Bank growth

Pinnacle Financial Partners says growth in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 added more than \$58 million dollars in deposits, helping it to move up one spot to make it the fourth largest bank in the Roanoke MSA. "We've always said we're serious about investing in Roanoke, and we're seeing the fruits of that investment now," said David Allen, Pinnacle's regional president. Pinnacle grew its Roanoke MSA deposit base 15 percent over the two-year period from June 2017 through June 2019.

*Compiled by
Gene Marrano*

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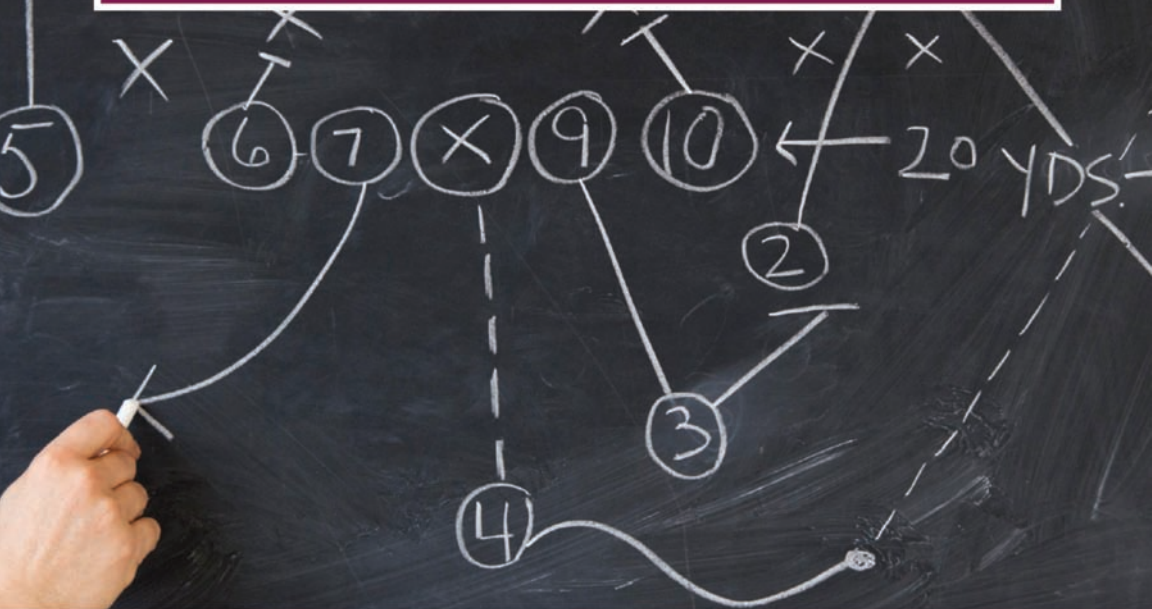


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