

Valley Business FRONT

VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE BUSINESS JOURNAL

ISSUE 199

APRIL 2025

Roanoke Cultural
Endowment

Jump Into Mystery

JA's Kerri Garnett

Salem's Carey
Harveycutter

Mountain Movers
Creative Arts

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A man with a goatee, wearing a black polo shirt and blue jeans, is smiling and playing a red and orange electric guitar. He is standing in a music store with various guitars hanging on the wall behind him. The store has price tags on the guitars and other musical equipment visible in the background.

More than a Music Shop

Kris Hale
Hale's Music School

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WELCOME TO THE FRONT

For your April 2025 edition of FRONT and our lineup of stories, we have four profiles, one report, and one pictorial. Profiles can be about a business / organization or a person. Ultimately, all profiles tend to be based on an individual behind the mission.

Frankly, all stories are about people. A product or service only has any character because of the spirit of the person responsible for it. Which means, on average, we introduce you to more than 100 people each month, factoring in the FRONT'n About, CareerFRONT, and FRONT notes.

Why all the math?

Next month, we'll hit our 200th edition of FRONT.

Over 20,000 people. That's a lot of introductions.

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Gene Marrano
Editor



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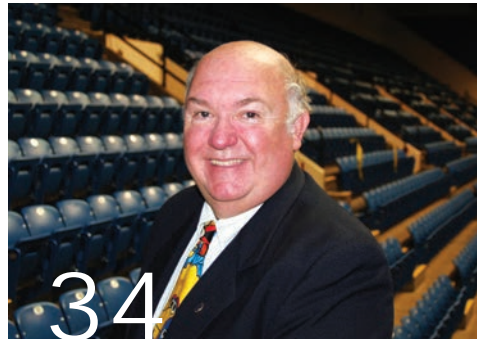
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“ ”
She did it
anyway. — Page 18

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“Hey, I’m Getting The Band Back Together”
*Hales Music School in Salem:
lessons and instruments*

By Andy Brady





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Aila Boyd



Andy Brady



Doug Doughty



Dan Dowdy



Jennifer Leake



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.

2025 CONTRIBUTORS



Bonnie Chavez



Daniel Colston



Carrie Cousins



Tom Field



Becky Freemal



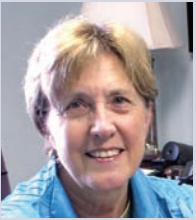
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“ ”

What we're building we're keeping locally.

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“ ”

Start a 'Spring Shout-Out' initiative.

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

“ ”

We realized we caught lightning in a bottle.

— Page 35





"Hey, I'm Getting The Band Back Together"

Hales Music School in Salem: lessons and instruments

By Andy Brady

From a hand-me-down guitar at 9, to multiple degrees, to college educator, Kris Hale now runs a music shop and school for every type of student and instrument. Something for everyone.

Kris Hale took private lessons in guitar, piano, and music theory, starting at a pretty young age. After starting college, "I decided that the only thing I would like to do would be to play music for a living." So, Kris went to Radford and got a bachelor's and a master's degree in guitar performance. After that, he went on to Emory & Henry College (now Emory & Henry University), where he became the director of guitar studies.

Over the years he taught guitar at many colleges including Radford University, Lynchburg College (now University of Lynchburg), Roanoke College, and more.





"During my time at RU, I was teaching there in the mornings and then at a local music shop for 11 years before it shut down." He found Blue Note Vintage Music in Salem and asked if he could rent some space from them.

"And that's kind of how we started, and it just kept growing. People came in and would ask, do you teach piano? And we were like, 'no, but I can find somebody,' and then it just picked up from there."

Pick up it did. Blue Note (the shop) eventually closed, and Kris took over more building space for lessons.

"There are about 10 other instructors besides myself, sometimes it's up to 13, sometimes it's lower, just depending on who lives in town." Some teachers who are seasonal follow the college schedule, including some current teachers from Virginia Tech. Over the next couple years, he took over the entire building and added a store front.

After finding qualified teachers, people would ask "Where can I get a pack of strings? There's no way I want to send them to Amazon; so, it just started that way. I started carrying strings. Then all of a sudden, Mom bought a guitar off of Amazon." (Kris refers to some of the 'student' guitars off Amazon as "a GSO, guitar shaped object, it looks like one.") It can be hard to sound good on a bad guitar. So, he branched out to have a full store front with quality instruments.

Online ordering is killing other music shops, so having a focus on lessons first, and the convenience of the shop, is a great combination.

The 13 teachers are not only teaching guitar. Lessons are available on a wide variety of instruments, too many to list them all. Brass, woodwind, drums, piano, guitar, bass, and even vocals. They have rentals in the building for any student, school age or not, that allow them to rent a much more expensive instrument such as a tuba, cello, or clarinet, at a more affordable price, while they are testing and learning new hobbies.

Every fall, hundreds of students are looking for an instrument as they enter 6th grade band. Affordable rentals are almost a necessity for a new student faced with spending \$1,000+ on a new instrument. Hales Music allows them to change instruments as their interests change. This is where a rental program really shines.

Beyond lessons and a store, Hales Music provides maintenance and repair.

“ ”

Ten percent of my students are still doing online lessons, from COVID time, and one who's actually in India... they were living here and moved away, and they're still taking lessons.



"I have a whole workshop in the back; guitar, violin, really anything with strings." Plus, Hales offers repairs on many school band instruments in house as well.

Kris says his customers don't fall under one type.


"Well, it depends. It's different during different times of the day... because we're open 12 to 8. Daytime is usually homeschoolers and retirees off work. There are some who will zip over here on a lunch break or something. And then, for the afternoon, middle school and elementary school. And then after about 6, we start seeing the adults coming after they get off from work."

Why choose Hales for classes?

"It's a requirement for me, if you're going to work here, you actually understand music and you can point to a degree to prove it."

All of the instructors are either undergrad or have a graduate degree. "There's nowhere else that does this. There's plenty of guitar places, always will be... but how many places also have trumpet, saxophone, marimba, and drum lessons?"

When asked 'what's next' Kris mentions teaching bands and ensembles. Students learning how to play with others and not just by themselves, is very different, he says. Instead of just one on one education, Hales can also focus on anything from string quartets to garage bands.

"Or even, we'll have this guy playing guitar... we have a bass player... we have a keyboard... we have a drummer... we have a singer. Yeah, just put them all in; we now have a band." 

“ ”

I like all genres, I'm a big fan of everything, I've always looked at it as; there's only 12 notes, they're only in different orders.



Taking the long view on supporting arts and culture in Roanoke

By Hart Fowler

There's a beacon on the horizon that's beginning to flash a bit brighter with biddings of good things in store for Roanoke City arts and culture nonprofits.

The Roanoke Cultural Endowment (RCE) was created a decade ago and championed by Roanoke City Council (former council member David Trinkle in particular), an unprecedented and pioneering arts-based financial plan to raise \$20 million dollars, then, and only then, to begin investing in local arts and culture non-profits annually, with the interest on that endowment leading to grants. At a 5% return, that's a million dollars a year going directly to local arts groups and artists, who would apply for those grants annually.

“We are a giving mechanism for something long term,” said Executive Director Shaleen Powell in an interview, “and what we're building we're keeping locally.”

Under her leadership, they recently reached 7 million dollars, with accruing interest giving added traction.

“I'm so proud of our donors. We're almost halfway there and we get a great return on the money now,” said Powell, who reaffirmed that they do not fund programming - this is an investment for the future. She encouraged those that donate to individual arts organizations to continue doing so. Roanoke City is the Roanoke Cultural Endowment's single largest donor to date, as they have contributed \$1.65 million to the RCE endowment. For Powell and the RCE, investing locally gives local returns.

“I just had a donor tell me how happy it makes them to know that their money will be spent here. It's literally going to stay here forever.”

The current 25 or so arts and culture nonprofits generate at least \$64.2 million annually to the city's economy (based on a study now several years old,) a major selling point for the endowment, when compared to similarly sized cities and economies.

Even with a vibrant and growing arts scene, Roanoke non-profits are vulnerable to cuts in grant funding, and Powell's work raising money from local citizens and corporations couldn't be better timed, with directives from the Trump Administration to the National Endowment for the Arts and Kennedy Center aiming to take more control the federal grant-giving process.

New “Compliance Orders” require funding recipients to abide by merit-based and not race or gender-based opportunities. DEI and



Submitted

Shaleen Powell

gender ideology focused programming are also ineligible for federal grants under the new guidelines.


The “Our Town” grant that the City regularly wins, which most recently funded the Roanoke Arts-Connect program, remains unchanged, though all new grants require abiding by the new Compliance Orders from The White House.

It is unclear to what extent Federal Grants support Roanoke non-profits in the arts and culture field, but a local endowment of this magnitude doesn't only have the ability to affect real change but also ensures that the Roanoke arts community can choose what they – and the public – value as arts and culture, without federal or state interference.

Powell nobly summed up her task: support for the often threadbare operating budgets of local arts and culture groups, including

the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, Opera Roanoke, Mill Mountain Theatre, Local Colors, Jefferson Center, Southwest Virginia Ballet, etc. Powell is also a violinist for the RSO; she met her husband J.P. Powell at the Berklee School of Music. He's the front man for the local power pop band My Radio and a co-owner of the Lucky and Fortunato restaurants in downtown Roanoke.

“Our goal is to have nonprofits in the arts and culture sector have another source of revenue,” Shaleen Powell added, “one that is predictable and sustainable, and they can count on year after year.”

The beauty of a long-term investment is the patience for the big payoff, and for the Roanoke Cultural Endowment, more than a third of the way towards its goal and with good momentum, the finish is in clearer sight now – offering an excellent view of things to come. (see roanokeculturalendowment.org for more information. 



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LEAD BY EXAMPLE

**By Carrie Cousins,
Vice President at
Lead Point Digital**

Executive Summary:

A client recently came to me with an idea – they wanted to sell more widgets and were planning to ramp up manufacturing of this item. Additionally, every new widget produced would be yellow. Are you sure, I asked?

How to use Google Analytics to improve your marketing strategy

This question arose because I could tell from marketing and advertising channels that conversions of yellow widgets was not strong. Most customers never put a yellow widget in the cart on their e-commerce site!

This insight came from Google Analytics. This free tool can be connected to any website and gives you more insights into your digital house than you can probably think about. What it is great for is helping you understand your online presence and how people – shoppers, users, content digesters – are interacting with and using the information you put online.

What pages did they visit? Are they from locations where you are running ads? Are they reading the content or buying the things that you think?

In this instance, we could see from analytics that plenty of the users came to the website when there was a yellow widget in an ad. (So, this client was on the right track.)

But when you look deeper less than 1% of those people actually bought the widget in yellow. Almost every purchase of the item was in a color other than yellow.


After talking about this for a few minutes, the client admitted to having a lot of yellow widgets in the storeroom. So, we dove in a little deeper to Google Analytics to see if there was a better marketing story to tell.

We found the bright color helped people see the widget through all the digital clutter online, but when it came to purchase, blue and gray options were far more popular, selling at nearly 50 times the rate of the yellow option.

That concept solidified our marketing strategy to sell more widgets – use bright, fun color options to get attention. (And have a limited number for people that

want them.) But reinforce and make it super easy to purchase more popular colors quickly.

A few months later we met again, and sales were up for black and gray widgets. And the client was thankful that we used data they already had to prevent a giant inventory blunder.

This is just one reason I love data in marketing in advertising. What might seem like simple insights can have huge business implications. And that's a win for everyone. 

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Sabrina East

Sabrina East

The Evolution Is No Mystery

By Dan Smith

Sabrina East is nothing if not flexible and her party business is showing the positive results.

Sabrina East has spent most of her 47 years adjusting to one challenge or another, usually with considerable thought, sometimes simply on a well-versed hunch. Fact is, most of those reactions—whether to personal crises, market fluctuations or family dynamics—have proved beneficial.

Most recently, she has made a slight adjustment to her Jump Into Mystery party business, against solid business advice, principally because she sees the adjustment as the right thing to do. Jump Into Mystery parties have been her primary source of income for the past several years,

growing almost exponentially by following a proven (by her) theory.

That base has included holding the parties at bars, wineries and other places where alcohol is served. She considered finding a venue with no booze and asked a business professional friend for advice. The response: “Don’t do it.” The reasoning was that the population that doesn’t drink is a minority (38 percent, according to a Gallop Poll) and the profit margin wouldn’t be much. She did it anyway and found the result to be quite satisfying.

A look at East’s background gives a hint at



Submitted

Mystery from Stave & Cork event in Salem

her action. The Salem native is a Roanoke College graduate with degrees in criminal justice and sociology. She was raised by a single mother and has two stepsisters and a half-sister with whom she is close. She has never been married and lost her ability to bear children because of a car wreck when she was 16.

She had a solid career in juvenile detention and human services ("I loved every second of it") and started Jump Into Mystery in about 2018 as a hobby. "I realized quickly there was a need," she says, and she watched Jump Into Mystery leap into a part-time job

and then a passion that began to consume her time. Between 2018 and 2020, she was working at two jobs. She was faced with a decision: which job meant more to her?

She chose Jump.

Her first gig was at a country club. Then a retirement community. In 2020, Covid looked like it would smack Jump down, but East discovered virtual parties via the internet and that allowed her not only to hold the parties (booze optional, since the parties were at home), but to expand her geographic base to the world.

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Mystery Bower Arts Center fundraiser

She got business help from the SBDC and her friend Christina Garnett because “I had zero background in business.” Seventeen days after she made her full-time decision, Covid shut down the world and left East with the question: “What now? Do I go back?” Nope. She went virtual and almost viral. “It took a while,” she says. “I had to connect with some new nursing homes because they were locked up” and were dying to get together with live people. That solved the problem.

She discovered that “all these companies were shut down and were disconnected from their employees and had low morale. They needed team-building more than ever.” She had a solution and offered it up with her “three-hour interaction” that was Jump Into Mystery.

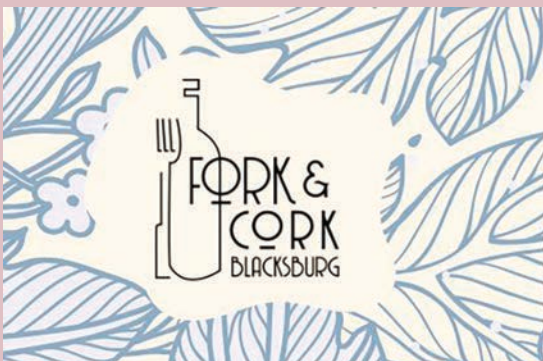
“Virtual boomed,” she said, “and it wasn’t as hard as I thought it would be.” That progressed until the summer of 2021 when she was able to go live with outdoor parties. And that

has been progressing famously. Then came a question from a customer, a recovering alcoholic who lived in California. Could she have a party at a non-alcohol venue?

“He said he missed getting together with people, but didn’t want to go to a bar,” she says. “People like [Jump Into Mystery] live, and I wanted to provide something that was not a trigger, so I connected with some sober groups.” She found One Love Coffee Shop and thought, “Let’s see what happens.”

It worked and “it meant a lot to provide alternatives.” She had spent some of her early career counseling alcoholics and addicts and knew the value of finding entertainment for those afflicted.

All the while, East had been writing her own mysteries (she has copyrights) and assigning parts in the stories to those attending. “That makes us unique,” she says. “I develop the stories to fit the needs of the people who



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Jump into Mystery team building event

come. I write the character roles based on their personalities.”

Typical games cost those taking part \$35 and last 2.5 to 3 hours. She requires a minimum of 15 players, but there is

no maximum. The events are monthly.

“What I envisioned in 2018 has come to fruition,” she says. “These are great fundraisers” and they are a lot of fun, even as they evolve. Which is constant. 



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BEST JOB EVER

By Jennifer Leake

Executive Summary:
Spring is all about new beginnings—it's a great time to refresh, refocus, and invest in your people.

Nurturing talent: helping your team grow this spring

Just as plants need sunlight, water, and good soil to thrive, your employees need the right support, opportunities, and encouragement to reach their full potential. Here's how you can cultivate a season of growth in your workplace.

1. Set Clear Expectations

A garden flourishes when each plant has space to grow; the same goes for your team. When employees know exactly what's expected of them and how their work contributes to the bigger picture, they feel more engaged and motivated. Clarity is like rich soil—it gives them a strong foundation to build on.

Action Tip: This spring, revisit job expectations with your employees. Are their goals clear? Do they understand how their role impacts the company? Minor adjustments can make a big difference.

2. Foster Continuous Learning

Plants don't grow overnight—they need consistent care. Employees thrive when they're given opportunities to learn and develop new skills. Whether it's mentorship, training, or hands-on experience, investing in their growth benefits everyone.

Action Tip: Offer employees a chance to learn something new, whether through online courses, workshops, or cross-training. Encourage them to explore skills outside their immediate roles.

3. Recognize and Appreciate Contributions

Just like plants reach toward the sun, employees thrive when they feel seen and valued. Regular recognition—big or small—boosts morale, builds loyalty, and inspires people to do their best.

Action Tip: Start a "Spring Shout-Out" initiative where team members publicly recognize each other's contributions. A little appreciation goes a long way!

4. Encourage Collaboration and Teamwork

A garden isn't made up of just one type of plant—different species work together to create a thriving ecosystem. The same goes for your team. When people collaborate and communicate well, the workplace becomes more dynamic, creative, and productive.

Action Tip: Host a "Spring Bloom" brainstorming session where teams tackle challenges or work on creative new projects together.

5. Give Constructive Feedback for Growth

Every gardener knows that occasional pruning leads to stronger plants. Employees need regular, constructive feedback to refine their skills and keep growing in the right direction.

Action Tip: Set up short, informal one-on-one check-ins to offer guidance, answer questions, and celebrate progress. The key is to make feedback a regular, supportive conversation—not just a performance review.

6. Spark Innovation and Creativity

Spring is a time for fresh ideas, and that mindset should extend to the workplace. When employees feel encouraged to experiment and think outside the box, they're more likely to come up with solutions that move the company forward.

Action Tip: Launch a "Spring Innovation Challenge" where employees pitch creative ideas for improving processes, products, or workplace culture. Recognize the best suggestions with small rewards or shout-outs.

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Empowering the Future:

Keri Garnett's Vision for Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia

By Aila Boyd

Keri Garnett, president of Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia, is on a mission to equip young people with the financial literacy, entrepreneurial mindset, and work readiness skills they need to succeed in life.

Garnett's passion for youth empowerment stems from her own experiences growing up in Roanoke, facing financial challenges, and navigating life as a first-generation college student and teen mom. Now, through Junior Achievement (JA), she is dedicated to ensuring students have access to the tools and knowledge that can change their futures.

Garnett's path to JA was shaped by her background in human services and financial counseling. She realized she wanted to be on the preventative side of financial literacy—helping young people before they face financial hardships. Since stepping into her leadership role, she has focused on expanding JA's programs, strengthening

community partnerships, and engaging students in meaningful conversations about their ambitions and the barriers they may face.

"My leadership style is rooted in authenticity and impact-driven decision-making," Garnett said. "JA's mission is all about preparing young people for economic success, and I lead with the belief that every student—regardless of background—deserves access to the knowledge and resources that can change their trajectory."

Sharon Lustig, CEO of CMR Institute and board co-chair of JA, said, "As an organization dedicated to helping young people discover what's possible for their futures, we are so very fortunate to have a leader in Keri who has both a passion for this work as well as one who is committed to our region. Keri grew up here. She's raising her children here. She's as invested in this community as she is in our mission. Keri shares her passion each and every day by looking for ways to expose young people to the new, the different and the possible. She is taking them places they've never been and helping them see career opportunities that they did not know were within their reach. Keri is passion in action."

Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia reaches approximately 4,000 students each year, offering programs that provide real-world skills not always covered in traditional classrooms. Whether it's learning how to budget, practicing job interview skills, or building a LinkedIn profile, JA ensures students are prepared for life after high school.



Keri Garnett

Courtesy photos



One success story that stands out to Garnett is Jaz'yah, JA's 2024 Student of the Year. A senior at William Fleming High School with a 4.2 GPA, Jaz'yah is also a student leader and a representative at Roanoke City School Board meetings. After participating in JA's Stock Market Challenge Summer Camp, she gained confidence and valuable financial knowledge.

"Seeing students like her, who are already

leaders in their community, gain even more skills and connections through JA is what makes this work so rewarding," Garnett said.

Collaboration is at the heart of JA's impact. Local businesses play a crucial role in bringing JA's financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and work readiness programs to life. Organizations like Edward Jones and Truist provide professionals who volunteer to teach financial literacy lessons, while other

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companies host JA Job Shadow experiences, allowing students to see careers in action.

“Our partnerships are what make JA’s programs so powerful,” Garnett said. “We also host events like the Stock Market Challenge and the Southwest Virginia Business Hall of Fame, which bring together community leaders and students.”

Despite these successes, JA faces challenges in expanding its reach. Funding remains a primary hurdle, as the organization relies on financial support for materials, staffing, and program development. Volunteer engagement is another challenge, particularly in the post-pandemic era.

“We know people are busy, so we try to make volunteering with JA as flexible and accessible

as possible,” Garnett explained. “An effective JA volunteer is simply someone who cares about young people and wants to make an impact.”

Garnett is particularly excited about the expansion of JA’s Stock Market Challenge into local high schools, as well as the launch of Polite Pathways, a workforce readiness program designed to teach students professional soft skills through hands-on learning.

Another standout initiative is JA’s 18 Under 18 program, now in its second year. The program highlights young people in the region who are making significant contributions to their communities, encouraging others to pursue their dreams regardless of age.

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Looking ahead, Garnett envisions Junior Achievement expanding its reach and enhancing interactive learning experiences.


“My vision is for every student in Southwest Virginia to have access to the tools, mentors, and opportunities that help them build a successful future—whether that means college, entrepreneurship, or a skilled trade,” she said.

Garnett highlighted the importance of education and perseverance as key lessons for students involved in JA.

“Your future is not determined by where you start—it’s built by the choices you make and the knowledge you gain,” she said. “Education will open doors for you, but you have to be open to learning and listening. Every young person is capable of achieving big things, even in Southwest Virginia.”

Through her leadership, Garnett is proving



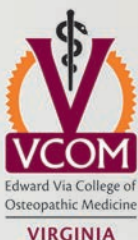
that the right guidance, resources, and opportunities can empower young people to take charge of their futures. With a strong foundation in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and career readiness, JA is shaping the next generation of leaders, innovators, and changemakers in Southwest Virginia. 

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BUSINESS CENTS

By Daniel Colston

Executive Summary:

Being a business owner is just plain tough. Your employees may think of you as the one who has it all together and who just gets to rake in the money, but what they don't see is behind the scenes.

Daniel Colston, CFP®, CEPA runs a tax and investing firm in Roanoke, Upward Financial Planning, specializing in helping business owners and retirees. He can be reached at daniel@upwardfp.com.

Being an undefeatable force when tragedy strikes

That's because you are paying bills and taxes, shopping insurance, running payroll, sending garnishment checks to the courthouse, waiting for invoices to be paid, running ads, trying to get new contracts, and trying to find ways to grow your business in the meantime. That's not even half of it.


And if your phone number is out there like it should be, then you're probably also being inundated with spam phone calls or B2B companies trying to earn your business. I remember when I first started working for someone and heard him abruptly hang up the phone on a telemarketer. I thought it was a little rude. Well now I get 5-10 of these phone calls a day. I don't even answer the phone anymore when my iPhone warns me, "Probably Scam."

Added to the daily stress of simply being a business owner, sometimes tragedy can strike—an employee gets hurt, you can't make payroll, the city shuts you down for a permit issue, a third party vendor creates a bottleneck problem for your deliverables, you have interpersonal conflicts among your staff, a pivotal person in your business gets ill, or even worse, passes away.

As a financial advisor who works with many business owners, sadly I witnessed many of my business owner peers suffer huge tragedies in the last two years, many of them resulting in bankruptcy or a complete end to their business. Many factors can contribute to this, but perhaps some of the largest causes were higher interest rates and tighter lending practices. In 2023 and especially 2024, lending became harder to get, and the rates were not as attractive as they were in 2020 and 2021.

Followers can sniff out leaders who they want to follow, and they also know when those leaders are flailing and it's time to find another captain and another ship. If you're a small business owner and tragedy has struck your business, it's important to stay calm, maintain control, shift from growth mode to survival mode, and climb your way slowly out of the pit.

Being a business owner has never been easy and it's these times of difficulty that will decide how successful your business will be. As Warren Buffett says, "When the tide goes out you see who was swimming naked."

You owe it to yourself, your family, your employees, and your clients to be strong and do everything within your power to keep the train running, because at the end of the day, it's your name on those checks. 


Whether you are Liberal, Conservative or somewhere in-between, your favorite Nonprofit is taking a hit.

My team and I are national consultants who work with nonprofits and government agencies. It seems I am steeped in this, every day, at all hours. Here are the highlights and actionable steps that you can take today.

Nationally, regardless of funding sources, nonprofits are freaking out. They are terrified that their work will anger the federal government and are working overtime to diversify their funding sources. To lay it out, Federal funding affects State Funding; State Funding affects County and Municipal funding. So, by reducing government funding, nonprofits look at private foundations, creative fundraising, and individual donations.

So, what can you do? Easy - help a local nonprofit. Here are some ways you can make a difference where you live:

- **Donate Money** - \$5.00 monthly, or a gift of \$200.00 one-time, whatever you can afford. A Tree Planted provides low- or no-cost counseling to our most vulnerable community members (including kids). A one-time donation of \$25 could provide transportation to an otherwise inaccessible therapy session.
- **Donate Time** - Ask if they need a board member or volunteer. Did you know the Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition could use a handful of volunteers to make outreach kits weekly? There are 52 weeks a year, which is 52 chances to help!
- **Attend a fundraiser** - Enjoy a fabulous event and incredible networking opportunities! United Way's annual, "Celebrate United" is on June 12th. Tickets go on sale April 7th - see you there!
- **Buy Stuff you need anyway** - Melrose Plaza is a new grocery store in NW Roanoke, benefiting the community and Goodwill Industries of the Valleys. If you are going to buy groceries anyway, buy local.
- **Show up** - Try something new. The Grandin Theatre has monthly events that showcase fun and thought-provoking films and live events. Plus, their concessions has some great beer, wine, and buttery popcorn.
- **Just ask** - Find a nonprofit you care about and simply ask, "How can I help?" Trust me - they will have an answer.

Helping a nonprofit is a tax deduction for your business (or yourself), you do some good in the world, and a nonprofit has one less thing to freak out about. Together - we can Build a Beloved Community. 



SMALL BUSINESS TOOL KIT

**By Bonnie Chavez,
CEO of Building
Beloved Communities**

Executive Summary:
since January 20th, there has been a slew of federal activity: Executive orders, layoffs, funding freezes, and lawsuits. I've had trouble keeping track.





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Urban Baby Beginnings lands in Roanoke >

A non-profit organization that strives to advance maternal and infant health equity has set up shop in Roanoke, much as it has done in 4 other Virginia cities. **Urban Baby Beginnings** will provide resources for pregnant and post-partum women, mental health support services for those struggling with motherhood - and a crisis diaper bank among other offerings says **Stephanie Spencer**, the executive director and founder of the Richmond-based non-profit: "a couple of years ago the state of Virginia developed something to support mothers, a comprehensive benefit to support mothers on Medicaid who wish to access doula support services."

"Doulas" are trained professionals who provide another level of support and comfort before, during and after childbirth. Spencer says the Health Hubs - including the new one in Roanoke on Franklin Road in downtown Roanoke - are designed to bridge the gap in communities that face systemic barriers, lacking access to high-quality, community-centered care. "We actually have a team that's out there meeting individuals in Roanoke; we have 40 partners in Roanoke alone that are supporting this hub, businesses who are all focused on providing support for pregnant and parenting women," says Spencer, a registered nurse by trade.

Urban Baby Beginnings and receives some



state and federal grant funding, providing mental health services, peer support groups, links to other community resources - like trained doulas and other assistance, with a special but not exclusive focus on underserved communities. Urban Baby Beginnings also has "Health Hubs," in Norfolk, Petersburg, and Newport News, in addition to Richmond. Spencer also says there is room for other organizations that work with expecting and new parents - like Huddle Up Moms - with each playing their part to support those women and families that need access to additional resources.



Gene Marrano photos



Submitted photos

More affordable housing on site of a former church >

Several older churches that no longer hold services are being turned into affordable living spaces and **Restoration Housing** held a ribbon cutting on their 9th and biggest remodel ever in February. On Mountain Avenue in Old Southwest Roanoke, the former Trinity United Methodist Church annex will be turned into 15 units of affordable housing for the elderly, after a 3 million dollar makeover that should take about 14 months. **Isabel Thornton** is the executive director for Restoration Housing: "since before we purchased it we've been fundraising. We got several large state and federal grants for construction costs."

Historic state and federal tax credits will

also help defray construction costs. The venerable 3rd Street Coffee House in the Trinity basement and the former worship hall right above it will remain open. "It's a great little venue," says Thornton of the Coffee House live music space. Trinity United Methodist Church merged with Greene Memorial Methodist last year and sold their building on Mountain Avenue southwest to Restoration Housing. The pastor at Greene Memorial, Joanna Paysour, was also the last pastor at Trinity. She approached Thornton about repurposing the 123 year old church - turning it into affordable housing for low-income seniors.

The former Belmont Baptist church in southeast Roanoke is now an affordable housing complex - the Belmont Lofts - and several other congregations in Roanoke that moved elsewhere, merged or disbanded and sold their buildings are also undergoing the same transformation.



City of Salem

Carey Harveycutter

Salem's number one cheerleader still going strong

By Doug Doughty

It's hard to miss the impact of Carey Harveycutter, the director of tourism in Salem. He also served previously as director of facilities in Salem for more than 30 years. He's also current manager of the Salem Fair, the largest free gate admission fair of its kind in the country.

Salem has been the host for numerous sports events, many at the college level. "The next event up for us for NCAA is women's basketball," Harveycutter said before the Division III Women's Championship came to town last month. Several decades ago, "we didn't know it was sports tourism," said Harveycutter, noting that the late Dan Wooldridge had suggested the concept. "He had been a referee in a D III basketball championship."

The came the Division III NCAA football title game. "[Officials] first talked with Roanoke

City about Victory Stadium but it was too big. They never really embraced it. So, they came to us." The Stag Bowl has been staged many times in Salem and returns in 2027. "It's a huge impact when you have a team coming to town," says Harveycutter, who was asked about the role of sports in economic development – not only in Salem, but in the Roanoke Valley as a whole.

Sports tourism did not take off overnight "[Salem City officials] Forest Jones, Jeff Taliaferro, Joe Yates, Scott Sampson ... my myself. We just went to a football game that

Dan Wooldridge suggested to us that it would work. That led to the Stagg Bowl, which is also broadcast on national television. The Women's DIII Basketball Final Four was national NCAA championship #105 for Salem.

Then there is DII and DIII softball championship softball at the Moyer Sports Complex, which was recently remodeled to keep other with other localities that have also upgraded facilities. "We used to go to a publication called NCAA News. They said they were looking for a site for Division III softball," Harveycutter remembers, adding that, "the competitive nature has changed considerably. People have constructed facilities that they need to fill ... It's more competitive now than ever.

"We continued to build and, here we are 32 years later. We realized we caught lightning in a bottle, that this was something we could build upon. We had the logo developed as Salem Virginia's championship city. The agency that produced that is still in Vinton."


"We had the facilities and going back to that first Stagg Bowl had financial support from the city of Roanoke, the county of Roanoke and then from Roanoke's convention and visitors' bureau [now Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge." It's been a team effort."

It is not only Salem that benefits notes

Harveycutter: "it is very rare that we have a team for a championship stay in Salem. Most of the teams now are at the Holiday Inn Tanglewood. They just completed a wonderful multi-million renovation. The property's in great shape. They understand what teams need."

The City of Salem has also partnered with Roanoke College to host sporting events there at the Cregger Center in recent years – not just at the Salem Civic Center. Speaking of Roanoke College, the Maroons will play their first season as a member of the Old Dominion Athletic Conference this Fall – at Salem Stadium. "They're going to be very competitive in the ODAC and are working hard to put 9,000 people [in the stands] like they did last year for the first game, when it was free [the Maroons played club-level football against JV teams in 2024]," says Harveycutter; "I think they will have good crowds - hopefully they're not [scheduled] the same day as Virginia Tech's."

An economic impact snapshot (from just a few of the college events, softball tournaments etc. that help fill local hotels, eateries and shops when visitors come to the valley. (City of Salem statistics)

2023 Stagg Bowl: \$1,878,907
2024 Women's lacrosse: \$757,281
2024 Women's Volleyball: \$281,875 



Carey, former City Manager Forest Jones and Councilman Bill Jones at 2017 Stagg Bowl



Move It!

Mountain Movers Creative Arts is a dance studio in Salem (1794 Apperson Drive) specializing in ages 18 months to 13 years. Ballet, Tap, Jazz, HipHop, Lyrical, Acro, Cheer... Angie Craft says, "We believe in more than just teaching dance steps. We aim to build confidence, discipline,

and lifelong friendships. Our instructors guide students in a supportive atmosphere, where every child feels valued. If you're looking for a creative space where your child can grow, express themselves, and thrive, we invite you to join the MMCA family!" www.mmcadance.com 540-750-0098

Photo by: Olivia Marone
www.oliviamaronephoto.com





THERE'S SOMETHING HAPPENING HERE

By Gene Marrano

Executive Summary:
Closing in on his third year at the helm as the President at Roanoke College, Frank Shushok Jr. is shaking things up in Salem.

For Roanoke College president partnerships are the key

Frank Shushok came aboard in July 2022, succeeding Mike Maxey, after a 13 year stint at Virginia Tech, where he served in several roles as a Vice President, most notably perhaps as senior associate vice president and vice president for Student Affairs. He was one of the most public administrators on the Blacksburg campus as he helped guide Tech students through the pandemic. In all, he brought 30 years of work experience to Roanoke College with him the to the campus in 2022.

What's happened since then? New majors, agreements with community colleges and local high schools, breaking ground on a new science center that will bring all STEM courses under one roof, a cannabis studies program – and the return of varsity college football for the first times since the Maroons gridiron program went dark in 1942 because of World War II. Change is nothing new for Frank Shushok – at Virginia Tech he led the maintenance and renovation of more than 30 percent of Virginia Tech's physical campus and served on many other boards and organizations at the university.

"We have one of the most robust systems of higher education [in Virginia], we have every kind of institution. They play a really, really important role in economic development, our economy and lifting up the spirits – these are all really important. Partnerships. partnerships and partnerships – we rise and fall together. We've got to be connected [but] we don't need to be duplicating – we need to be combing efforts so that the whole is greater than the sum."

The Maroons played club-level football last year under another ex-Hokie – head coach Bryan Stinespring – but starting in September Roanoke College is a full-fledged member of the Old Dominion Athletic Conference. Their first game in 2024 at Salem Stadium drew an estimated 9000 people excited to see college football (NCAA Division III, which is non-scholarship) in its return to the Roanoke Valley. "We thought people would be excited about football."

"Students are everything – its why we exist. The goal is to understand
continued on Page 40



Frank Shushok

Subscription budgeting: Part II

As promised, here are some tips for budgeting your business subscription services. Last month, we tackled technology; and we hinted at another area to address: memberships. On the surface, this category could seem more “optional” than technology; it’s still an operational or overhead expense on your time and money; and the degree of necessity for memberships might depend on your organization’s service market as much as culture.

Are there businesses that are not involved in any memberships at all? Of course. But you may not be aware of them. (Get it? Memberships can serve an important role.)

The setup

A little introspection here: My own business could be a member of 30 organizations. I know that because I just counted them. A dozen trade and professional development organizations; a dozen chambers of commerce (in our specific service market); and a half-dozen community service organizations. Some of these have national entities (with a local chapter); many are completely local.

I wouldn’t mind being a full-fledged member of all 30. The budget however—JUST FOR LOWEST LEVEL DUES ALONE—easily exceeds \$12,000.

Do you think I need to budget for memberships?
(Rhetorical question.)

What to do

Wait. Maybe that setup question wasn’t rhetorical. Maybe your organization can subscribe to as many memberships as you want. We’ve all seen organizations that appear to sponsor every club or association, right? Not really. Even the largest corporations aren’t members everywhere. They just pick and choose more than small businesses (so it seems like they’re prolific).

Here are some membership tips for small business:

- 1. Conduct an audit.** Just like we suggested for technology subscriptions, make sure you are aware of all the memberships assigned by your company and/or employees. This includes organizations related to your business (trade and professional development); general business or commerce or networking (like the chambers); and community service or random memberships (from Kiwanis and Rotary to niche areas like animal welfare or youth recreation clubs or country clubs). See which memberships are clearly active or possibly inactive or lapsed. And yes, there are some organizations that aren’t worthwhile or even legitimate.
- 2. Determine a budget.** I won’t presume to claim a percentage of your operational expenses that should be allocated to memberships, because some businesses are served more

continued on Page 40



ON TAP FROM THE PUB

By Tom Field

Executive Summary:

Today, more than ever, so many services you need as a business operator are subscription-based; budget strategically.



Partnerships,
partnerships,
and
partnerships—
we rise and fall
together.

Marrano / There's something


from Page 41

the student's goals and help them accomplish them. That has to be customized." Bringing back college football – not to mention a cheer squad and marching band aligns with his thinking that," if we want more students to choose Roanoke College, we need to do new and different things."

Roanoke College's 12th President says, "you take things you learn [along the way], you make connections – partnerships and connection are everything for lifting up our economies and our communities." Partnerships with Virginia Western and most recently with New River Community College makes it seamless to transfer from those two-year schools to finish a bachelor's degree at Roanoke College.

"The world is changing so fast – you have to be agile." Larger and publicly-funded institutions find it harder sometimes notes Shushok – something that can be easier to do at a small, private school like Roanoke College, which has around 2000 students. "We can pivot and move quickly."

Other partnerships with Virginia Tech and William & Mary are in the mix too. A \$3.5 million state grant under the lab school program means a closer relationship with K-12 schools. "We want to partner up and down the whole educational system – and we also want to partner with industry and business," says Shushok, "we're also linking arms with all sorts of partners locally, including our local government."

Shushok – his wife, First Lady Kelly Shushok is a minister says he's having "a ton of fun," in his two-plus years at the helm in Salem. "One of the things I hope people are noticing about Roanoke College is that we're doing a lot of new things. We're listening carefully to what people want." Stay tuned. 

Field / On Tap

from Page 37

than others by memberships. But I will say establishing a realistic percentage is a good idea. It's also acceptable to include membership expenses with your HR or employee development budget as an additional control measure. (In other words, treat it as a legitimate line item, not just peripheral.)

- 3. Establish a mission.** It should be relatively easy to determine which memberships are most important to your core business. While a chamber membership might be a top priority for a retail outlet in the same community, a trade or professional association might be the top priority for your essential operations (e.g. real estate, healthcare, legal, finance, construction, education, hospitality, marketing, etc.). So, begin by classifying which kind of membership matters most, followed by the kinds that are more optional (or just favored). Important: remember, memberships require your money

AND time... actual and valuable resources from both parties. (Also, the value or ROI you expect from memberships may differ from that of your employees. Listen and evaluate accordingly.)

4. **Eliminate redundancies.** I won't even bother describing this. If you are a member of two or more organizations that are essentially the same scope or service, choose one (even if you still participate with multiple orgs).
5. **Get creative.** Understand that many membership organizations are more flexible than what you first see on the surface. Some are super insular and exclusive to the degree that you are either a member or you are completely shut out. Most are not that way.

Many organizations will allow you to participate as a non-member, where you still benefit. Here's a little secret: more organizations have transitioned to an à la carte program, where you have access to all or most activities, but at a higher, non-member (or "future member") rate. In fact, many have transitioned to where all or most activities require payment anyway, just a lower fee for members to cover the hard costs for events.

There are also ways to be involved and support organizations beyond membership dues. Sponsorships and collaborations abound; and you can often select singular affairs and activities, rather than the whole term. Another secret: some organizations are quite open to suggestions and proposals. Others will exchange membership for a service or product you can provide. A select few will waive fees for volunteering, serving on the board, etc.

Caution: Just ensure your creativity doesn't exceed what you would have expended for standard memberships.

6. **Scheduling.** Membership organizations typically have an annual term. If you want to be involved with more memberships than your budget supports, consider leveraging "rolling" membership renewals and layering your dues subscriptions so they don't hit in the same quarter or they alternate within your budget periods. Although organizations don't like this, you can leverage some lapsed "sessions" so that your renewals actually hit on 18-month cycles, for example, rather than annually. They'll still "have you" but maybe not for a quarter or two. (Shhh... don't tell any of them I said that.)

We like our memberships. And in today's work environment, with the explosion of remote workforces, these memberships matter more! I encourage small business owner/operators to engage organizations that either serve your purposes or our community. Even if national membership organizations are essential to your business, I hope you will seriously consider participating in and supporting our LOCAL organizations.

I have 30 of them I could suggest. 



Seriously consider participating in and supporting our LOCAL organizations.



GUEST COMMENTARY

By **Becky Freemal**

Executive Summary:

"What got you here, won't get you there" has never been more relevant as businesses evolve to meet tomorrow's challenges. While seasoned veterans provide organizational wisdom, the emergence of fractional executives adds a complementary layer of agile, cross-industry expertise to drive innovation forward.



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Fractional leadership: trusted innovation that gets business done


This fresh perspective brings the innovation needed to move companies forward—from startups to mid-sized companies, nonprofits and for-profits alike. Fractional executives, such as chief marketing officers (CMOs), leverage their lived experience and battle-tested expertise to transform organizations' growth strategies. They bring high-level leadership that includes specialized skills, increased agility, and improved innovation—all without the associated costs of a full-time hire.

The "rise of the fractional" as it has been dubbed, increasingly proves to be an optimal solution, particularly for companies with annual revenues under nine figures. These leaders offer growth, strategy, and expertise across various roles: fractional chief executive officer (CEO), chief financial officer (CFO), chief marketing officer (CMO), chief operating officer (COO), as well as specialized areas like human resources and major gifts fundraising.

While the terms freelancer or consultant may be more familiar, fractional leadership represents a distinct evolution. Freelancers typically focus on tactical specializations, such as graphic design, copywriting, or web development. Fractional executives often maintain networks of these vetted professionals to complement existing resources, building agile teams for their clients based on specific needs. Consultants offer guidance without actively leading day-to-day operations. In contrast, fractional executives work alongside established teams, building and leading strategy just as a full-time C-suite executive would, but with that added cost-effective benefit and the innovation that comes with cross-industry insights. Once they've built a company's capabilities and strategic foundation, they may transition to an advisory role.

Today's digital landscape offers endless possibilities through automation and AI that optimize marketing channels and audience reach. Yet, one fundamental aspect remains unchanged: trust. People do business with people they know, like, and trust. Successful fractional leadership ensures all team members—freelancers, consultants, and internal staff—work cohesively and align strategy, automation, and AI with the desired outcomes of the business.

It's a growth framework that continues to prove successful, contributing to the increasing adoption of this leadership model across industries, hence the "rise of the fractional."

Becky Freemal is a fractional chief marketing officer based in Roanoke, Virginia. An Emmy-winning journalist turned bestselling author, and founder of Market Exec, she helps tech, SaaS and finance companies throughout the U.S. break down complex topics into data-driven stories that connect businesses with their target audiences. 

KNOW THE SIGNS!

SAVE A LIFE



SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK



Pressure or squeezing in the center of the chest



Shortness of breath



**Shooting pain through shoulders,
arms, neck or jaw**



Heartburn, nausea or indigestion-like pain



**Dizziness, fainting or sudden
abnormal sweating**



Extreme fatigue or exhaustion



Always call 911 when you feel any combination of these symptoms. Do not wait or try to drive yourself to the hospital.

** Women may experience signs that may not be as easy to recognize, such as fatigue or feeling flu-like symptoms.*



Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital's Chest Pain Center is accredited by the American College of Cardiology.

Cardiovascular Institute

CARILION CLINIC

FRONTReviews >

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Look up... from your damn phone

What a fun read. *Unplugged* (Black Rose Writing; 2020) by Joe Barrett explores that phenomenon many of us think about: unplugging from the incessant digital intrusion. Although the book is five years old now, it's still relevant. It's a fictional narrative (but I think it makes points better than a nonfiction or business advice book would); and you'll have the added benefit of laughing you're a** off. There's one subplot that bugs me (due to how unrealistic and outlandish it is) involving faux Irish philosophers at a no-name pub; but it's so hilarious, I allowed it. One neat direction our first-person narrator used, is that he is a mega-millionaire geeky app developer entrepreneur who throws his mobile phone in the river—a most unlikely candidate. He does "live life better" without the distractions; and it's an idea none of us will do, but all of us could relate to—or perhaps wish for many, many times.

—Tom Field

Underage drinking

How'd you like a fast fun read all about beer... how it's made, how it's celebrated, and a few warnings about how it can be abused? Well... who better to take you on

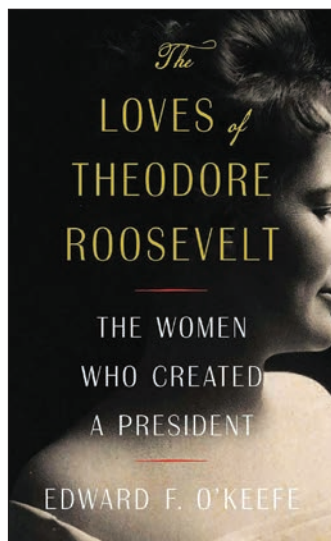
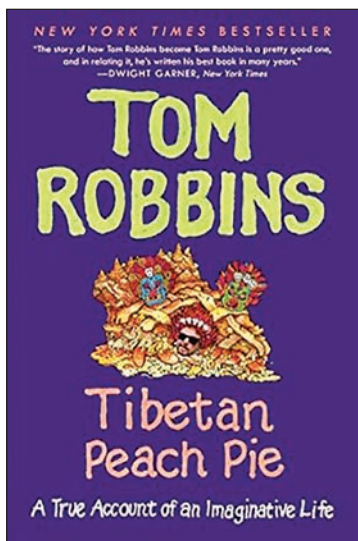
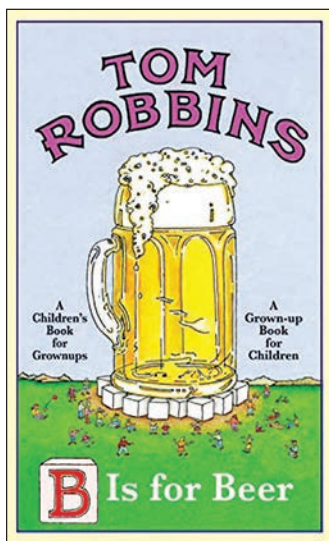
that journey than a six-year-old girl and her beer fairy? After being encouraged by her philosophically minded uncle, Gracie downs a can of beer on her own; and hilarity ensues. Aw, now, don't get your hops all up in a pinch—it's just a story. You can read Tom Robbins's *B Is for Beer* (HarperCollins; 2009) in one sitting, like me. I laughed. I cried. I had a beer.

—Tom Field

Our storyteller virtuoso

Good lord: I had no idea Tom Robbins was 92. He died this past February (2025); and when I think of his discography (okay, musicians have discographies, writers have bibliographies—but Robbins's work almost feels more like albums than novels) it just doesn't seem like a lineup from someone born in 1932. His "seriocomedies" include album-sounding titles like, *Jitterbug Perfume*; *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*; *Another Roadside Attraction*; *Still Life with Woodpeckers*. (See what I mean?) I never read *Tibetan Peach Pie* (Ecco; 2015), and since it's the closest thing to his memoir, I thought it apropos for a review:

I was not disappointed. What I like about Robbins' storytelling is that each description



runs along simply, beautifully—and then, he'll suddenly pluck in a next-level sentence or paragraph that is outright brilliant poetry (though still prose). Just one example: he describes being a young boy, helping out at the circus that comes to town. In the middle of that, he waxes philosophically about circus life being a metaphor for real life—and you see the light... right there in center ring.

Even better... our memoir-narrator's early years are mostly in Virginia (Hargrave Military Academy, Washington & Lee, VCU, Richmond's Fan District and Times-Dispatch, etc.).

—Tom Field

The women behind the man in the arena

Theodore Roosevelt wrote in his senior thesis for Harvard in 1880 that women should be paid equal to men and have the option of keeping their maiden names when they marry. A politician who often proclaimed that women should be allowed to vote, something that did not happen nationwide until after his passing, following after a most strenuous life. Yet behind the energetic, manly façade were the women in his life – sisters Conie and Bamie, his first

wife Alice – who died tragically days after childbirth and on the same day as his mother – and Edith Roosevelt, his second wife and the First Lady once TR, then the Vice President, ascended to the White House when President McKinley was assassinated.

The Loves of Theodore Roosevelt: The Women Who Created A President (Simon & Schuster, 2024) by Edward F. O'Keefe makes the case in great detail (throw his mother in the mix too) that behind – or alongside or pulling him up in many cases – is a woman. Edith and his two sisters were politically savvy and protective of their "Thee" as he was often called. When many think of TR they recall the charge up San Juan Hill in Cuba that propelled him to legendary status, being shot but still going on with his speech while running for an improbable third term with the Bull Moose party in 1912, hunting big game or taking a pass as a rancher in the Dakotas. *The Loves of Theodore Roosevelt* reveals another side – a man who was also a feminist, one who also cherished the women in his life and what they did for him.

—Gene Marrano

The reviewers: Tom Field is a creative director, writer, and publisher; Gene Marrano is a news reporter and FRONT editor.



Tom Field

Ready...set...design >

Allegheny Highlands Chamber of Commerce hosted its Lunch and Learn on March 4 at Mountain Gateway Community College. This time, it was a hands-on workshop “Exploring Canva: Design Like a Pro” where over 50 attended, toting their laptops. Chamber director Josh Taylor moved the training as quickly as possible (not easy, with a free and open to the public workshop) as instructor Lacy Meyer helped users at all levels navigate the features of the multi-functional, super popular app.



Submitted



Bucket crew deployed >

God’s Pit Crew—a Danville-based disaster response volunteer organization—rallied up and deployed goods and assistance to Southwest Virginia, Southeast Kentucky, and southern towns of West Virginia that were hit hard from catastrophic storms and flooding in mid-February. “Seeing communities devastated by this storm is heartbreaking, especially after so many have already faced these hardships in recent years,” said Randy Johnson, God’s Pit Crew President and Founder. “Our Immediate Disaster Response team is mobilized and will continue working around the clock to help those affected by this widespread flooding. We are committed to being there to help these communities recover.” Supplies included “Blessing Buckets,” bottled water, and cleaning products to sites like Grundy, Richlands, Princeton, Holden, Beckley, and Pikeville.



Case worker >

Taylor L. of the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia** was named one of 22 nationwide finalists for the **Cox Mobile Phone Case Design Competition**. The contest invited youth to submit phone case designs for the chance to win a \$25,000 scholarship. Taylor's design depicted a hot air balloon lifting a diploma, which he said "represents the beginning of a journey; education and hard work can take you wherever you want to go!"



\$4M and the horse it rode in on >

Veterinary Teaching Hospital (part of Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech) received a \$4 million gift from Karen Waldron (Daleville-based Fralin & Waldron real estate development company) and Shawn Ricci (Bent Tree Farm in Shawsville). The donation will be used to improve emergency care for horses and small pets, including the hiring of a second veterinarian and bringing in an additional critical care specialist. Above: Chris Byron and Tessa Wyner, Class of 2025, bandage a horse at VTH.



Ferrum inks deal >

Ferrum College and the **Franklin County Board of Supervisors** have announced the creation of a Resident Impact Scholarship. Initially funded with \$100,000 allocated by the Board of Supervisors, the scholarship will support one or more Franklin County residents while they pursue an undergraduate degree at Ferrum College. Students eligible for the scholarship must demonstrate high financial need and permanent residence in Franklin County throughout the time they receive funds. They must be in good academic standing, maintaining a minimum grade point average of 2.0. Scholarship funds can be used for tuition, room, board, and associated fees of Ferrum College.

Ferrum President **Mirta Martin** said, "this \$100,000 in scholarships will provide invaluable opportunities for Franklin County residents to pursue their education right here at Ferrum College while remaining in the community they call home."



MGCC

MGCC scholarship >

Mountain Gateway Community College has announced **Christine Rothwell** as the recipient of the 2024 Wilson Cup for Scholarship, Character, and Community Service. The Wilson Cup, established in 2007 by Bill and Lang Wilson, honors outstanding students at MGCC who demonstrate exceptional scholarship, character, and community service.

As the Chair of the Classified Staff Committee, she plays a key role in organizing fundraisers, coordinating social events, and developing training programs for faculty. Rothwell is highly involved in supporting her children's activities in the community, including football, soccer, and band, while maintaining a high level of academic achievement.



LG inpatient Top Ten >

LewisGale Medical Center has been ranked in the top 10 percent of inpatient rehabilitation facilities nationwide for delivering effective, efficient, timely, patient-centered care. Netsmart Technologies, Inc., determined the rankings, drawn from more than 80 percent of all inpatient rehabilitation facilities nationwide. **Collin McLaughlin**, CEO of LewisGale Medical Center said, "providing exceptional patient care is our highest priority and this acknowledgment reflects our dedication and compassion."

Netsmart's report card is based on data from 886 qualifying inpatient rehabilitation facilities nationwide between October 2023 and September 2024. This is the 17th year the award has been issued. The data was based on twelve months of data drawn from Medicare and non-Medicare patients. The results were weighted and combined into a single composite score.



Tech's Innovation Campus >

Graduate-level classes at **Virginia Tech's** new "Innovation Campus" opened in January, and in late February they celebrated with a ribbon cutting. The state-of-the-art facility in Alexandria is focused on computer science, engineering, project-based learning - and AI development. Virginia Tech President **Tim Sands** on what they are calling, The Center of Next: "Together we are advancing our impact on the Commonwealth and our nation and elevating our reputation as a source of knowledge and discoveries that make a difference. We're attracting talent, connecting with new partners and resources ... creating experiences that prepare students for the jobs and opportunities of the future." US Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine also spoke before they cut a ribbon, as did Governor Glenn Youngkin.



Submitted



Arts Pop! returns to Taubman >

Several dozen local arts non-profits showcased their arts and culture offerings at the 5th Annual Arts Pop! Expo at the **Taubman Museum of Art** in Roanoke last month. The event included a series of live performances in the auditorium as well, ranging from ballet to vocalist performances to staged readings of excerpts from plays. Patrons were able to stop by the information tables staffed by each organization, a chance to connect and learn why they should support the arts in Roanoke.



Habitat offers Hope and Promise >

Habitat for Humanity has cut a ribbon on two new houses it built with the help of volunteers -the Hope House is on Salem Avenue Southwest, the Promise House on Madison Avenue Northwest. What is unique is that the non-profit Family Promise - not families making mortgage payments - will own them and rent to clients. **Amy Morgan** is executive director for **Family Promise of Greater Roanoke**: "we will then be able to lease those to families coming out of our shelter program and are ready to go into transitional housing but may not be ready to go into a permanent rental situation [due to] credit history, rental history or maybe past due debt. This will give us a chance to work with them for another year."

American Rescue Plan Act funding awarded in 2022 by Roanoke City to Habitat for Humanity resulted in the construction of two single-family detached houses. **Betty Jean Wolfe** is with Habitat for Humanity in the Roanoke Valley: "we're always on the lookout for more opportunities to try and increase home ownership, which is the main work that Habitat does – and also entering in to more rental properties. We're recognizing an entire class of people – housing stability is a bedrock of family stability." Family Promise of Greater Roanoke takes ownership and will use those two new properties as short-term rental housing for people transitioning out of homelessness.





Gene Marrano

Delta Dental bolsters safety net clinics >

The **Delta Dental Foundation of Virginia** has announced \$950,000 in grants distributed to 14 "safety net clinics" that provide dental services to the under-served, under-insured and those Medicaid-insured Virginians. Locally New Horizons Healthcare and Bradley Free Clinic both received \$75,000 of that total. Delta Dental of Virginia President and CEO **Frank Lucia** helped deliver the Big Check at the New Horizons pediatric dental clinic on Williamson Road, which opened its doors last year: "People understand the connection between dental health and overall health. There are a lot of symptoms that can be detected from early dental procedures. Once children start developing good habits of oral healthcare it carries through for the rest of their lives."

CHIP of Roanoke Valley also received a grant for its dental program. **Jonathan Stewart** is the CEO for New Horizons Healthcare; he says this region is short by over 20, on the number of dental care providers for the underserved community they focus on: "We cannot sit back on Williamson Road, we cannot sit back at our other clinic on Melrose Avenue and wait for folks to come to us and expect that to make a meaningful difference. That's where partnerships come in. One of the partnerships we're extremely excited about ... is that three of the residents that have emerged from Carilion's general practice dentistry have become staff members at New Horizons." Stewart said after the COVID shutdown the New Horizons clinic was barely "hanging on," and had to recruit new dentists.

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

EDUCATIONAL FRONT



Noell

Evan Noell has been named the new principal of William Byrd High School. He joined Roanoke County Public Schools in 2010 and served as instructional assistant (Green Valley Elementary); special education teacher (Northside Middle); teacher (Glenvar Middle and High); assistant principal (WE Cundiff Elementary); and principal (William Byrd Middle).

Anna Drew, a teacher at Shawsville Middle School, received the Milken Educator Award and a \$25,000 cash prize. She was one of only 42 teachers nationwide to receive the award and the only one from Virginia. Milken awards are

known as “surprises” as recipients are unaware until the news is announced—usually at all-school assemblies.



Hancock

Michael Hancock has been named the Virginia Tech Police Department’s Officer of the Year for 2024. He has worked with VTPD for two years and has a total of seven years in law enforcement. Hancock was named Officer of the Month four times in 2024, which factored into his selection as Officer of the Year.

Courtnee Bishop has been promoted from chief financial officer to chief operating officer at McLeod Enterprises, LLP in Roanoke. She will oversee operations, collaboration, performance, and



Bishop

efficiency in the organization, as well as serve as chair of the Academic Advisory Board. McLeod operates and manages childcare facilities (HoneyTree Early Learning Centers), family recreation, education, real estate, property management, and community/philanthropic services.



Hartless

Tracy Hartless has been promoted to chief financial officer at McLeod Enterprises, LLP in Roanoke. Hartless has been the cornerstone of McLeod financial leadership

since 2022 serving as chief accounting officer. She will now take on broader responsibilities including overseeing financial strategy, managing risk and long-term financial planning.



McLeod

Mason McLeod has been promoted to the position of Chief Banking Officer at McLeod Enterprises, LLP in Roanoke. McLeod has served in the financial operations at his own companies for many years, has extensive contacts with banks and bankers, and comprehensive understanding of finance, with specific expertise in real estate financing.

Harpreet Dhillon, the W. Martin Johnson Professor of Engineering and associate director





Dhillon

of Wireless@Virginia Tech, has been appointed associate dean for research and innovation in the College of Engineering. Dhillon has been a member of the Virginia Tech faculty since 2014.

WELLNESS FRONT



Hall

Penny Hall has been selected to lead the West Piedmont Health District as director. WPHD is one of 35 local health districts within the Virginia Department of Health

(counties of Franklin, Henry and Patrick and the City of Martinsville). Hall has 26 years of experience with the Department of Social Services and served as COO for the West-Piedmont and Central Virginia health districts, executive director of Botetourt County Social Services, regional director of VDSS Piedmont; and associate division director for Local Engagement & Support. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in human services with a specialty in Executive Leadership.

Erin Via is the new assistant administrator at LewisGale Hospital Alleghany. She joined HCA in 2017 as the patient access director;



Via

and is a board member of Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and active with Live Well Alleghany Highlands Team, Community Alternatives to Positive Prevention, and Alleghany Highlands Healthy Youth Coalition.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT

Michelle Williams has been hired as a talent strategies manager for The Roanoke Regional Partnership (Get-2KnowNoke). She's a



Williams

Roanoke native, a Radford University graduate, and has eight years of marketing experience. Williams will showcase Roanoke Region's advantages to target audiences and she'll also work with the Talent Ambassador and Onboard ROA programs.

SENIOR FRONT

Char Bell has been appointed director of marketing for Warm Hearth Vil-

Have a career announcement?

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FOCUS ON MOMENTS THAT MATTER.



Bank of Botetourt



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CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Balentine is a Roanoke entrepreneur, founder, and owner of Crowning Touch Senior Moving Services as well as its transport, consignment, auction, and real estate portfolio. The business caters to the high growth senior citizen demographic and has been serving our regional market since 1996. [linda@crowningtouchusa.com]

Aila Boyd serves as the editor of "The Fincastle Herald" and "The Vinton Messenger" and coordinates social media for the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce. She holds an MFA in writing from Lindenwood University.

Andy Brady is a family man, outdoorsman, and businessman. He runs multiple businesses and franchises through Virginia, and the broader east coast, including Green Home Solutions, RoanokeOnTap, and Brady's Distillery. He sits on the Mill Mountain Zoo board as vice president and focuses on helping local businesses flourish through networking and outreach. [AndyBnoke@protonmail.com]

Bonnie Chavez is the CEO of Building Beloved Communities, a local consulting firm specializing in community-centered business solutions. Her driving force is to help all organizations overcome business barriers with a lens focusing on smart solutions that benefit the community. Bonnie is a proud lesbian, Latina woman who values her family, roots, heritage, and culture. [bonnie@buildingbelovedcommunities.com]

Daniel Colston, CFP®, CEPA runs a tax and investing firm in Roanoke, Upward Financial Planning, specializing in helping business owners and retirees. [daniel@upwardfp.com]

Carrie Cousins is the Director of Digital Marketing at LeadPoint Digital in Roanoke. For 15+ years, she has helped businesses tell their stories and get better results online with practical digital marketing strategies. She also an active leader in AAF, serving on the local and district boards, and is an adjunct

professor at Virginia Tech.

Doug Doughty is retired after spending 45 years at the Roanoke Times. After graduation from UVA in 1974, he was hired as a hockey beat reporter by the Roanoke Times. Many of his early assignments involved covering the Salem Pirates Class A baseball team when he witnessed — and later wrote about — the death of Alfredo Edmead in a collision with one of his Pirates teammates. Doughty later became the UVA beat reporter, covering football, golf, lacrosse and a host of other sports, including the Cavaliers baseball team when it won the NCAA championship with one of his sons on the team. Doug Doughty is also a member of the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame. [doughtysports@aol.com]

Dan Dowdy is the business development director for Valley Business FRONT and owner of The Proofing Prof proofreading services (proofingprof.net). 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]

Micah Fraim is a top-referred Certified Public Accountant and business finance strategist who is well-connected in the regional business community and nationally recognized. Publisher of The Little Big Small Business Book, he also publishes a blog at www.fraim.cpa/blog and is frequently interviewed as a business financial expert in national media channels. [micahfraim@fraimcpa.com]

Becky Freemal is a fractional chief marketing officer based in Roanoke,

Virginia. An Emmy-winning journalist turned bestselling author, and founder of Market Exec, she helps tech, SaaS and finance companies throughout the U.S. break down complex topics into data-driven stories that connect businesses with their target audiences.

Hart Fowler is an independent journalist with commissions by the Washington Post, Blue Ridge Outdoors, 100 days in Appalachia and others. He is also publisher of 16 Blocks, a non-profit print and digital arts and culture magazine. [hart.fowler@gmail.com]

Kevin Holt is a partner at Gentry Locke's Roanoke office where he has worked since 1998. His specialty practice area is commercial, real estate, intellectual property, and ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) litigation. He enjoys supporting and attending games of his two sports-active daughters and enjoys traveling (visiting 27 countries and 38 states).

Shatenita Horton serves as the Senior Vice President of Retail Banking at Freedom First Credit Union. As a member of Senior Management, Shatenita directs the sales and service efforts through creation, coordination and management of company-wide Retail, Private, and Business Banking programs. She hails from Columbia, Missouri and has lived in Roanoke for the past 3 years. [shorton@freedomfirst.com]

Jennifer Leake is a seasoned Certified Management Consultant (CMC®) with over 30 years of business and consulting experience. She is a certified trusted advisor in the areas of employee assessments, engagement, and emotional intelligence. She offers ideas and best practices to help you hire the right people, engage employees, and lead effectively to enhance workplace performance and drive overall business success. [Jennifer@AssessmentPros.com]

Gene Marrano is FRONT editor and an award-winning anchor and reporter for WFIR

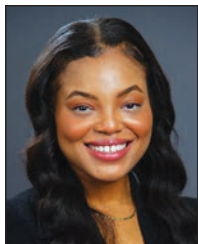
Newstalk radio. "Best one on one interview" award from Associated Press of the Virginias for his interview with former Roanoke County Chief of Police Howard Hall. [gmarrano@cox.net]

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 and two children.

Alicia Smith is vice president of F&S Building Innovations in Roanoke. She grew up in the construction business and has served in multiple capacities, currently managing all sales, design, production and marketing of the residential division. She's also the president of Build Smart Institute and serves on several boards, community and church organizations. Alicia enjoys lake-life living and fun times with her family (husband and two daughters) and friends.

Dan Smith is a veteran journalist and member of the Virginia Communications Hall of Fame, a winner of numerous press association awards, the Small Business Journalist of the Year, two Perry F. Kendig Awards and the Arts Council of the Blue Ridge's Literary Award. He is author of eight books, including the recent novels "NEWS!" and "CLOG." [pampadansmith@gmail.com]

Nicholas Vaassen is a graphic design specialist with over 27 years experience. His design projects include logos, magazines, web design, signs, newsletters, postcards, business cards, and any other marketing materials you can think of. [nicholasvaassen@gmail.com]



Bell

originally from the Pacific Northwest. Prior to this new appointment, Bell oversaw and managed the social media platforms and branding for a technology company.

lage in Blacksburg—a nonprofit senior living community. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Roanoke College,

REAL ESTATE FRONT

Larry Kitchens has been promoted to Chief



Kitchens

of experience from Lansing Building Products and has demonstrated leadership and mastery of real estate operations.

Operating Officer for Elite Real Estate—a subsidiary of McLeod Enterprises, LLP in Roanoke. Kitchens brings over 36 years

Compiled by Gene Marrano and Tom Field.



Every student... deserves access to the knowledge and resources that can change their trajectory. — Page 24

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Ads that win, won

AAF Roanoke ad club held its annual American Advertising Awards (ADDYs) program on Feb 22 at the Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center. Among the winners: Branch (Howard Packett Award for Creative Excellence); Virginia Tech Dining Services (Best of Print); Cry (Best of Digital); Pinkston (Best of Electronic); Red Velocity (Mosaic). Judges choice awards also went to: VT Dining; ACK Studios; AAF Roanoke. Individual awards went to: Jamal Milner (Silver Medal); Meghan Dee (Advertising Person of the Year); and Vendor of the Year was awarded to LeadPoint Digital. Nearly 60 professional awards (Best, Gold, Silver) and 23 student awards (Best, Gold, Silver) were presented.

From Billy's to Hanging Rock

Hanging Rock Tavern has opened in the former, longtime, popular Billy's Barn at the Thompson Memorial / US 311-Catawba interchange (and traffic circle) in Salem. The new venue offers a pub style and smokehouse restaurant, brewery and beer garden, and live music / entertainment venue. The owner / operators also run an outdoor (disc golf, trails, etc.) event space on a farm in Shawsville.

AE/C firm downtown Roanoke

Timmons Group, an engineering, design, technology services

firm, has opened a new office on Norfolk Avenue in downtown Roanoke. The Richmond-based firm has around 20 offices in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, DC-Maryland. Local projects have included the airport Aviation Drive, Roanoke County Safe Streets for All Action Plan, Smith Ridge Commons, Wasena Skatepark, Rte 460 improvements, and jobs in Salem, Covington, Franklin County, and Virginia Tech.

More pickle play time

Carilion Wellness Roanoke on Starkey Road has opened three new pickleball courts; professional tournament grade.

Just add water

The **Virginia Museum of Transportation** in Roanoke has added a new Maritime Gallery, located on a newly remodeled second floor. The gallery features ships and artifacts in a greater capacity and collection than what VMT presented in the past.

Stacking track

The Roanoke chapter of the **National Railway Historical Society** has acquired a new location in the Norwich neighborhood of northwest Roanoke City. The trackside property was operated by Virginia Scrap Iron and Metal and was used by Steel Dynamics, AkzoNobel Wood Finishes, Associated Asphalt, and Norfolk Southern and is adjacent to the former

Walker Foundry and current Roanoke River Greenway. The NRHS collection could include around three dozen train engines and cars.

Backing off the barrel

Speyside Bourbon Cooperage in Smyth County (Atkins) announced it is laying off around 75 employees due to a decline in bourbon sales. The American division of the Scotland company manufactures staves (the strips of American White Oak wood used to fabricate whiskey barrels). SBC opened stave mills in both Smyth and Bath Counties, Virginia, in 2018.

Capping off RC admin home

The Administration Building on **Roanoke College** campus will be named the M. Paul Capp Administration Building, after the 1952 alumnus. Capp received a distinguished alumni recognition, was a noted baseball and basketball athlete and physics student, and is a doctor and leader in medical radiology (including executive director of the American Board of Radiology). The building is perhaps the College's most recognizable historic structure placed in the front center of campus.

'Dappering' up in Daleville

The Glebe – Blue Ridge Living retirement community in Daleville, Botetourt County, is undergoing significant

expansion in 2025, including a new "MarketPlace" dining space; a new pub/sports bar with billiards; a new coffee and bake shop; and a new culinary director (who appeared on Gordon Ramsey's Hell's Kitchen).

Housing money for Habitat

More than \$139 million in Affordable and Special Needs Housing loans for 41 projects across the Commonwealth has been announced. The recommended projects will create and persevere 2.969 total units for low-income and extremely low-income households. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) administers Affordable and Special Needs Housing (ASNH) loans, which combines state and federal resources to provide a simplified and comprehensive application process. Habitat for Humanity in the Roanoke Valley will receive \$700,000 of that total.

VT a best workplace

Virginia Tech has been recognized as one of the Best Workplaces for Commuters for 2025, placing it among 800 "forward-thinking organizations across the U.S. and Canada." Best Workplaces for Commuters is a national program that recognizes workplaces that provide exceptional commuter benefits to employees. The program is managed by the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of

South Florida. Virginia Tech's commuter benefits program includes Hokie Bike Hub: A DIY facility where affiliates can learn to repair and maintain their bicycles, serving as a one-stop shop for all things related to sustainable transportation, Transit passes: free access to Blacksburg Transit as well as the Smart Way Express and Smart Way buses; Ride sharing: free ride-matching for carpooling and vanpooling through ConnectingVA; Electric vehicle charging stations and Gobbler Gears: an affordable, semester-long bike rental program providing students with convenient, sustainable transportation options.

Dawgs have first two complete home sellouts

Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs recorded the first two sellouts in their 9-year history (around 8000 each of the two nights, at the Berglund Center on February 28 and March 1. A 10-game winning streak didn't hurt, as even more casual fans are known to turn out when a sport franchise is rising high.

Alexandra Crutchfield is the Rail Yard Dawgs Vice President: "I think everybody likes to see a winner. We put together some really great promotions for the community too. If they're not sold on the hockey aspect maybe they're coming for the Weiner Dogs or for the superhero night. To have a great product on the ice is just a huge bonus."

Boones Mill gets major boost for revitalization efforts

The **Town of Boones Mill** has received a Community Improvement grant of more than \$860,000. Town Manager B.T. Fitzpatrick says this is one of the largest grants the town has ever received and the first for downtown revitalization. "This is a tremendous win for our small town," says B.T. Fitzpatrick III, Town Manager. "This investment will ensure the continued growth and economic prosperity of Boones Mill! We are excited to work with DHCD on this project." Fitzpatrick says the grant from the Virginia Department of Housing

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and Community Development will also pay for sidewalks and a more defined parking area. The town is creating a park from land donated by Carter Bank as well; Fitzpatrick says it will be a gathering spot for events and maybe a farmers' market.

Project Outside issues grant funding

Roanoke Outside started "Project Outside," as a community fund that allows people and businesses to make donations and then directs those funds back into improving local outdoor amenities. Pete Eshelman with Roanoke Outside Foundation (affiliated with the Roanoke Regional Partnership) says some proceeds from the annual Go Outside Festival every Fall also fund Project Outside grants.

"We decided to focus on three key areas – the maintenance of existing outdoor assets, investing in new outdoor assets, and the organizations or businesses that operate in that outdoor space." This year \$30,000 in grant money went to 8 regional projects to enhance parks and trails, improve search and rescue efforts, update trail maps, and expand outdoor programs for veterans and underserved youth. Project Outside has raised \$205,000 since 2020 through donations from the community and proceeds from the GO Outside Festival held each Fall.

BRP Ambassador program

The **Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation** has created an action plan called Blue Ridge Rising, born

MAY 3
MELLEN COUGAR

MAY 9
BOTTOM OF THE BARREL

MAY 17
BELOW ALABAMA

JUNE 7
GTBB
DALEVILLE TOWN CENTER

out of the call for public outreach. The Foundation has released a list of Blue Ridge Rising ambassadors from every locality along the Parkway from both North Carolina and Virginia. George Ivey is director for the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation: "We have created an ambassadors committee made up of people from each county, so we can continue to have that dialogue going forward as we work on implementing solutions, as we find out there are emerging issues. We definitely want to act on the ideas [generated]." The ambassadors from this area include Jonathan McCoy from Botetourt County and Pete Peters - the Vinton

Town manager - for Roanoke County. The ambassadors will work to strengthen relationships and foster economic development between the North Carolina and Virginia communities adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Long-time home builder goes to County

The **Franklin County Board** of Supervisors approved the purchase of the Mod-U-Kraf building in Rocky Mount for \$5 million.

From Verge to Alliance

The **Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council** announced

that the Verge entity has been rebranded to the Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance. RBIA is a portfolio that includes the Regional Accelerator and Mentoring Program (RAMP), Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC), and Common Wealth Angels "all dedicated to tech-based economic advancement." The organization reports it "accelerated 60+ tech companies; seen 850 high-paying jobs created in the region since 2017; seen 3,200+ patents filed since 2014; and brought together 225 RBTC member companies for professional development, networking and talent retention."

It also recently led a coalition to include 38 regional organizations, including Virginia Tech, Carilion, Virginia Western, Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers and others, to secure \$4.9 million through GO Virginia's Project VITAL that will be used to further biotech and medical device commercialization and establish Roanoke Blacksburg as a biomedical hub. The coalition aims to create 1,100 jobs over five years with a \$40 million economic impact.

Compiled by Gene Marrano and Tom Field

Check out additional FRONT Notes from Valley Business FRONT on our Facebook site or social media links at www.vbFRONT.com.

“ ” Federal funding affects State funding; State funding affects County and Municipal funding. — Page 29

MAY 2 **MAY 16** **JUN 6**

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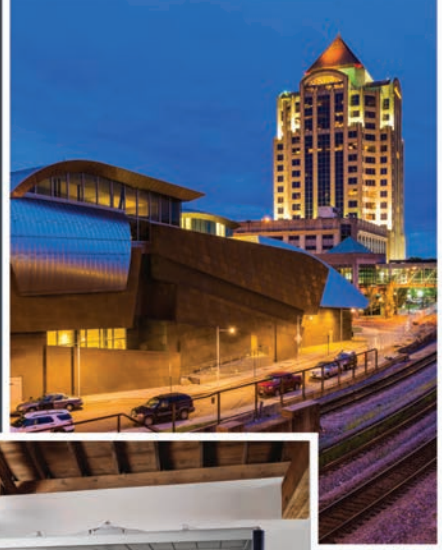
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