

# Valley Business FRONT

VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE BUSINESS JOURNAL

ISSUE 145

OCTOBER 2020

8 of Roanoke's Finest  
2020 CF Virginia Brewer's  
Ball "UnTapped"

Roanoke Higher Education  
Center's 20th Anniversary

Fashionista Roanoke

Style Tips

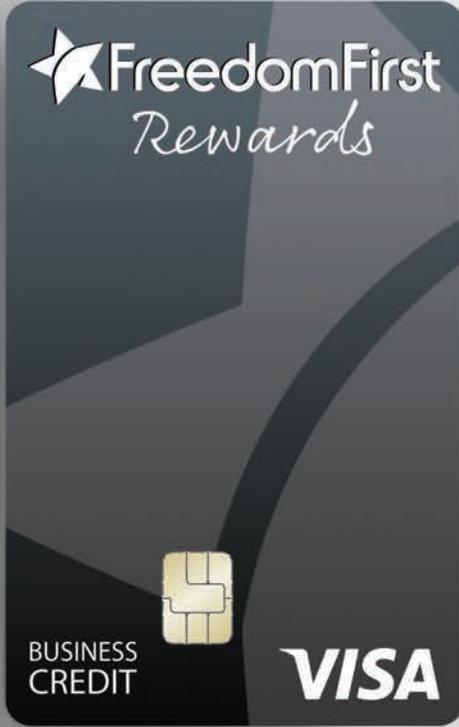
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## Our Local Fall Fashion

Tyrone Molina  
Fashionista Roanoke

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# WELCOME TO THE FRONT

In this issue we take our hands off the steering wheel a bit with Garland Gravely's multi-page fashion layout, which Valley Business FRONT has run on occasions in the past. See what might work for you in a business or casual setting. Back in the day when for a decade-plus our editor traveled the country (and Canada) for several companies. It was suits and ties on most occasions. He was obsessed with ties and bought one like every other week. He's down to about a half dozen now, and the business world has become more casual in general – especially in the COVID-19 work from home era. Our publisher, likewise, has retired most of his ties to the back of the closet. This is a special issue in other ways also – like the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation "Roanoke's Finest" feature (a top of the list cause we have supported for four years running) and a 20-year salute to the Roanoke Higher Education Center – a milestone worth celebrating and a gem for our community.

One more thing – we are planning an upcoming issue on notable business leaders in the region – be they in private industry, a non-profit environment or in local government; well known or perhaps unsung. Of course, 2020 has been a crucial year for good leadership on many fronts. Anybody you would like to suggest? Send that name and maybe a little background to [news@vbfront.com](mailto:news@vbfront.com). Happy reading.



**Tom Field**  
Publisher



**Gene Marrano**  
Editor



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## Pick It Out-Wear It Out

*Merchants in Roanoke Offer Ensembles from Casual to Professional*

A Special FRONTReport



“You will be judged on your visual image whether you like it or not. — Page 40

Cover photography of Tyrone Molina by Steve Curtiss.

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Beth Bell



Bruce Bryan



Mike Leigh



Gene Marrano

## Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Advisory Board comprised of a selective group of diverse business professionals who support our mission and have an interest in how our business journal best serves our local communities and region. As a sounding board throughout their term, board members have been given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. 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. 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 Advisory Board involves direct input on the various FRONTLists we present throughout the year. 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 contacting us with 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.

# 2020 CONTRIBUTORS



**Dan Dowdy**



**Tom Field**



**Doug Kidd**



**Annette Patterson**



**Michael Shelton**



**Nicholas Vaassen**

“”  
Keep copious records to ensure you can document compliance.

— Page 25

“”  
Darker colors are the power move... blue is seen as dependable. — Page 35



**Tim Bradshaw**  
Roanoke Blacksburg Regional Airport / transportation



**Lisa Clause**  
Richfield Living / senior development



**Mike Dame**  
Carilion Clinic / healthcare



**Katie Gehrt**  
Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech / culture



**Frank Martin**  
Hall Associates / commercial real estate



**Mary Ann L. Miller**  
Bank of Botetourt / finance – banking

“”  
It's ok to delegate... but it's not ok to ignore...

— Page 24

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 56.



**Paul Phillips**  
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# Pick It Out—Wear It Out

## *Merchants in Roanoke Offer Ensembles from Casual to Professional*

A Special FRONTReport

We're going to sit back. And not say a lot. We'll let the pictures do the talking for our little fashion runway on fall clothing options that are available right here in Virginia's Blue Ridge. The styles are also the kind one can actually wear and function in when working and playing and just moving about here in

our part of the world. Thanks to Fashionista Roanoke (who has brought us this feature before), our local merchants, the Hotel Roanoke venue, the models, the stylists and photographer and crew for this showcase production. Meet Fashionista Roanoke on Page 13.) And now... "Work it, baby."

## Classic + Color



Tyrone Molina is our FRONTcover model. Okay, we admit it... we selected the business suit look in large part, because we're the business journal. But on the other hand, how could we not? That suit! A classic fit for many professions, but coupled with a pop in color that immediately removes it from the stuffy. Tyrone is part of the Fashionista Roanoke group and this project; and he also works as a nurse assistant at Carilion Clinic and is in the physical therapy (PTA) program at Liberty University.



**Minimalism**

Model: **Carolina Rodriguez**

Merchant: **Frances Khan – Roanoke**

Stylist: **Frances Khan**

Photographer: **Steve Curtiss**

Venue: **Hotel Roanoke**

Note: **Yes, you CAN wear white after Labor Day**



**Business Attire**

Model: Tyrone Molina  
Merchant: Davidsons Clothing for Men – Roanoke  
Stylist: Larry Davidson  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: Today's suit is streamlined, but not the trendy too tight "Mod" look



**Business Attire**

Model: Kathleen Claytor  
Merchant: The Bird Cage Boutique – Roanoke & Salem  
Stylist: Gwenda Kellet  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: A confident jacket yet still complementing easy and fluid movement



**Traditional Preppy**

Model: Albert C. Torres  
Merchant: Mast General Store – Roanoke  
Stylist: Lauren Ricci & Garland Gravely  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: Basic, efficient, earthy with one subtle color splash



**Traditional Preppy**

Model: Rupinder Kaur  
Merchant: Mast General Store – Roanoke  
Stylist: Lauren Ricci & Garland Gravely  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: Sometimes, it's all about the jacket



### **Evening Wear**

Model: **Jo Orji**

Merchant: **Frances Khan – Roanoke**

Stylist: **Jo Orji and Andrea  
from Frances Khan**

Photographer: **Steve Curtiss**

Venue: **Hotel Roanoke**

Note: **Match your accessories, but  
pair it off one elegant tone**



Jo Oriji and Garland Gravely

Courtesy of P. Barrett; Fashionista Roanoke

# FASHIONISTA ROANOKE: A MULTICULTURAL SOCIAL EDUCATIONAL FASHION ORGANIZATION

“We have a love of fashion,” says Garland Gravely, stating the purpose in a most succinct way about a local group of people who get together to explore all matters related to style and fashion. In Roanoke, Virginia, no less.

“We have high school and college students, parents, people of all different backgrounds,” Gravely says about Fashionista Roanoke, a collection of well... fashionistas — who are described on the organization’s social media sites as “bringing attention to the importance of the aesthetic element in our lives, by promoting education, and marketing stylish and healthy-living through enhancement and empowering multicultural members.”

The club was founded in October 2008. Fashionista Roanoke puts on fashion shows (most of them are tied to charity events), conducts workshops and seminars, promotes itself whenever it can in the media (such as local television news programs and features and magazine shoots like this one), produces a YouTube “Fashionista Live!” holds in-store and boutique runways and showcases, and partners with the local Paul Mitchell Beauty School at Towers Mall in Roanoke.

Gravely says the club includes 40 to 50 active models, meeting monthly, many of those involving runway rehearsals. The club works with organizations and resources that can be served by the fashion sector in many different capacities, including the Boys and Girls Clubs, Goodwill Youth Center, YMCA After School programs, and fashion marketing classes at Roanoke’s William Fleming and Patrick Henry High Schools.

Celebrating diversity is a significant part of Fashionista Roanoke, and Gravely says what and how they are running the club is gaining attraction; so much so, they’re looking to expand the model to other cities such as Washington DC, Richmond, Atlanta, and New York City.

Garland Gravely is the organization’s president and co-creative director; Jo Oriji is vice president, model coaching coordinator, and co-creative director. Jo trains the model on how to walk the runway. Currently the best way to check out and contact Fashionista Roanoke is through Facebook and [fashionistaroanoke@hotmail.com](mailto:fashionistaroanoke@hotmail.com) email.

**Photography for photoshoot sessions by:**  
Roanoke Photographer Steve Curtiss [ <http://photos.rovago.com> ]

**Project directors:** Garland Gravely, Jo Oriji, and volunteer Christine Gist



**Bohemian**

Model: Ricky Brown  
Merchant: La De Da – Roanoke  
Stylist: La De Da  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: Loose, flowing, comfort, understatement that still attracts



**Outdoor**

Model: Yaya and Matt Suprenant  
Merchant: Walkabout Outfitters – Roanoke  
Stylist: Lauren Ricci & Garland Gravelly  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: What elements? Got everything you need to go everywhere you want



**Edgy**

Model: Carmen Khoklar  
Merchant: Shades of Color – Roanoke  
Stylist: Garland Gravelly  
Photographer: Steve Curtiss  
Venue: Hotel Roanoke  
Note: The BAM of medallion and wrap over strong, solid base





**Bohemian**

Model: **Brittany Ortiz**

Merchant: **La De Da – Roanoke**

Stylist: **La De Da**

Photographer: **Steve Curtiss**

Venue: **Hotel Roanoke**

Note: **Boho is about identity via personal creative ensemble**



## Hipster

Model: **Stephanie Mear**

Merchant: **Mast General Store –  
Roanoke**

Stylist: **Lauren Ricci**

Photographer: **Steve Curtiss**

Venue: **Hotel Roanoke**

Note: **Combining jumpsuit and jacket  
makes an original brand**



**Hipster**

Model: **Brandon Miller**

Merchant: **Mast General Store –  
Roanoke**

Stylist: **Lauren Ricci**

Photographer: **Steve Curtiss**

Venue: **Hotel Roanoke**

Note: **If there's one style that's both  
intentional and not—it's hipster**



## Street Fashion

Model: **Shanequa Brown**

Merchant: **Shelena's Collection –  
Roanoke**

Stylist: **Shelena & Garland Gravelly**

Photographer: **Steve Curtiss**

Venue: **Hotel Roanoke**

Note: **When casual go-to gets a  
double-take, you've succeeded**

# AND NOW... A FEW FASHION STATEMENTS FOR YEAR 2020 EXCLUSIVELY



## Remote Romper Roomwear

**Style Notes:** What you wear and where you work all come together as more of us are setting up specific workstations from our "home" offices... YOU set your dress code.

**Model:** Lauren Field (Blacksburg, VA), student and new teacher / elementary education; Radford University + Montgomery County Public Schools.



## The Masked Zinger

**Style Notes:** Even a remote field rep needs her mask; coupled with social-distancing, networking, travel, and business development appointments require it.

**Model:** Kelsey Monahan (Salem, VA), University of Virginia; Senior Account Executive / Higher Education & Healthcare sector for Virginia Beach-based Mythics, Inc.



## The Half-n-Half Zoom Attire

**Style Notes:** Who cares what's below the camera's view? Be professional (at least on top); but you can remain as homey and comfortable as you want below the beltline... as long as you don't stand up.

**Model:** Hayley Ohl (Salem, VA), Roanoke College; Human Resources specialist for Roanoke-based Carilion Clinic.

# SPECIAL FEATURE

The Brewer's Ball: A Celebration of Roanoke's Finest is a unique campaign and event that celebrates the finest in local craft beer, food, and people in the Roanoke area, while raising funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Eight Finest Honorees, nominated for their exemplary leadership, active involvement in the community, and business excellence, participated in an awareness and fundraising campaign in support of the CF Foundation and its mission.

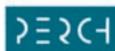
For the 4th Annual Brewer's Ball celebration, the 2020 Roanoke's Finest Honorees will be recognized for their fundraising achievements at a special "UnTapped" Virtual Event online.

Join us as we celebrate Roanoke's Finest while toasting to a cure for CF!



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The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's mission is to cure cystic fibrosis and to provide all people with the disease the opportunity to lead full, productive lives by funding research and drug development, promoting individualized treatment and ensuring access to high-quality, specialized care.

When the CF Foundation was established in 1955, most children with CF did not live past elementary school. Due in large part to the Foundation's aggressive investments in innovative research and comprehensive care, today, many people with CF are living into their 30s, 40s and beyond.

**2020 Roanoke's Finest  
Brewer's Ball Steering Committee**

**Holly Carroll-Owen** 2020 Chair  
United Healthcare

**Price Gutshall**  
**Hannah Hopkins**  
**Allan Lawrence**  
**Marc Nelson**  
**Mark Baldwin**  
**Bryan Summerson**

**Cystic Fibrosis Foundation / Virginia Chapter**

**Terri Quinan** Executive Director  
**Ellyn Kirtley** Development Manager

Cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects about 30,000 children and adults in the United States and 70,000 people worldwide. A defective gene and its protein product cause the body to produce unusually thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and leads to lung infections; and obstructs the pancreas and stops natural enzymes from helping the body break down and absorb food.

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation / Virginia Chapter • 804.527.1500 • [www.cff.org](http://www.cff.org)





## **Kaili Crumpacker**

Lucas Paving  
Environmental Scientist

- Committee member, volunteer, and team leader for Roanoke Great Strides for over a decade
- Former member of the YWCA Board of Directors
- Environmental Policy Degree
- Graduate of Roanoke College



## **Teddy Dalton**

Callie Dalton & Associates, Long & Foster  
REALTOR®

- Previously served on board of JJ Redick Foundation which helped raise money for Child Health Investment Partnership and Children's Miracle Network
- Board member of Swing for a Cure, raising funds for the American Cancer Society
- Roanoke native; Graduate of Radford University



## **Diane Simmons**

Simply Fitness by Diane; Founder & Owner  
Carilion NRV Medical Center; Reg. Respiratory Therapist

- Awarded "Star in the Star City" from Roanoke Mayor Sherman Lea
- 2018 recipient of the business award from the Urban Professional League
- Health and Fitness Expert on WFXR TV's "Living Local" Wellness Wednesday Segment
- Graduate of Virginia Tech



## **Brittany Turman**

Optum / UnitedHealth Group  
Virtual Events Manager

- 2019 Leadership Roanoke Valley Graduate
- Volunteer with Botetourt County Board of Elections and United Way of Roanoke Valley; childhood friend with CF
- Member of Junior League of Roanoke Valley
- Board Member of Mill Mountain Zoo
- Graduate of University of Lynchburg

# Roanoke's



## Gray Hamlin

Carter Machinery Company  
Machine Sales Representative

- A top fundraising Roanoke's Finest Honoree
- Enjoys spending time with family; wife: Holly; daughter: Austin; son: Hutch
- Roanoke native
- Alumnus of Hampden-Sydney College



## Gavin Hollingsworth

Hall Associates Commercial Real Estate  
Sales Associate

- Enjoys the challenge of meeting new people in new environments
- "It's an honor to be able to help share information and make people aware of different complications and diseases."
- Graduate of Virginia Western Community College and Virginia Tech



## Nathan Webster

Scratch Biscuit Company,  
The Village Grill, Oak Tree Catering  
Owner

- Prominent Roanoke restaurateur and entrepreneur
- Fundraising in support of a College Fraternity Brother
- Roanoke native
- Graduate of Elon University



## Ashley Willie

MKB REALTORS  
REALTOR®

- Experienced realtor who enjoys working with first-time buyers and sellers
- Volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, Square Society, Ronald McDonald House
- Roanoke native
- Graduate of Virginia Western Community College

# Finest





# BUSINESS OPERATIONS

By Mike Leigh

## Executive Summary:

*It's ok to delegate bookkeeping and accounting tasks to specialists, but it is not ok to ignore them.*

Send your questions  
or comments to Mike@  
OpXSolutionsllc.com

## Financial literacy

It is hard to believe this is my 68th article for Valley Business FRONT. It is also hard to believe that in those first 67 articles, not one discussed finance. You see, there are other great column writers in FRONT that can help you in this area. And generally, I believe that if you focus on continuously improving your operations, then good financial results will happen. But that may be too short-sighted.

I recently read a book to help growing businesses manage their numbers. Not a book originally on my reading list, but it was required reading for a course I am taking. When I saw how many business owners in my class were getting incredible insight from the book, I realized that financial illiteracy is a common problem.

For many of us, reviewing balance sheets and income statements is intimidating. Maybe you are in the group that thinks, "I just want to know how much money we are making." But if you regularly make decisions that impact the finances of your organization, your financial statements provide the information you need to consistently make the right ones.

You do not need to be a financial expert. All small businesses should have an accountant on their team to help provide advice. But with a basic understanding of your numbers, you can learn:

- Are each of my products/services making money? Which is most profitable?
- Am I in danger of running out of cash?
- Should I buy or lease?
- What are my biggest expenses, and how are they trending?
- How should I price my bid proposal?
- Where do we need to focus our efforts in the next three years?
- How much revenue is needed on a new product line to break even?
- Is my debt too high?

When I help leaders develop their delegation skills, we discuss the need to maintain responsibility for the outcomes and to not abdicate it. Finances are much the same. It's ok to delegate bookkeeping and accounting tasks to specialists, but it is not ok to ignore them.

There are many useful books and courses that can help you better understand your finances and the health of your business. Or, have your accountant sit down with you and explain everything in your reports until you understand them. Once you fully understand your numbers, you'll grow stronger in your strategic decision-making and improve your financial success. 

## A tax prep year unlike any other

To say we live in unprecedented times feels like an understatement at this point. Smart business owners will take a closer look at what they have and use some strategic planning to ensure they're not stuck paying a bunch of unexpected taxes next year.

### PPP concerns

Not everything has been answered about the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) on loan forgiveness and/or repayment. What we do know is payroll reports are important. This includes the 940, 941 and VA5. Also, carefully document rent and allowable business expenses.

Changes were made to PPP forgiveness with the June passage of the PPP Flexibility Act of 2020. This extended how long you have to spend the money and lowered the percentages that must be spent on payroll. Benefits, state and local taxes on compensation, utilities, and rent and mortgage interest are allowable as forgivable use.

Permissible uses are limited, even if you don't plan to apply for forgiveness. You can't use it for salaries over \$100k, 1099 contract workers, mortgage or debt principle, payroll outside the US, and a variety of tax credits.

Since there are still unknowns about this program and acts of Congress that could change the requirements, it's a good idea to keep copious records to ensure you can document compliance.

### EIDL grants and loans

The Economic Impact Disaster Loan (EIDL) will require the same documentation as the PPP. If you use all funds for paid leave, maintaining payroll, increased material costs, mortgage, rent, and lease payments, and a variety of other required payments you're falling short on because of lost revenue, it can be forgiven. You can't use it to pay for sales and marketing activities to replace lost business, expansion expenses, or refinancing long term debt.

If you use any of your EIDL money for forbidden uses, you'll not only lose the forgiveness option, but also may be required to repay as much as 1 ½ times the original loan amount immediately. You also could face criminal charges. Don't mess around with this one. If you're confused, get professional help now.

This year, more than ever, it's important to plan tax strategies and predict consequences before year-end. So much has changed around incomes and outflows that it's hard to know what the tax ramifications will be until you map it all out. The relative low cost of spending two hours with a fee-only financial advisor could mean a huge difference in what you're able to keep. Do it before 2021 hits, though, because you can't apply changes retroactively. 



## FINANCIAL FIGURES

By Michael Shelton

### Executive Summary:

*This year's fourth quarter tax planning includes PPP, EIDL and revenue swings.*

*Michael Shelton is a financial retirement counselor. Reach him at michael@discover360 Financial.com*

**Converted from the former Norfolk & Western Railway office** building adjacent to the Hotel Roanoke, the RHEC modernized the entire facility and retained the iconic Art Deco architectural style.



# 20 YEARS STRONG: STILL PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

## *ROANOKE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER [2000–2020]*

The Roanoke Higher Education Center celebrated its 20-year anniversary on August 20, 2020, exactly twenty years from the date the doors opened on August 20, 2000.

Adult learners have taken advantage of over 200 programs of study that have created opportunities for upward mobility by earning degrees, endorsement, and certificates and have prepared these learners to be workforce ready.

The Center functions under the umbrella of the Roanoke Higher Education Authority, a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. During the first seventeen years of its existence, Dr. Thomas McKeon served as Executive Director, and in 2017, Dr. Kay Dunkley took over this post.

Accomplishments include developing a new strategic plan, conducting an economic impact study that determined the Center contributes almost \$10 million annually to the economy, and activating the Center's Foundation.

Other projects include a \$2 million renovation and expansion of the Clinical Simulation Center that offers nurses and other health care workers hands-on training and serves Radford University, Radford University Carilion, and Patrick Henry Community College. In 2017, an \$8 million renovation and new construction project took place to allow the expansion of the Claude Moore Education Complex that houses the Virginia Western Community College Al Pollard Culinary Arts Program.



Kay Dunkley, Executive Director, Roanoke Higher Education Center, speaks virtually at 20th anniversary event on August 20 — exactly 20 years since the doors opened on August 20, 2000.



Left to right: Kay Dunkley, Executive Director, and Carla James Jackson, Senior Director of Academic and Student Services, cut the 20th anniversary cake.

The newest project is the construction of a courtyard that will expand the campus's footprint and connect the main building with the Claude Moore Education Complex. This green space will allow seating for students and visitors, provide an outdoor learning lab for culinary arts students, and provide an opportunity to acknowledge the rich history of the historic Gainsboro community through interpretative signage.

Individuals can earn a GED all the way to receiving a Ph.D. from one of the twelve colleges, universities and workforce agencies that include: Commonwealth Learning Systems, Dabney S. Lancaster Community College, James Madison University, Mary Baldwin University, Old Dominion University, Project Discovery, Radford University, Region 5 Adult Education, TAP-This Valley Works,





Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Tech, and Virginia Western Comm. College.

Other members include the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority, Seasons and Occasions Café, TAP Headstart Regional Headquarters, and VA811.

Mayor Sherman Lea, of Roanoke City and Senator John S. Edwards, the Chair of the

Board of Trustees, spoke via live stream at the event. In advance, videos were released daily featuring Senator Mark Warner, Heywood Fralin, Warner Dalhouse, and Thomas McKeon, along with testimonials from current and former students.

The Center has awarded almost 10,000 degrees, certificates, and endorsements during this 20-year period. 



Tom McKeon was RHEC's founding Executive Director.





## SMALL BUSINESS TOOL KIT

By Annette Patterson

**Executive Summary:**  
*Suddenly small  
is the new big.*

# Small teams + growth mindsets + exponential technologies = unstoppable

As I interact and observe the changing work world, I try to view the new perspective as opportunity. I've talked with so many professionals over the last 6 months that report feeling enlightened to a new way of life through the COVID work world. Driven colleagues, facing staggering challenges, but using COVID as a way to increase their growth mindset.

Growth mindset is a belief that your talent, skills, abilities and personality can be developed through hard work, good strategies, learning from mistakes and getting input from others. Whereas a person with a fixed mindset believes that basic qualities like intelligence, talents and abilities are fixed. As in, you have a certain amount of talent or intelligence and that's it. In short when you have a fixed mindset you find it more difficult to navigate the challenges that you encounter during these demanding and uncertain times.

This COVID period has illuminated the success of those entrepreneurs and employers that subscribe and promote the growth mindset. They embrace and stretch their "pivot muscle" better than their counterparts. It's clearer every day that any citizen with the growth mindset can operate and manage themselves as their own business whether working for themselves or someone else. This unprecedented time has demonstrated that a two, three or four-person team can accomplish big things in their garage or home office.

After all, just about anyone can access the talent that is missing from their toolbox by "renting" expertise needed to grow their business. Even very expensive equipment can be accessed through the "fab labs" popping up across the county or at the local community college. In fact, the cloud enables small companies to store and manage massive amounts of information, hire design gurus online and even benefit from data analytics at little cost. They can do it all through exponential technology that doubles small companies in capability or performance. Technology is now at the point where its price-performance makes it possible to solve today's business problems in ways that were not previously possible.

In many ways, small is bigger because of the ability to leverage all that is at our fingertips, while outpacing big companies, burdened with heavier baggage, in the pivot. Exponential technology and growth mindset sets up smaller companies to be successful during this big disruption known as COVID. Suddenly small is the new big. 

## Investing2Reach the People

Years ago, I wrote about the value of “going where the eyeballs are” when it comes to advertising. It’s an age-old concept, but as you evaluate your place in the business community, it’s one that deserves a little closer examination. If you have exceptional messaging but aren’t sharing it with the right people, then what is the value? If you build an incredible advertisement then show it to no one, what have you accomplished?

The answers may seem obvious, but sometimes the obvious confounds people. Even smart people.

Even those well-versed in marketing can be thrown off by familiar industry jargon. For years, B-2-C in business has stood for business-to-consumer advertising while B-2-B has always referred to business-to-business advertising. If you are targeting end-user consumers, you employ B-2-C tactics and channels. If you want to reach business owners and decision-makers, you utilize a B-2-B approach.

The only problem with that theory is that when it comes to buying things, even business-to-business focused decision-makers are themselves consumers.

## Concepts4Your Marketing

As you evaluate your advertising spending and determine how you will allocate your 2021 investments, think about new ways to reach the standard audience.

During the height of COVID, the time consumers spent in front of computers was at an all-time high. That was the same whether it was a business owner or a stay at home dad. Whether you were a soccer mom or a CEO, you were bound to your home and watching a screen. It was a pattern that transcended any type of demographic. Get it?

The majority of people in the spring and summer were also watching more TV and consuming more video and internet information. You may not have noticed it then but think back now and you’ll realize many of the advertisers you saw were corporations like Microsoft, Salesforce, ADP, and Adobe.

In other words – anticipate where the majority is casting their gaze and use a strong message that cuts through. The money, new deals, and business expansion will be much more likely to follow. 

“  
”  
Sometimes the obvious  
confounds people.



## A LITTLE INSIGHT

By Bruce C. Bryan

**Executive Summary:**  
*Think about new ways  
to reach audience.*

*Bruce C. Bryan is  
the president of 5Points  
Creative, an award-  
winning advertising and  
marketing agency in  
Roanoke. Contact him at  
bruce@5PointsCreative.com*

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All photos: submitted

Melissa Mortellaro

# CLOTHES-WISE: WHAT AND HOW YOU WEAR IT MATTERS IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

By Gene Marrano

---

Wear it well and make sure it makes sense color-wise for you; here's advice from two consultants.

Beth Garrett is a Certified Image Consultant. Through her Elevating Your Image company (previously profiled in Valley Business FRONT), "I help leaders [and] workforce members create the right image for being successful." How to dress for different business environments and how people can influence others with what they wear and how they look overall (i.e. the right cosmetics, jewelry, etc.)

Part of her service includes a color analysis – what looks good with certain skin tones – and what fashions/colors should be avoided. "There's a lot of psychology around color and how the brain interprets the colors we wear," notes Garrett, saying that concept has "fascinated," her for years. For example: if someone wants to be seen as a leader, darker colors are the power move. Blue is seen as dependable and trustworthy.



Submitted

Beth Garrett



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Melissa Mortellaro showing off some Tom James fashions

Garrett has gone virtual recently and now has clients on both coasts as well as locally in the Roanoke area. She cites Malcolm Gladwell's book *Blink*, wherein he writes that you've got about 7 seconds to make a good first impression before the other person has made their judgement. "Men need to know what looks good on them too," she points out. "Put that best face forward," says Beth Garrett, and "look the part." (See [elevatingyourimage.com](http://elevatingyourimage.com) or Facebook page.)

A recent JMU graduate with a Hospitality Management major, Melissa Mortellaro goes a step further – not only does she help create a wardrobe for clients (after measuring them in person), but then the firm she works for regionally – Tennessee-based Tom James - tailors those garments in-house as a vertically-integrated company. "I make it a personal experience for my clients, it's super-convenient and they don't have to go anywhere for their clothing," says Mortellaro. From shoes and belts to formal wear – in the right fabrics for their lifestyle - she can advise, noting that many of her clients are executives

"that are really killing it," and don't have much spare time to hit the mall or even shop online.

In right now are styles somewhere between ultra-casual and power suits says Mortellaro, with the more relaxed COVID-19 remote working experience influencing what some wear when returning to the office environment. "But they still want to look and feel good in their clothing, so they look presentable – even on Zoom." Not a shock perhaps: men seem to need more help in figuring out what is presentable to wear.

Partnerships with higher-end shoe and accessory manufacturers allows Tom James to offer clients the complete package, "to get the full experience." Mortellaro loves the "people aspect" of her job which fits with her interest as well in hospitality as a career choice. It's simple she notes: "people want to do business with [other] people that look good." (See the guest commentary from Tom James on Page 40.)

Clients who are pleased with their Tom



*Before*



*After*

Kate's Before and After, courtesy of Elevating Your Image

James makeover will even tell Melissa Mortellaro they wish they had known about this 20 years ago. (Tom James Company is 54 years old). 80 percent of

sales are repeat business. "You don't really know what you need until you don't have it — and that's what I help people realize." (see tomjames.com) 

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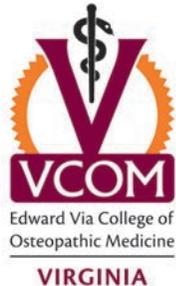


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# MINDFUL BUSINESS

By Beth Bell

**Executive Summary:**  
*On becoming a leader worth following, and The Ripple Effect.*

*Beth Bell is the executive director for the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce (as of mid-January) and helped found FemCity Roanoke, a business networking community for women. Contact her at [bethboydbell@gmail.com](mailto:bethboydbell@gmail.com).*

## True leadership takes real skill

I feel very fortunate to have worked for a company for 15 years that encouraged creating your successor - not being afraid of building up an employee who may leave you. They empowered employees to be part of the decision-making process and rewarded them for sharing ideas. Our mission statement wasn't just a sentence on a wall, it was referenced often when implementing new programs and making tough decisions.

One of my managers, in response to a difficult situation, said "what we will not do, is not do nothing." That really stuck me as a 23-year-old. It was about doing hard things and doing what was right. I was empowered to coach and mentor others. That experience evolved into building and coaching large sales teams outside of my full-time job. Now I use those abilities to advise small business owners. Becoming a leader worth following to me, is a leader who will help others rise.

Another manager gave me so much freedom to own initiatives from end to end, that I recently told her she created a monster. She boosted me up so much, telling me often that I was the kind of person who would be successful in whatever I put my mind to, that I leapt out of a cushy corporate job to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors. As a single mom that was a very risky move, but everything I did during that time led me to where I am now.

All of these experiences were with a company that operated in 14 states and supported over a million customers. Leadership has to be built into a company's culture. I've worked with other companies over the past few years that failed at having this mindset.

If you're looking for leadership growth and connection to others with a similar mindset, I hope you'll join me on October 15th at Ripple Effect, Leadercast leadership conference hosted by the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber. Attend live at the Salem Civic Center or virtually. Attendees will learn from a cast of 6 international leaders: US Olympic Soccer legend, Abby Wambach, digital marketing guru Randi Zuckerberg, community builder and CEO of Daybreaker, Radha Agrawal, Paralympian and business consultant, Bonnie St. John, Fast Company Editor-in-Chief Stephanie Mehta and author/networking expert Tiffany Dufu.

Attendees are eligible for CEUS and will leave with a revitalized leadership toolkit, a for honing team strengths, a blueprint for cultivating and nurturing your community of leaders, proven concepts for breakthrough performances, a master plan using the "next normal" mentality, and clarity on how to clarify and prioritize what truly matters most. Interested? See [bit.ly/RippleEffectRoanoke](https://bit.ly/RippleEffectRoanoke) 

## All about involvement

Katie's Place—a community support program with locations in Roanoke and Lynchburg—offers day support services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Its mission is to improve the quality of life for adults with disabilities; and that includes providing opportunities for them to demonstrate skills of self-sufficiency and achieving goals, while at the same time, contributing to their community in meaningful ways.

The organization is licensed by the DBHDS and is a provider of Medicaid Developmental Disability Waiver, Intellectual Disability Waiver, and Home and Community-Based Care Waiver Services.

“We offer a structured way and caring place for individuals with special abilities to go out into the community to interact, develop their skills, and give back,” says Heather Hicks, the program director of Katie's Place. “We help individuals live a full circle of life... with socialization, employment, and in-home services.”

Katie's Place accepts support from financial contributions, donation of items such as office/home/craft supplies and healthy snacks, and community involvement. Volunteers are also sought, appreciated, and utilized!

Services for Roanoke are provided from Katie's Place Downtown Roanoke location and on the HumanKind Campus for Lynchburg. More information is available at [www.katiesplacadaysupport.org](http://www.katiesplacadaysupport.org). 

“”  
We help individuals live  
a full circle of life...

## GOOD WORK

**Executive Summary:**  
*Katie's Place provides an  
engaging daycare support  
for adults with challenges.*



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## STYLE NOTES

By Doug Kidd

**Executive Summary:**  
*Today's business dress code has been turned upside down—or has it?*

# To Dress or Not to Dress... That is the Question

The new normal...

A hybrid schedule of socially distanced in-person appointments, a cadre of Zoom appointments, and in many cases still many workers are 100% work from home.

The elephant in the room for all workers is now, "What in the heck do I wear to work?"

For months, many people have been wearing a pressed and presentable shirt or blouse up top in the camera's eye, and below the video's horizon they have been concealing shorts or comfy sweats... the sneaky little fashion secret! It reminds me of a decade-old ESPN commercial where the hosts think they are off camera and stand up with suit and tie tops and athletic shorts below. If you are chuckling now, I feel you! I have lovingly nicknamed it, "COVID casual."

So back to the question at hand, what do we wear in the new normal?? And how does one go about shopping for needs in today's socially-distanced retail obstacle course?

Being a wardrobe consultant for the past 25 years, I have spent much time in thought trying to help my customers and associates figure out what to wear in the new normal these past few months. Having many conversations with individuals, I have found some people welcoming the thought of getting back to the habit of getting dressed for work. They feel professional and take pride in putting together a polished look. I have spoken with others that feel like they will never go back to dressing up in the same way they had pre-COVID. Needless to say, opinions are all over the place.

My best attempt to bring some clarity to the subject will be the following guidelines:

- Each position will differ. As businesses return to their normal, each answer will vary. Therefore, a fashion response as it relates to your pressing wardrobe needs should be individually based. Will you be client facing? Will you continue to work from home? How do you want to be perceived in your clothing? Does travel need to be factored into the equation when purchasing clothing? These questions should be considered when looking into thinking about your current apparel and future purchases.
- As an image consultant, I will say that studies over the years have proven that you will be judged on your

visual image whether you like it or not. People are drawing conclusions based on what they see, whether over video or in person; remember this when you are in video meetings, regardless of your position. Consider being intentional about the image that you are putting together whether business or casual, but it should be consistent with how you want to be perceived for your career aspirations.

- Flexibility and utility are more important than ever. When investing in pieces for your wardrobe, it would make sense that there will be a variety of uses, especially if you are still in the wardrobe building stage. Multi-use for clothing added becomes important. Versatility!
- Business Casual in the workplace is becoming more of the norm. From a consultant standpoint, my view is that this is an opportunity to really define your own style, and create a terrific look, not as an excuse to just put on something more relaxed or comfortable. In fact, many of the customers over the years I have spoken to have found business casual much harder to navigate, so step wisely.
- There will still be times when formal dress is what needs to be worn. For those times, obviously you want to look your best, and it's always better to be prepared ahead of time for those events, not as they come up on your calendar that same week! If you are dressing up in your best, obviously it's a pretty big occasion, so I would suggest to plan ahead and make sure that you are perfectly attired for the calendar that you have already in place: weddings, award ceremonies, formal events, resort wear, etc.



For months, many people have been wearing a pressed and presentable shirt or blouse up top in the camera's eye, and below the video's horizon they have been concealing shorts or comfy sweats... the sneaky little fashion secret!

Best of luck to you in our post pandemic business world. I hope that the odds will always be in your favor; and with the proper dress, you just might be able to put those odds in your favor! 🍀

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## ON TAP FROM THE PUB

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*Most of the time, there is little need for any of us to be in a rush; so we never do it.*

## Just do it, now

Do you know what I appreciate?

People who do things right then and there.

It happens so rarely anymore, that when someone responds immediately, I'm so shocked, I drop whatever I'm holding. This is why I can carry nitroglycerin packed in military-grade C4 without a lot of worry. (I don't carry this combination... I'm just sayin')

My favorite example comes from an engineer I met many years ago at a PacSun plant in California. Yeah, the Pacific Sunwear beach lifestyle apparel clothing brand that was so popular for venturesome—or more accurately, wanna-appear-to-be venturesome—youth of the 1980s.

I was shocked by this one-second-response-time IT guy because: A) if ANY company exuded a chill attitude, it's PacSun; B) of ALL vocations that are gauged by testing-first, analyzing, assessing the situation before responding, it's ANY position in the IT department; and C) I asked questions that didn't expect an immediate answer.

But indeed, this IT-anti-IT dude walked and talked like a jacked up Google pod device on a band-boosted 5G network.

For seventy-five percent of our warp-speed plant tour, my intrepid escort had an immediate answer to each question. But the real kick is the remaining twenty-five percent. For that part—he GOT the answer. Immediately.

He would shout to someone in the room, "Hey, Mary, what's the square root of 49, again?" (That wasn't the question; it's been decades... I can't remember the questions.) Or he would shout to ANYONE in hearing distance, amongst the droning conveyor belts and whirring equipment: "Who's got the flux capacitor specifications?!?!?" (Again, not the actual question. In case you were thinking it was.)

And if Mary or ANYONE ELSE didn't have the answer? My man didn't even wait for them to go get it. He went-and-go-got-it himself. Whipping out his phone—and this, young grasshopper, was when smart phones were anything but—his fingers called up no Google or Alexa or Siri (is she still here?)—but a real live person. Usually it was Sharaiya, his personal assistant, or even Yoshinakalexandria, the front desk receptionist who knew a lot of things. (Not their real names, I don't remember them. But I'm betting the warrior princess-like monikers are pretty close to accurate, given the powers they had. Plus, it's California... those are common names there.)

My tour guide never let me down. Not once. Even as we wrapped up the final plant exploration, he asked if I had my rental car or had taken a cab. (This, young grasshopper, was pre-Uber / Lyft era.)

continued on Page 44

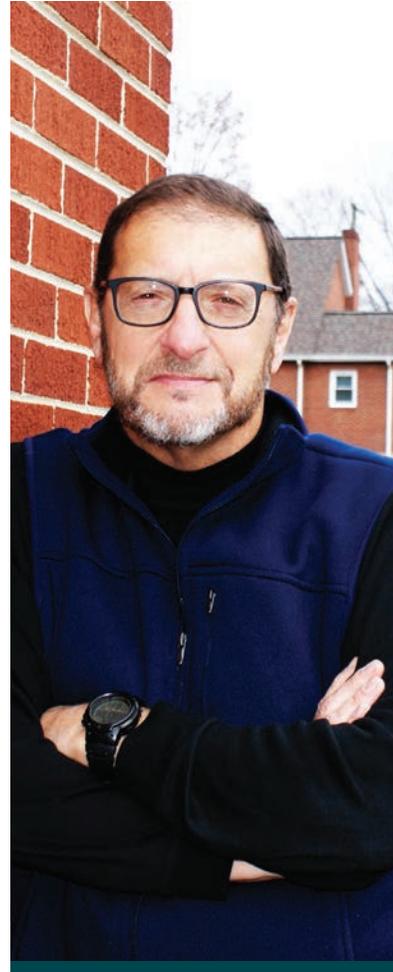
## Coffee and Custard part of SE Roanoke revival

About three years into the project, Chris's Coffee & Custard off 9th Street in Southeast Roanoke is getting ready to open this month. Beth Woodrum will employ mostly young adults with special needs – like her son and store namesake, Chris, who has Down Syndrome. Woodrum has also started a non-profit called LovAble, that trains young adults with challenges for the workplace. Chris's Coffee & Custard will feature a limited food menu as well and a large outdoor seating area when it opens. Brick pavers can be purchased at \$100 for that patio – and to support the LovAble mission. (See the Chris's Coffee Facebook page.)

"There's really nothing here in Roanoke where we can employ individuals with intellectual development or physical disabilities," Beth Woodrum said during a progress update tour in late August, "I just decided I wanted something long term for these special individuals, to be able to work and contribute back to the community." (Editor's note: my son used to play Little League baseball with Chris's older brother Taylor; another brother, Josh Woodrum, was a standout quarterback at Liberty University and gave pro football a shot for several years. Their grandfather lives on my block. Good people.)

The 9th Street industrial park in Roanoke – once home to the American Viscose company – is slowly being redeveloped. Ed Walker is turning one high rise building into apartments; Carilion has opened a physical therapy center adjacent to Chris's Coffee and Southwest Virginia Ballet (under the directorship of Pedro Szalay) completely renovated another building next door for its studios and teaching spaces.

continued on Page 44



## THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE

By Gene Marrano

**Executive Summary:**  
Southeast Roanoke coffee house will employ those facing a variety of life challenges.

## Field / On Tap

from Page 42

"Nah, I actually took a cab," I said, "And I was going to..."

"Yoshenakalexandria!," my new pal shouted in his dumb phone. "Have the car brought around."

He looked at me and described a new hip restaurant that all the LA circuit was buzzing about.

"It's just off the 405," he continued. "Yo!" he blurted out again (he actually called her by her full name every time, I'm just running out of word count here. Plus, again, that wasn't her real name... it was something close to that though, I'm sure of it). "Call and get Mr. Field and me a reservation for 6:15 at Consuela's Tavern," he continued. (Not the real name of the place; you're catching on, right?) He said he'd like to take me to dinner, but if I had other plans, we could still get a quick drink.

Whatever plans I had—changed. I was fine hanging with my new get-it-done-Google-Assistant-before there-was-

even-a-Google—friend.

The point of this wordy story is that, well... it's just plain outright refreshing to see something taken care of right away. I don't do it. Most of the folks I hang with don't do it. I was reminded of that long ago LA adventure today when I was on the phone with a source for one of our stories.

"If you could get a comment from one of your people," I queried, "that would be most helpful..." (expecting her to call back or email me the statement).

"Kyle!" she hollered (our names here aren't as exotic), obviously holding her truly-smart phone off to the side (but still loud enough to cause me shock), "what's the square root of the overall dimensions on our flux capacitor? Mr. Field needs to know."

A rare occurrence. Surprising me. Like a comet.

So, I'm going to set down the nitroglycerin packed in military-grade C4 I've been carrying (CAREFULLY!!!) and just celebrate these moments when I run across such a rare soul. 

## Marrano / There's something

from Page 43

I've always thought Southeast Roanoke city was a bit of a diamond in the rough, especially for homes near the Roanoke River Greenway. Turning the 9th street industrial park into more of a mixed use development (there are a number of businesses there already) – and perhaps less of an eyesore – could help regenerate the whole area, a working class part of the city where older, larger homes (often in need of extensive renovation) can be had for a relative song. Here's hoping Chris's Coffee & Custard is another successful part of the Southeast rebirth. 



Pedro Szalay-SW VA Ballet



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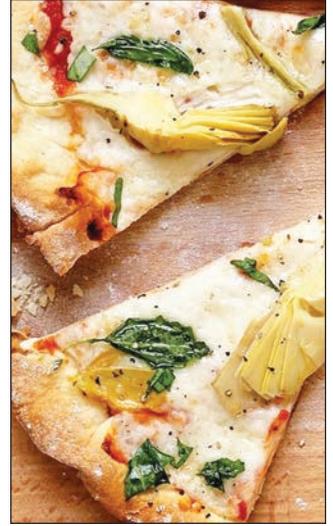


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### *Tasty, inside*

Food Fanatics Kitchen just off the west side of downtown Roanoke (near the Jefferson Center) is a good choice for a number of reasons—a primary one is if you're just not sure what you want for lunch or dinner, or your guests can't make up their minds. FFK offers a delightful menu. Artisan-like appetizers; well diversified salads; soups; burgers and sandwiches; a limited but decent pasta selection; grilled entrees from all four (beef, fowl, seafood, vegetable) sources, and then—their brick oven pizza specialties. Pizzas here deserve a special callout: they're super fresh, perfectly thin-crust, and so versatile. Though FFK gives you complete freedom to design your own, I recommend picking a combination they have already crafted... I am certain someone took great care in all the pairings. I have to add, the pizzas are not large; but they do satisfy, and you probably won't be carrying home leftovers.

If there is anything that would take part of a star off a review, it's the name (and that doesn't really count... but really? I don't think anyone I've met cares for that rather strange moniker, even if the intent is just to be obvious)—and on occasion, the neighborhood itself. Sitting outside is usually a treat, but we've experienced loud vehicles, music not of our selection for dining, and on one visit, a domestic dispute that brought

out the cops. That said, the cuisine—as well as the impeccable service—is too good to miss. My various parties and I will all be back for more FFK.

—Tom Field

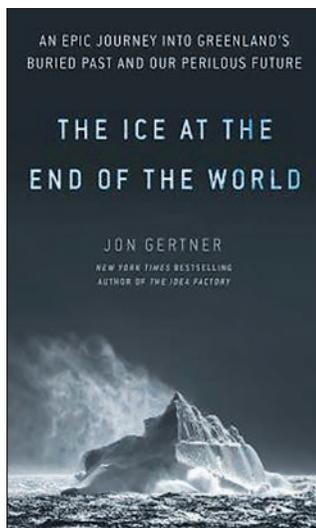
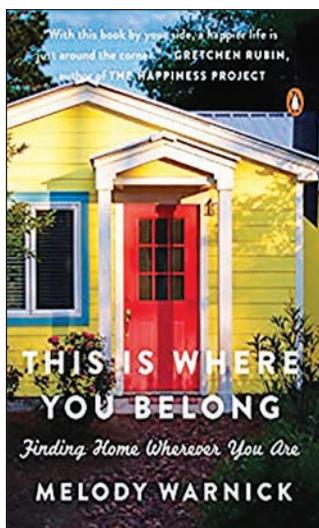
### *Planted*

*This is Where You Belong: Finding Home Wherever You Are* by local author Melody Warnick (Penguin; 2017) hit me hard as I've always searched for the place where I feel most at home. It turns out there are some very practical steps you can take to become rooted into the community where you live. With chapters like: Lace Up Your Sneakers, Buy Local, Say Hi to Your Neighbor, and Create Something, you will learn from Melody's voyage from Texas to Blacksburg, VA (nonetheless). It's such a great read that even I, being a native of Roanoke City, enjoyed every chapter as we try to establish roots in Salem since we moved back here from Atlanta and Asheville 8 years ago.

—Kris Cone

### *Off to a good start*

Golden Cactus Brewing in Roanoke launched recently inside a renovated industrial building at what has been dubbed the West End part of downtown. The airy, brightly colored building with



exposed wooden beams retains that industrial look and leaves plenty of room inside and outside for social distancing. The laminated and very long bar top hewn out of wood slabs is impressive – unfortunately, one cannot belly up to the bar and sit there until Phase 3 is over. Oh yeah, the beer – Golden Cactus was off to a good start in early September, featuring the tasty GCOG imperial wheat with agave (the plant in tequila), the Black Tie Hazy IPA, and an Italian Pilsner (who knew?). Food trucks will offer a variety of fare at the edge of the spacious outdoor seating area and if you want to “crawl” a bit, Big Lick Brewing Company is right across the street. Drink responsibly.

—Gene Marrano

## Melting ice

We’ve all read about the concern many scientists have when Greenland “calves” giant icebergs from the edge of a massive ice sheet that covers the sparsely populated island five times the size of California – and what that could mean to rising sea levels. But Jon Gertner’s book *The Ice At The End Of The World: An Epic Journey Into Greenland’s Buried Past And Our Perilous Future* (Random House; 2019) isn’t a 300-page screed about the impacts of global warming – relax.

Instead it’s a page-turning look back into the past 150 years as explorers trekked across that ice sheet – at first thinking it might be a pathway to the North Pole.

Then scientists realized that drilling down into the ice, to the bedrock far below, could yield core samples that offered hints on civilization’s past – analyzed in labs as minute layers of snow that fell every year and turned in ice, then yielding that information. *The Ice at the End of the World* goes back to the mid-1800’s to describe those explorations of Greenland – the isolation, the cold, the near starvation – and death that befell some. Early on it was also realized that the condition of Greenland’s ice sheet would impact weather in Europe. In the last few chapters Gertner focuses on what the quickening pace of Greenland’s ice melt means for ocean currents, weather systems, economies, and migration patterns. A fascinating read for tales of derring-do – and its sober warnings.

—Gene Marrano

The reviewers: **Tom Field** is the owner and founder of Valley Business FRONT and is a creative director, publisher, writer, and marketer; **Kris Cone** is a real estate agent in the Roanoke Region and principal at Cone Realty Group; **Gene Marrano** is editor of FRONT.



Submitted photo

## Safe distance >

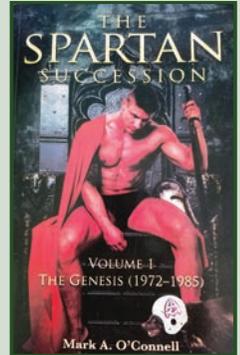
**Roanoke Cement Company / Titan America** recently celebrated 900 consecutive days of safety with no lost time at work with a socially distanced gathering at its onsite Wildlife Habitat Council certified trout pond.

## Spartan History >

Salem native **Mark O'Connell** has released a second book chronicling the history of high school football in Salem, *The Spartan Succession: The Genesis (1972-1985)*, a sequel to *The Team the Titans Remember*, namely Andrew Lewis High School. Andrew Lewis became a middle school when Salem High School opened its doors in 1977. The program struggled to regain its past glory (two state titles under then-head coach Eddie Joyce), until Willis White took over in 1983. To date, White and his successors have played in twelve state championship games, winning nine. Salem High School football is also big business for that locality, for local eateries, shop selling Spartans gear etc. O'Connell is now a freelance sportswriter near his current home in Orange, also broadcasting local high school football and lacrosse. Before a virtual talk about his book last month the Salem Museum described *The Spartan Succession* as "a riveting journey from the locker room to the playing field and beyond, providing a keen view of what it takes to make and sustain a high school football dynasty."



Submitted photo

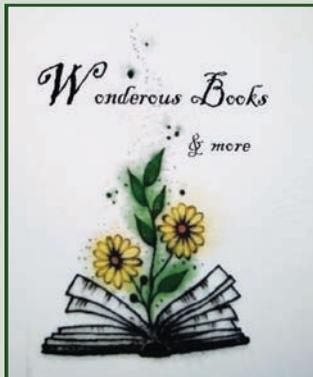


## Wonderous Books in Salem >

The first ribbon cutting for the Salem-Roanoke County Chamber of Commerce didn't happen until late August (a sign of the times) when **Wonderous Books and More** debuted on Main Street



Facebook photo



in Salem. The new business features gently used books and other gift items. The shop also offers a small event space for rent. Wonderous Books and More is owned by **Savannah Oaks**, a college junior. The store's name pays homage to Alice in Wonderland, Oaks' favorite book. Visitors can also meet the shop bunny, appropriately named Poe.



Submitted photos

## Millstone Kitchen helping its Neighbors in Need >

The shared-use kitchen facility in Blacksburg, **Millstone Kitchen**, has taken on new partners as it addresses food insecurity made worse for some families during the pandemic. Grant funding has allowed **HazelBea Catering** and **On Site Culinary** to come aboard, preparing 400-500 fresh, healthy meals every week for distribution in New River towns, cities and counties including Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, Floyd and Newport. The Agency on Aging, Future Economy Collective, Newport Community Center, Christiansburg Parks and Recreation, Warm Hearth Village and NRV Diaper Pantry are making those weekly food deliveries. The Live Work Eat Gather Inc. non-profit that supports Millstone Kitchen - in cooperation with Montgomery County - received a Community Development Block Grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to help pay the catering companies for the meals being prepared.



## Can you do the Fandango? >

Live music returned to **Dr. Pepper Park** in mid-summer and a sellout crowd (with attendance limits capped at 1000 due to COVID-19 distancing requirements) was on hand when **Absolute Queen** took to the stage in late August. Park president **Waynette Anderson** and the lead singer for the Tampa-based Queen tribute band reminded or thanked those in attendance for wearing face coverings and doing their best to observe

physical distancing guidelines. Dr. Pepper Park opened its 2020 season about two months late due to pandemic safety precautions.



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## Former Mayor criticizes rejected development proposal >

Long time Roanoke Mayor **David Bowers**, seeking to reclaim that seat as an independent candidate next month – Democrat Sherman Lea Sr. in the incumbent – has used the turning down of a proposed mix-used development project across from Valley View Mall as a campaign issue. “About two years ago a successful developer named Pavilion came up from Charlotte, North Carolina with a grand plan to develop the 100 acres at Evans Spring,” Bower said during a mid-August Zoom news conference (available on [www.bowersformayor2020.com](http://www.bowersformayor2020.com) .) “Pavilion planned on investing \$250 million in private/public funding ... that’s equal to or maybe more than we’ve had spent developing the Virginia

Tech Carilion Medical Complex. “\$270 Million in tax revenue was projected to be generated here in Roanoke. Now wouldn’t that be welcomed revenue during these hard-hit pandemic times,” continued Bowers. He said if elected next month once of his first calls would be to Pavilion, asking them to reconsider the Evans Spring project, which had drawn stiff opposition from some northwest Roanoke City residents.

## Unique boutique fitness facility all about escaping the daily hustle >

**Hustle Haven** in downtown Roanoke on Campbell Avenue offers hot yoga and indoor cycling classes, yes, but co-owner **London Ray-Dykstra** says it’s also meant for people to come enjoy other aspects. Like the self-care boutique, potion bar, and outdoor patio. “It’s essentially a coffee and tea bar. We created a drink that can be hot or cold that we infuse with mushrooms, herbs and CBD. That’s all part of the self-care agenda.” Ray-Dykstra says Hustle Haven is also flexible on how people use the facility: “you can either do a drop-in [class], buy class packs or [become] a member.”



## Mickey Matthews back on the trail >

Retired Virginia Western Community College American history professor **Jim Sargent** has gone from writing non-fiction books about baseball (he grew up in Michigan playing it and following the Detroit Tigers) to writing historical fiction through his Mickey Mathews mystery novels, set around World War II. The latest is *Warm Springs Mystery*, wherein rumors are flying in 1945 - and President Roosevelt may be in danger. Mathews has again been called in to partner with the FBI. “We seem to be having more success with this book than the previous ones,” says Sargent; “this book is starting out in multiple formats, e-book, paperback, and hardback, Amazon and [new publisher Doce Blant] have them all.”

## A whole lotta love >

The **Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce** has unveiled a new LOVE artwork, on display at the Smith Mountain Lake Visitor Center (Bridgewater Plaza.) The LOVEworks program is a state-wide branding initiative designed to promote travel in Virginia. There are now more than 200 LOVE displays statewide. "The goal is to have the sign as a backdrop as visitors take their photo in front of the letters L-O-V-E and share on social media," says Chamber executive director Christopher Finley. In July, the SMLRCC received a \$10,000 grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation's WanderLove Recovery Grant Program, which was used to commission local artist Lisa Floyd with Floyd Artworks for the project.



Courtesy of The Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce



## Kroger chips in to upgrade its volunteer training center >

It's actually been opened for about 9 months but the COVID-19 delayed ribbon cutting for a renovated volunteer training room at **Feeding Southwest Virginia** in Salem just took place in late August. The **Kroger Volunteer Center** was renovated with new wall graphics and seating areas, with help from a \$35,000 grant from the grocery chain's mid-Atlantic division. President and CEO **Pamela Irvine** says it's important to treat volunteers well – they are crucial to the non-profit food bank's operation. "We wanted this room to be refreshed because if you're not paying people, they have to feel good about the environment in which they're volunteering." Irvine cited those volunteers who come back

time and time again to help sort, pack and determine whether recovered food from local supermarkets can be distributed to food insecure families in need.

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## Kiwanis playground opens >

The **Kiwanis Club of Roanoke** wanted to celebrate its 100th year in 2020. So, the club that meets weekly and organizes the annual pancake breakfast and auction (held last month after a COVID delay from the spring) decided to raise \$400,000 for an all-inclusive playground outside the Melrose Library, which debuted at its new location last year. The Centennial playground opened at the end of August, with a volunteer mulching/ribbon cutting.

## Kroger and Heinz step up again >

A \$20,000 combined donation from **Kroger** and **Kraft Heinz** will renew their support of the Virginia Western Student Co-Op that launched with the 2019-2020 academic year, with a focus on eliminating student food insecurity on campus. More than 370 students were served multiple times by the free co-op pantry in the last academic year. "Before we launched the Student Co-Op [located in the Strauss Family Student Life Center Building], we estimated that up to 50 percent of our approximately 10,000 Virginia Western students could be going hungry every day. Through the immediate popularity of the Co-Op, we learned how real the need was," said Dr. Robert H. Sandel, President of Virginia Western.



Submitted photo



Submitted photo

## New school means new natural gas service >

Due to construction of the new **Colonial Elementary School**, Botetourt County and Roanoke Gas Company have partnered to bring natural gas service to the Blue Ridge community. The new school will be using natural gas-fired boilers. As a result, the new infrastructure will serve the school and the homes and businesses along the way to the school. It is expected that Roanoke Gas will expand the system over time in the Blue Ridge area. "Getting natural gas service to Blue Ridge is one of the extra benefits we are receiving as a result of the new school project," said Botetourt County Board of Supervisors Chairman Billy Martin.



## Updated look for Roanoke's pro hockey team >

No thundering checks, no Diesel the mascot and no screaming fans after a goal is scored - until at least December - but the **Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs** hockey team looked to maintain a "buzz" by rolling out a refreshed or new logos and game jerseys recently. The changes – with graphics design help from Dawgs vendor **Magnets USA** in Vinton, were actually in the works since late last year but was slowed by – well you know. Vice President of Operations **Alexandra Martin** says the Dawgs front office saw no signs that momentum for the franchise was slowing as the team prepared for its fifth season at the Berglund center. That was until COVID-19 "turned everyone's world upside down," as she puts it.

The Rail Yard Dawgs lost 7 of their 28 home games last season when COVID cut the season short, and any additional revenue from possible playoff games. At last word, the SPHL said the season opener would be pushed back from October until at least mid-December. "We've had such amazing fan support and sponsor support through all of this," says Martin, "it's been really awesome, the sales are still coming for merch[andise] and people are still paying on their season tickets."



## Drive-thru job fair >

**Express Employment Professionals** hosted a "Drive-Thru Career Fair" at the Roanoke Berglund Center in mid-September. Express owner Garry Norris reported 57 cars / applicants and said several positions were already placed (just days after the event).

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

## NON-PROFIT FRONT

**Autumn Lavering** has been promoted to chief operating officer at Child Health Investment Partnership of Roanoke.



Kerr

The Jefferson Center announced the following new officers and board members: **Nathan Kerr**, chair; **Whit Ellerman** and **Sharon Burnham**, secretary of the board; **Richard Socha-Mower**, treasurer; **Greg Brock** and **Bo Frith**.

WVTF Public Radio, RADIO IQ has appointed **Bruce Marquis** as development director for the public radio network based in Roanoke. Marquis most recently was development officer for West Virginia



Kerr

Public Broadcasting, coordinating major gifts and planning capital campaigns for the statewide public radio and television network.



Sala

Virginia Children's Theatre (formerly Roanoke Children's Theatre) has added **Emma Sala** as the Education Associate. As Education Associate, Sala will teach multiple VCT Academy Classes including Creative Drama, Elementary Ensemble Acting, and she will co-teach Elementary Musical Theatre. Sala has

been a part of VCT from the beginning - having been a youth performer in the very first RCT production.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Balzer & Associates has welcomed **Kyle Mitchell**, civil engineering, and **Beverly Longstreth** to the Roanoke office.

## EDUCATIONAL FRONT



Samba

**Aissatou Samba** has been named housekeeping manager at The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center, where she is in her 11th year. Samba oversees a team of up to 20 people responsible for guest rooms, public spaces,

and areas of the Holtzman Alumni Center. She will handle scheduling, lead meetings for her team, manage payroll, and oversee the purchasing and receiving of supplies.



Weaver-Hightower

The Virginia Tech Department of English has hired a new department head, who said she was "thrilled to join a university invested in the power of the humanities and literature." **Rebecca Weaver-Hightower** held a similar leadership position at North Dakota State University prior to joining Virginia Tech on July 1. She earned her Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Kentucky.

**Tim Baird** has been appointed faculty principal for the Creativity and Innovation

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District Living-Learning Community (CID LLC) at Virginia Tech. Baird is associate professor of geography at Virginia Tech. He has been a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology at Virginia Tech since 2016, and director of the Pathways to Sustainability Minor since 2015.



Bridgeforth

**James S. Bridgeforth** has been named assistant vice president for student affairs and ExperienceVT at Virginia Tech. Bridgeforth comes to Virginia Tech from the University of South Alabama where he was director of university housing and graduate faculty Instructor in higher education administration. He brings more than 17 years of experience working in higher education, including

at public universities, private colleges, HBCUs, and land-grant institutions.

**Robert Moore**, a professor in the Department of Chemistry, recently became the new director of the Virginia Tech Macromolecules Innovation Institute (MII), an interdisciplinary science and engineering research center focused on polymeric materials. He takes over from Christopher Williams, the L.S. Randolph Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering in the College of Engineering.

**Daniel Sui** has been appointed Virginia Tech's vice president for research and innovation, effective November 1. Sui is described as an

internationally renowned researcher in the area of GIS-based spatial analysis and modeling for urban, environmental, and public health applications. The Professor of Geography, Sui currently serves as the University of Arkansas' vice chancellor for research and innovation.

## MUNICIPAL FRONT

**Rob Light** has been named Assistant City Manager for the City of Salem. The 1989 Salem High School graduate returned with experience in both local government and the private business sector. In 2008 Light began his career in public service for Roanoke County and since March had led

the county's logistical operations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During his senior year at Salem High School Light was named one of the Commonwealth's 25 top college football prospects and he went on to play for William & Mary.

The town of Rocky Mount has named **Mark Moore** as its new assistant town manager. Moore comes to Rocky Mount from Pittsylvania County, where the Ferrum College graduate served as the director of parks and recreation for more than nine years. He has also held positions with the cities of Roanoke and Salem and Botetourt County.

*Compiled by  
Gene Marrano*



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# CONTRIBUTORS

**Beth Bell** is the president of FemCity Roanoke, a 300-member business networking community for women. [Roanoke@femcity.com]

**Tim Bradshaw** is the executive director for the Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport. A native of Roanoke who returned to the area in 2014, Tim has an Aviation BA degree from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and a Master's in Public Administration from Western Kentucky University. He lives in Troutville on a small farm with his wife Janee. His daughter Jessica and son-in-law Matt reside in Roanoke. Tim is an avid outdoorsman.

**Bruce C. Bryan** is proprietor of the award-winning advertising and marketing agency, 5Points Creative, located in downtown Roanoke. [bruce@5PointsCreative.com]

**Lisa Clause** is senior director of marketing and philanthropy at Richfield Living. She is a recent MBA graduate with distinction of Liberty University and has a bachelor's degree in marketing and minor in professional and technical writing at Virginia Tech. She began her career at the Roanoke Times, moved to WSET television rising to national sales manager. She co-owns Fine Line Interiors with her husband, and enjoys gardening, bike riding, and church activities.

**Mike Dame** is the vice president of marketing and communications at Carilion Clinic. A graduate of the University of Florida, he spent nearly a decade as a sportswriter for the Orlando Sentinel before transitioning to a career in digital communications that landed him at Virginia Tech in 2005; he joined Carilion in 2008. Mike lives in Roanoke with his wife Valeria and enjoys golf, guitar, spending time with friends and cheering on his beloved Florida Gators.

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

**Tom Field** is a creative director, marketing executive and owner of Berryfield, Inc. in Salem, and owner of Valley Business FRONT magazine. He has written and produced programs and materials for local and international organizations for 40 years. [tfield@berryfield.com]

**Katie Gehrt** is the director of marketing and communications for the Moss Arts Center and the Center for Creativity, Arts, and Technology at Virginia Tech. She holds degrees from Virginia Tech and West Virginia University. She's an avid equestrian who loves to travel and lives in Blacksburg with her husband and potcake dog.

**Doug Kidd** has 25 years in the business as a professional image consultant and clothier. He's with Tom James Company, a service that comes to clients in the privacy of their home or office.

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

**Gene Marrano** is FRONT editor and an award-winning anchor and reporter for WFIR Newstalk radio. He recently won best feature award from

the Virginia Association of Broadcasters for his Dopesick interview with Beth Macy. [gmarrano@cox.net]

**Frank Martin** is a senior associate broker and the top sales agent for Hall Associates, Inc., the oldest commercial real estate brokerage west of Richmond. He specializes in Sales and Leasing for office and industrial properties in southwest Virginia.

**Mary Ann L. Miller** is vice president of business banking and community relations at Bank of Botetourt. A graduate of Bridgewater College, she has been in the banking industry for more than fifteen years and currently serves on the board and executive committee as past-president with the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce, a board member with the Daleville Institute, and is vice chair of the board of with the Botetourt Family YMCA. A native of Botetourt County, she resides in Daleville with her husband, Matthew and their son Ira.

**Annette Patterson**, President of the Advancement Foundation in Vinton, is a results-driven leader that has built a massive network of support services, resources, and collaborations to benefit main street, early high growth ventures and freelancers. [annette.taf@gmail.com]

**Paul Phillips** has served as the chief executive officer of Freedom First Credit Union for the last twenty years. Freedom First was chartered in 1956 as a federally-insured member-owned financial cooperative and currently serves residents and businesses through its ten locations in the Roanoke and New River valleys. Prior to moving to Roanoke in 1998 Paul and his wife Missy lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming with their three children. A resident of Fincastle, Paul enjoys numerous outdoor

activities, travelling and spending time with his two granddaughters.

**Brian Powell** is the owner and operator of Wine Gourmet in Roanoke Virginia. Brian moved to Roanoke when he purchased Wine Gourmet in 2011. Brian attended Virginia Tech and is an avid Hokie Fan! A member of the Guild of Sommoliers, Brian resides in Roanoke and enjoys time with family and friends.

**Michael Shelton** is a Registered Financial Consultant that specializes in working with Accredited Investors, largely being business owners and real estate investors. He has worked with thousands of clients in Southwest Virginia and beyond to create smart, cost-effective, and rewarding financial solutions. Michael's services bring together the powerful combination of tax reducing plans through the business and investment planning with your personal net worth. His unique strategy to provide a holistic approach towards asset management always delivers a simple, easy and enjoyable experience. [michael@discover360Financial.com]

**Nicholas Vaassen** is a graphic designer with 19 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]

**Amy White** is the Dean of STEM (School of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) at Virginia Western Community College. She has a Bachelor's degree in biology from James Madison University, a Master's degree in microbiology and immunology from Virginia Commonwealth University, hails from Botetourt County, and has worked at VWCC since 2003.

““

When you have a fixed mindset you find it more difficult to navigate. — Page 30

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*Small business help in the NRV*

Montgomery County, and the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg have launched a small business recovery grant program in response to the pandemic. Small businesses must meet requirements and provide proper documentation to be considered for grants ranging from \$500 to more than \$27,000. Similar grants for childcare centers and non-profits are in the works.

*No recession for home sales*

Despite the ongoing pandemic, homes sales have soared across the Roanoke Valley. The Roanoke Valley Association of Realtors reports 638 homes were sold in July, up 11 percent compared with July of 2019. Officials say the sales numbers are due in large part to low mortgage rates.

*Help in Franklin County*

The Franklin County Board of Supervisors has set aside \$300,000 in CARES Act funding to assist local residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. \$225,000 of that amount is earmarked for utility bill payments, the remainder for past due rent or mortgage obligations. Applicants must meet certain guidelines to qualify for grants. United Way of Roanoke Valley will act as the program manager.

"As a community, we must work together to help our neighbors impacted by this outbreak and its effects," said Leland Mitchell, Chairman of the Franklin County Board of Supervisors.

*Hokies step up to the plate*

2020 may be a year many would like to close the door on as quickly as possible, but Boundless Impact: The Campaign for Virginia Tech, a fundraising campaign launched last year, has been a huge success. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year it raised more than \$185 million in new gifts for school, topping the \$181.9 million in 2018-2019. The \$172 million-plus received in cash was also a record, by nearly \$40 million. Said Virginia Tech President Tim Sands: "this record-setting show of support is especially uplifting as we welcome students to one of the most atypical fall semesters we have ever experienced." Boundless Impact has set its sights on raising \$1.5 billion – while engaging 100,000 Hokies by 2027.

*"Be Well" message also conveyed via NRV business community*

The New River Valley Public Health Task Force has launched a campaign urging all residents to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 – and to stay safe themselves. It's called "Be Committed. Be Well," and features a number of products and outreach methods, including

nearly 120,000 cloth face coverings distributed to designated locations, - stores, restaurants, farmer's markets, local government offices, courthouses, libraries, aquatic and recreation centers, police, fire/rescue agencies, hospitals and health/medical providers and schools (K-12 and colleges and universities). Media campaigns on various platforms are also in the mix with Virginia Tech students now back in Blacksburg – greatly increasing the population there. Blacksburg Police Chief Anthony Wilson said in a late August news release that, "we're pivoting to a focus on working together to stay safe as our community grows and moves about in greater numbers, as it does each year at this time."

*Harvester goes dark for 2020*

The Harvester Performance Center in Rocky Mount has canceled or postponed the remainder of its 2020 shows. The venue's general manager says the decision was based on uncertainty about the pandemic's progression and safety concerns for fans, staff, performers and the community.

*Carilion honored for hiring veterans*

Eleven Virginia employers have been honored for their efforts to hiring military veterans, those transitioning out of the service and the spouses. Carilion Clinic was one of the 2020

winners of a Virginia Values Veterans (V3) Award, receiving the 2020 V3 Readiness Award, for efforts towards, "improving workforce readiness, streamlining career development and fostering a strong military readiness workplace culture and environment." Governor Ralph Northam was among those presenting the V3 awards virtually in mid-August. The Virginia Department of Veterans Services established the Virginia Values Veterans program in 2012.

*Money to be made in green economy*

Governor Ralph Northam has signed the Virginia Clean Economy Act, establishing new energy efficiency standards (including 30 percent renewable energy by 2030), and avenues for investments in solar, onshore wind, offshore wind, and energy storage. Additional legislation said the Governor's office in mid-August will support new investments in solar energy. The Solar Freedom bill is designed to help grow the rooftop solar market in the Commonwealth.

*Carilion employees made whole again*

Following a mid-April announcement of reduced pay and furloughs, Carilion Clinic restored the hours and base pay for all employees in mid-September. In March as a response to COVID-19, Carilion

halted non-emergent services and procedures “to protect the health and safety of patients, employees and the public in the early days of the pandemic.” That led to a sharp decline in revenue for several months and then pay cuts and furloughs. Since May however patient volumes have gradually returned to approximately 90% of pre-COVID levels, what Carilion labeled “a new normal,” in the release announcing the pay and hours reinstatement. “We’ve rallied together in so many ways to keep our community healthy and safe,” said Nancy Howell Agee, president and CEO of Carilion.”

*Battling the coronavirus proactively as Tech students return*

With Virginia Tech students swelling the town’s population as they returned to campus, Downtown Blacksburg INC. distributed coronavirus prep kits to businesses in late August. Volunteers handed out bags of

PPE and educational information about the virus. A number of Virginia Tech students were suspended early in the new semester for violating COVID-19 safety guidelines established by the school – and agreed to by students.

*ROA numbers up again*

Encouraging signs at Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport - an increase in July 2020 traffic of 55% over June. The gain of almost 7500 passengers from June to July meant about 240 more passengers flying each day, as the airport entered phase 3.

*GO Fest is a no-go for October due to the pandemic*

The Anthem GO Outside Festival has been canceled. Instead two socially distanced concerts (featuring Andy Frasco and the U.N.) to benefit the new Project Outside initiative are planned. The Roanoke Outside Foundation will

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also stage a GO Quest scavenger hunt and is encouraging the local community and individual vendors to schedule their own outdoor events during the same weekend in mid-October when the 10th annual GO Fest would have been staged.

*NRV robotics company will expand*

A Blacksburg company that is developing self-driving vehicle systems is expanding in a big way: Torc Robotics plans to add 350 new jobs. Torc will invest \$8.5 million to expand its software development operations in Montgomery County. The company will also establish an additional

facility at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center in close proximity to its current operation in the Blacksburg Industrial Park. Virginia successfully competed with North Carolina and Texas for the project. Seed money from the Commonwealth as a participant in the Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) Program helped Torc Robotics find new markets for its self-driving vehicle applications.

*Remote working capability a possible boon for SW Virginia?*

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Economist for the Virginia Association of Realtors - Lisa Sturtevant - said the high cost of housing in regions like northern Virginia could work to southwestern Virginia's benefit. Sturtevant said that depends in part on how entrenched remote working becomes post-coronavirus. "If they are able to work from home it might make places down in the Blue Ridge area, down in Roanoke or along the Eastern Shore more attractive," said Sturtevant, "and we're starting to see a little bit of that around the edges."

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### *Floyd ag grant*

Floyd County has received a grant of \$20,000 from the Governor's Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development (AFID) Fund Planning Grant program to support local agriculture amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The grant will be matched with funds from the applicant communities and non-profit partners. Floyd County will use the funding to create a new digital marketplace for its farmers and provide technical assistance for using it. Floyd County will also add new refrigerated drop-off locations so producers can serve consumers throughout the week.

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### *RC poll hints at promising news*

The Virginia Index of Consumer Sentiment – as measured by The Institute for Policy and

Opinion Research at Roanoke College - climbed almost 8 points over the last quarter, making up half of the COVID-19 losses from the second quarter. The index remains about 2.5 points below its five-year average. The August 2020 value is 89.1 and "is driven by tremendous enthusiasm and confidence in the economy, regardless of political affiliation," said Dr. Alice Louise Kassens, Senior Analyst for The Institute, in late August. One possible reason: Nationally, the July unemployment rate was 10.2 percent, a rapid fall off from the COVID recession high of 14.7% in April. In the Commonwealth, the unemployment rate was 8.0% in July, down over three points since April. "Consumer sentiment [was] primarily driven by confidence in our economy over the next few years. The 2020 recession was unlike traditional economic recessions in that it was not caused by challenges with underlying economic fundamentals in areas like the finance or real estate markets," noted Kassens.

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### *Spanx founder issue grant in Floyd*

Troika Crafts in Floyd was selected to receive a \$5,000 COVID-19 relief and recovery grant from The Red Backpack Fund, targeted for small businesses and nonprofits, issues by The Spanx by Sara Blakely Foundation. Blakely started her company (those snug-

fitting underwear and leggings) twenty years ago with \$5,000 in savings; she is now a billionaire. The Spanx by Sara Blakely Foundation donated \$5 million to support female entrepreneurs in the wake of COVID-19 and teamed up with GlobalGiving to establish The Red Backpack Fund. Troika Crafts is a fine craft gallery located in downtown Floyd. Annie Armistead and Abby Reczek took over the business in January of 2019

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### *Sign of the (shrinking) Times*

The Roanoke Times laid off 10 employees (3 full time, 7 part time) in October as part of Iowa-based owner Lee Enterprises' plan to consolidate newspaper design work in the Midwest. The company rejected the proposal to establish a hub in Roanoke that would keep design work on site and provide a new revenue stream through custom publications and web services for area businesses. This means the pages of the Roanoke Times are being assembled in Iowa. Local Delegate Sam Rasoul and State Senator David Suetterlein had both sent letters to Lee supporting the establishment of a hub.

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### *New SML blog*

The Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce (SMLRCC) has launched a new "Visit Smith Mountain

Lake" travel blog, a monthly feature highlighting local experiences, upcoming events, and more. It's online at [visitsmithmountainlake.com/blog](https://visitsmithmountainlake.com/blog). "Our goal is for the blog to engage visitors and offer readers a peak into our world-class historical sites, unique shopping opportunities as well as fantastic dining and entertainment options throughout the region," said Christopher Finley, executive director in a news release.

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### *Pizza Hut tightens its belt*

Several Pizza Hut locations in Southwest Virginia have closed in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Salem, along with the Hershberger Road and Brandon Avenue Pizza Huts in Roanoke. Parent company NPC International, Inc. says the closings are designed to maximize the success of remaining locations.

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### *The music is back*

Live Music returned to Martin's Downtown in Roanoke in mid-September for the first time since March. Social distancing, facemasks and limited capacities are the norm for now. Owner Jason Martin says CARES act funding and a grant from the Roanoke Arts Commission for the live music return helped him weather the COVID storm. Since March, Martin's Downtown has had to cancel 150 shows because of the coronavirus. Only 75

patrons will be allowed in at a time and Martin says they will be strictly enforcing the mask policy. All shows are currently planned to be held indoors. Tickets will be sold at the door on a first come first serve basis. "I want to make sure that everything goes smoothly, and everybody feels good about it," says Martin, "I feel like this is the next step."

*Roanoke-Munich alliance*

The Roanoke-based strategic marketing and

advertising firm The O'Connor Group has started a special initiative to help Europe-based companies expand their presence and business opportunities in the U.S. Named "EUR-US," it is a partnership between and Imre Szerdahelyi's global marketing and communication consultancy based in Munich. The O'Connor Group will provide strategic marketing, event support, and advertising and design services alongside Szerdahelyi, the former Head of

Global Marketing and Corporate Communications for several multinational market and technology leaders. Both partners will also help American-based companies create strategies to succeed in European markets.

*Something many remote workers-turned educators can relate to*

Roanoke City Councilwoman Djuna Osborne resigned in mid-September, when her first term had still two years

to run. She said that due to the global pandemic she had to make significant adjustments to accommodate the needs of her family; that includes new obligations as a full-time stay-at-home mom and educator, along with her private counseling practice. "I, along with each of you, have had to make significant adjustments to accommodate the needs of my family," said Osborne.

*Compiled by Gene Marrano*

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“ ” Many of her clients... don't have much spare time to hit the mall or even shop online. — Page 36



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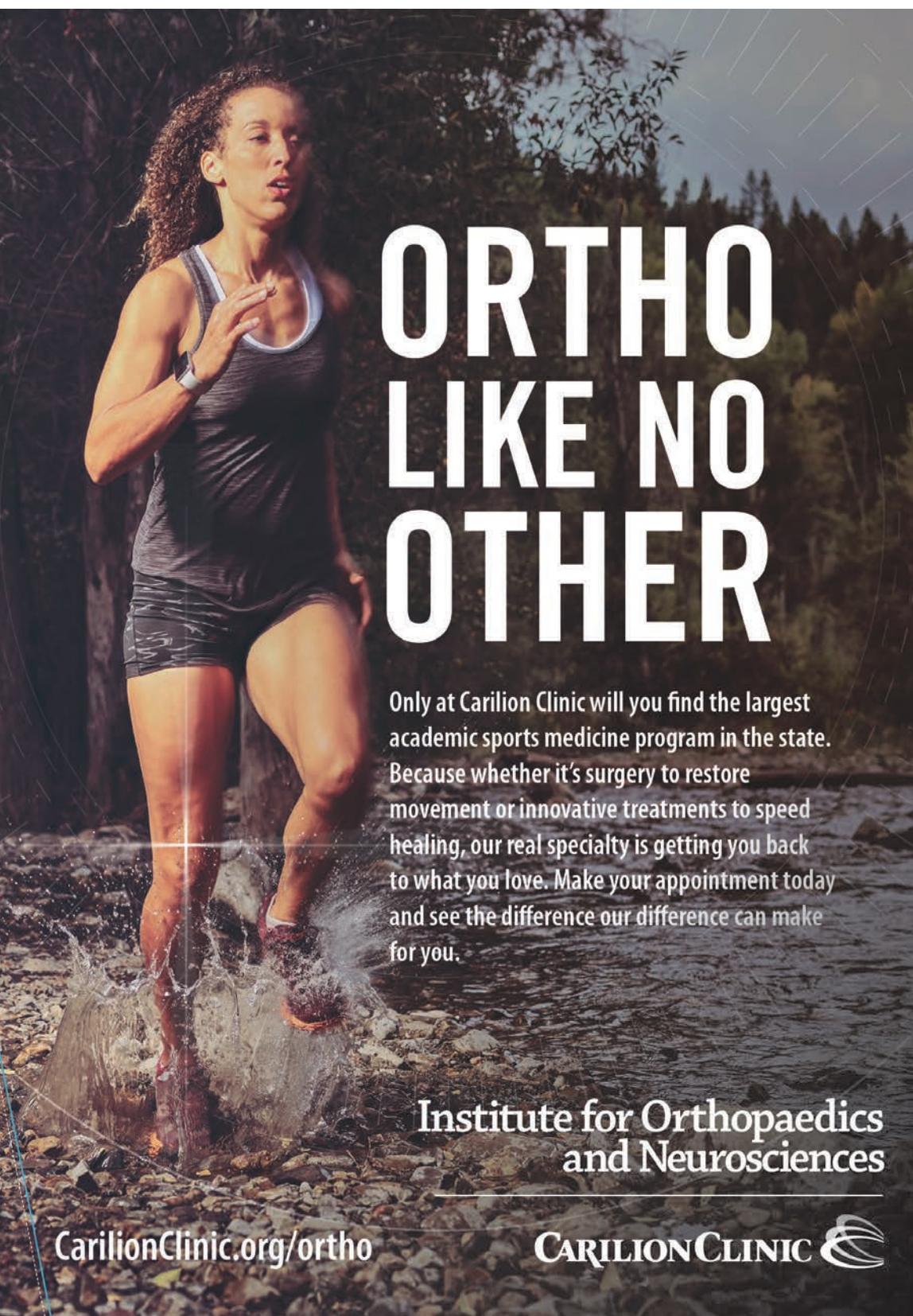
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