

Valley Business

# FRONT

Retirement  
Living  
Decision  
Time

THE SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR  
CHAMPION IN VIRGINIA'S BLUE RIDGE

FREE • ISSUE 83 • AUGUST 2015

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When  
Seniors  
Make  
the  
Move

Edna Miller,  
Brandon Oaks





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**bike to work**  
*Moments*

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Our understatement of the day comes from an article I read about moving senior parents to a more suitable environment: "Moving from a person's own home to a care facility of any kind is emotional."

Ya' think?

Moving from a home, particularly a home you've been attached to for decades has been compared to the emotional impact of those other significant milestones in life: births, deaths, marriages, divorce, personal traumatic events.

I can't help but think there is more opportunity serving this challenge than the businesses and professions we have covering it now. Some services are described in our FRONTcover story this month. But with the graying of America (increasing senior demographic due to longer life expectancies), coupled with new opportunities in living options and communities, I suspect there are innovations in services we haven't even thought of yet.

The entrepreneur I'm looking for is the one who can alleviate more of that trauma when we realize grandma can't really get along anymore in the house she's lived in for most of her life. In preparing for this story, we reviewed a lot of tips and expert advice on how to best conduct the transition.

Frankly, it's not easy enough.

Such a milestone will never be easy; but our subjects in this story give hope and show the promise that we can get better at it.



Tom Field

“ ”  
Nobody has thrown up

— Page 61



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# A COVER STORY BIG

## Decision:

*Where to go,  
Where to live*

Give us more trials 20

Permaculture expertise 27

Camaraderie in the NRV 36

Uber confessions 54

### PERSPECTIVES

- Business Dress 18
- Etiquette & Protocol 19
- Young Professionals 22
- Business Operations 23
- Wellness 30
- Legal 31

### REVIEWS & OPINIONS

- On Tap from the Pub 39
- Reviews 40

### FRONTLINES

- FRONT'n About 42
- Career FRONT 46
- FRONT Notes 50

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“ ”  
I also like to listen to the land — Page 27



Cover photography of Edna Miller by Tom Field.

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# AUGUST



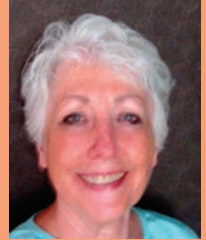
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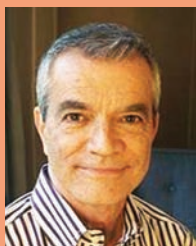
Anne Sampson

## Editorial Advisory Board

Valley Business FRONT has organized an Editorial Advisory Board in order to help direct coverage. FRONT selected a group of 16 diverse business professionals, who will serve as a sounding board throughout the 18 month rotational term that will turn over every year and a half.

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

# CONTRIBUTORS



Dan Dowdy



John Eby



Tom Field



Kathleen Harshberger



Becky Hepler



Mike Leigh



Kathy Surace



Nicholas Vaassen

“ “ Most women have a perennial problem with shoes

— Page 18

“ “ I’ve never run into a group like this

— Page 37

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 24.

## 2015 Members

- Nancy Agee** Carilion (Wellness)
- Laura Bradford** Claire V (Retail)
- Nicholas C. Conte** Woods Rogers (Legal)
- Warner Dalhouse** Retired (Seniors)
- John Garland** Spectrum (Development)
- James Glass** JG Co. (Development)
- Nancy Gray** Hollins University (Education)
- Ellis Gutshall** Valley Bank (Finance)
- Nanci Hardwick** Aeroprobe (Tech/Industry)
- George Kegley** Retired (Seniors)
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- Nancy May** LewisGale Regional Health System (Wellness)
- Stuart Mease** Virginia Tech (Education)
- Mary Miller** IDD (Tech/Industry)
- Ed Walker** Regeneration Partners (Development)

“ “ I baptize, I marry, and I bury

— Page 11

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



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# A BIG

## Decision:

### *Where to go, Where to live*

#### Decision time: the senior's choice >

##### Executive Summary:

*The FRONT talks to individuals involved in that most important transition chapter of one's sunset years—moving out of the home and into a new environment.*

By Rachael Garrity

*Two and one-half years ago, they were the "poster seniors." In his mid-80s, he remained active in his profession: mentoring students devising engineering projects or looking for patents, lecturing at trade shows, consulting. Having completed two successful careers, one in health care and the other in investment planning, she was a force to be reckoned with on the volunteer scene, especially when it came to the hospice movement. When they said that their primary care physician claimed his singular goal was to "keep us at home," their tone was joking but their intent was serious.*

*Today, she is in a memory care unit, and he has just sold their home and moved to a duplex in the same senior living facility, because a recent hip replacement has "slowed me down a bit." He still, though, walks Horatio, the chocolate Labrador retriever, every morning before he goes to share breakfast with her and cajole her to eat when she hesitates or becomes confused.*

Educated, intelligent, socially involved, delightful to be around, they are also typical in choosing to stay in their home as long as possible. According to the US Department of Human Services Institute on Aging, in 2011 just over one in ten Americans 85 and older lived in institutional settings.

It may be wisdom, but they—like others who are candid and informed—admitted that it has much to do with how difficult decisions are to make after eight decades on the planet, even with today's panoply of choices from single-family retirement homes nestled on tree-lined boulevards to full nursing care in sleek, modern high-rises.





**Edna Miller moved to Brandon Oaks 8 years ago from Lexington, where she worked for the U.S. government since 1942.**

According to Linda Balentine, founder and CEO of Crowning Touch, a Roanoke-based senior moving services company that includes not only help with moving, but consignment, auction and real estate, the average age when senior Americans decide to move out of his/her/their home of record is 82. "Interestingly," she adds, "when they do move, the average distance between them and their nearest child is 200 miles."

Balentine continues that when you consider the fact that in many cases these seniors' friends are choosing not to drive at night and they themselves either no longer drive or choose only close destinations, life "lots of times has become very lonely."

Chris Desimone, with Anderson, Desimone & Green, PC, a legal practice focused on estate planning and elder law with offices in Roanoke and Blacksburg, agrees. "In truth, we are counselors as well as attorneys. Our strength is in noticing when there are signs of trouble, as in an 85-year-old client who has lost a significant amount of weight. Or maybe when we walk a client out to his car and see dents along one side. Or on a visit to a lady's house we notice lots of expired food in the kitchen. When she pours the tea she may casually mention she hasn't left the house in weeks."

With no small amount of emphasis, he adds: "Planning is

““”

It is vitally important that people be allowed to live in accord with their own goals

— Dave Meshorer

““”

In life, most of the time love takes the form of assuming someone else's burden. It's called a privilege  
—Gary Heaton

truly important, and the irony is that it is often the people who might need it the most who are not particularly ready to do it. Why is it crucial? They are planning for everything they own and everyone they love and that includes—or at least should include— themselves.”

### *Families Matter*

Those who work with seniors, from retirement community administrators to attorneys to financial advisors to psychologists and other health care professionals, agree that family dynamics are the key to effective decision-making and successful outcomes.

Margo Brake, owner/administrator of Bethel Ridge Assisted Living in Fincastle, has, she says, seen the full range. “One couple brought their mother/mother-in-law in and insisted that she have her own things, including a piano. Then there was another woman whose state funding ran out. She couldn't hear well and basically didn't know where she was, but I knew changing places would be traumatic for her, so I agreed to work with the family and reduce our fees to basically just enough to cover our expenses of keeping her. She was already on Medicaid, and she was old enough that she had both children and grandchildren working. The amount they had to come up with, in addition to her Social Security, was not much more than around \$50 each, and they wouldn't do it.”

Gary Heaton, pastor at Green Memorial Methodist Church in Roanoke, has a slightly different take on the issue. He discourages seniors who think they should write “pages

John and Margo Brake





Pat Martin

and pages of instruction.” Drawing on both personal (his mother-in-law founded Blue Ridge Hospice and his mother was a hospice nurse) and professional (“like everyone else in my line of work, I baptize, I marry and I bury”) experience, he argues, “The best thing you can do is to stay healthy; have strong, loving relationships; and let your children do what they know is good for you. This business of ‘not being a burden’ is a less than healthy approach. In life, most of the time love takes the form of assuming someone else’s burden. It’s called a privilege.”

### *It's All About Independence*

“Today’s octogenarians are the first to have had a car to drive their entire lives, so car keys can become a point of family conflict,” Heaton continues. “When parent and child or siblings cannot agree, they call the pastor. It’s almost like an intervention.”

Pat Martin, LPN, senior living specialist for Richfield, says that she spends 1.5 to 2 hours evaluating an incoming resident who steadfastly maintains he can remain independent, perhaps calling in a physician for consultation on physical agility or mental capacity in an effort to give the incoming resident every chance to choose the style of living he wants.

“I’d say one of the knottiest issues,” Martin elaborates, “is an older person’s inability to recognize when he needs help. We often tell families it is crucial to make these decisions



Jo Lynn Seifert



The transition from one’s own home to assisted living can be a difficult and emotional process for families and loved ones. A much easier approach I recommend is Respite Care. Opportunities like a vacation or a weekend getaway is the best way I know to become familiar with an assisted living facility to determine if it is a good fit for an individual. At the same time, it can become their “home away from home”. The transition is so much easier for everyone when the time comes because they are familiar with and trust the staff as well as already feel like part of the community.

— Jo Lynn Seifert

“ ”

I ask if he or she trusts the person who has been designated 100 percent

— Mark Dellinger



**Mark Dellinger**

when the elder is able to reason for himself and actually participate in the process.”

A psychologist who gives the lie to the idea that his job is to lean back and tent his fingers, Dave Meshorer, PhD, LCP, works with adult patients of all ages. Currently, his oldest client is 103. He does both individual and family counseling, and his clients may have been referred to him by gerontologists and or may be living in nursing homes or other retirement facilities. “I cannot overemphasize the fact that it is vitally important that people be allowed to live in accord with their own goals,” he says. “Too often families are so concerned about safety that they forget their mother or father may consider other things far more important.”

Mark Dellinger, of Rhodes, Butler & Dellinger, PC, in Roanoke, strongly agrees. “Every client is facing a different puzzle, but the beginning and overriding question is ‘What do you want?’ Our demeanor in dealing with clients is every bit as important as our legal expertise. Some people want to be near their children. To others, a church family is important. Or maybe they’ve lived in the Roanoke Valley their entire lives and staying right here is crucial.”

Chris Desimone is equally insistent. “You ask a person what is important to her, and if she really thinks about the answer, she can and will essentially write her own plan. My job is to listen hard enough.”



**Chris Desimone**

“ ”

You ask a person what is important to her... she can and will essentially write her own plan

— Chris Desimone

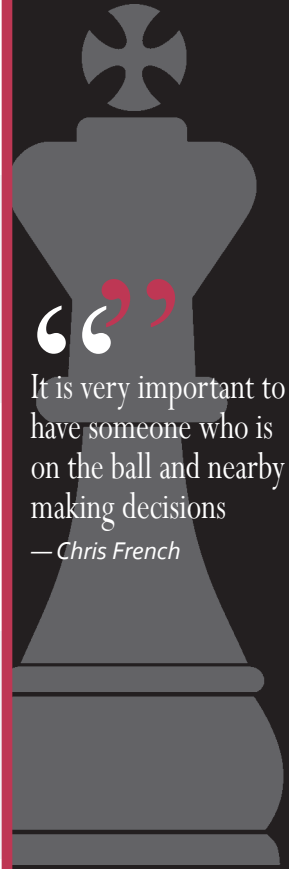
## *The Three Cs: Cost, Control and Change*

**COST:** Desimone hastens to point out that those who believe planning is only for elders with enough money to consider all options are totally wrong. “The less money you have, the more important it is that you plan, and plan well.”

Dellinger offers a pertinent example. “This isn’t just about what type of retirement community you might choose. With the right kind of long-term care insurance, many people can stay in their homes even when they need medical care.”

Paul and Chris French, a father and son who with Mary Plott comprise the professional team at Plott and French Financial Advisors in Radford, say the key to adequate financial planning is to begin well before one retires. They use a “Life Map” tool (different from the color-coded planner/journal) to help clients effectively identify what matters most in terms looking forward a decade or two. The process allows their client to define crisply what they want: maximize the estate that children will inherit? give to worthy causes? focus on a comfortable lifestyle? be sure there is enough to handle a health care issue? The result is a decision frame for investment decisions.

Beth Houk, acting director of marketing at Brandon Oaks, is also a consultant with Spectrum, a North Carolina-based research, marketing and project management firm. “What we are seeing today,” she says, “is that a number of people



““”

It is very important to have someone who is on the ball and nearby making decisions

—Chris French

**Bethel Ridge held a “Senior Prom” earlier this year; another way to help residents connect and feel special.**





When a choice is made to move a loved one into an assisted living facility everyone involved should have empathy for that person and realize that you are never too old to dream while they are making those adjustments. A happy, content and loved person can handle situations better.

—Cindy Taylor



**Cindy Taylor, activities director at Bethel Ridge, is "the greatest... an awesome person with a heart of gold who interacts with the residents on a very intimate level," says resident care representative Jo Lynn Seifert.**



**Beth Houk, director of marketing for Brandon Oaks and consultant with Spectrum, a senior resident community management firm based in Gastonia, NC.**

are considering their options at a younger age, and that's creating a strong market demand for not just health care options, but a hospitality-type construct that will work with clients who are still actively involved in work of some kind or hobbies or travel. And as the "boomers" move into retirement age, there is no question they will demand a higher level of service."

Even with good professional guidance, creating an accurate picture of actual costs can be complex. The Genworth 2015 Cost of Care Survey for Virginia, provided by Paul French, reveals the following median annual rates for the Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Roanoke area specifically:

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>Homemaker Services</b> . . . . .              | <b>\$39,422</b>  |
| <i>44 hours per week, 52 weeks</i>               |                  |
| <b>Home Health Aide Services</b> . . . . .       | <b>\$43,426</b>  |
| <i>44 hours per week, 52 weeks</i>               |                  |
| <b>Adult Day Health Care</b> . . . . .           | <b>\$15,860</b>  |
| <i>5 days per week, 52 weeks</i>                 |                  |
| <b>Assisted Living Facility</b> . . . . .        | <b>\$47,118</b>  |
| <b>Nursing Home –semi-private room</b> . . . . . | <b>\$91,250</b>  |
| <b>Nursing Home –private room</b> . . . . .      | <b>\$102,200</b> |

In terms of senior communities that involve no health care package, prices can vary dramatically based on specific types of service and amenities. In addition, there is a full array of payment arrangements from outright purchase to annual lease and even month-to-month lease. Sometimes

# COVER STORY

there is a substantial entrance fee, which may or may not be refunded either to the residents or to their estate. When the independent living facility is part of a retirement complex also offering assisted living, nursing care and perhaps special care for Alzheimer's and dementia patients (often referred to as continuing care communities), having invested in independent living can frequently give one access to lifetime healthcare services with no increase in charges. Beth Houk notes that this style almost acts as what she terms "uncapped long-term care." She explains: "You have to qualify both in terms of health and your financial assets. It is not uncommon for your monthly costs to be \$7,500 to \$8,000, but many people think that's far preferable to bankrupting your family with nursing home costs when the time comes."

**CONTROL:** Because such lifestyle decisions can indeed involve a substantial portion of the assets of an individual or couple, the decision on who has power of attorney—both financial and health—can and does become a huge issue.

Having now spent two decades at Bethel Ridge, Margo Brake says she's very firm about her own choices. "I definitely believe in long-term care insurance, and I think it's crucial to let adult children know what you want and that you WILL be part of the decision-making. I also have seen enough that I say be very careful when you award financial power of attorney to anyone."

““”

A number of people are considering their options at a younger age

— Beth Houk

**Paul Hubble declares himself "the oldest man" at Brandon Oaks at age 99 — born in 1916 during World War I. He served as an Army chaplain and then clergyman serving missions work in Japan and India. Hubble moved from Alexandria to Brandon Oaks 19 years ago.**





Linda Balentine

“ ”

Throw your heart  
over and your horse  
will follow

— Linda Balentine

Mark Dellinger echoes those points with vehemence. "I recommend that my clients go online and read *The Shopper's Guide to Long-Term Care Insurance* on the NAIC (National Association of Insurance Commissioners) website, so that they can talk the talk when they're deciding what policy they need. So far, as a power of attorney is concerned, I tell my clients they don't need an attorney to do an advance medical directive, but the financial situation is a different issue altogether. Not just when we begin working together, but every time I meet with a client, I ask if he or she trusts the person who has been designated 100 percent. Just recently, I had a woman say, 'Well, maybe only 90 percent now.' That's a deal breaker. And even more important is thinking out another step to decide who moves into the role if for some reason the person you've tagged is not reachable, available, or able for whatever reason."

In some cases, the person chosen may not be a family at all. Linda Balentine has been appointed the executrix for the estate of a woman whom she helped move 18 years ago. "There's a problem in the parent/child/sibling relationship, and she came to me instead. Just another example of how powerful the familial scene becomes."

Chris French says, "It is very important to have someone who is on the ball and nearby making decisions, if you yourself are no longer able." That is one of the reasons that he and his father prefer working with a team of professionals: attorney, CPA, and insurance agents or advisors, to create a comprehensive plan.



**CHANGE:** If there is a magic wand in the decision-making that surrounds successful later-year planning it is “transition.”

“There is a saying in the equestrian world,” explains Linda Balentine, “which applies here: *Throw your heart over and your horse will follow.* I encourage my clients to visualize themselves in their new home, no longer isolated because they don’t drive, ready for some fun with new friends.”


Bill Klein and his wife Dorothy were living in the Village of Hunting Hills, and had thought little about living anywhere else until Dorothy was diagnosed with COPD and congestive heart failure. “Suddenly, we needed to have everything on one floor,” Bill remembers. “Since a number of the members of Central Presbyterian Church, where I had served as pastor, were at Brandon Oaks, we were already familiar with it and knew that’s where we wanted to be. Still, finding just the right place required real help, and that’s what we received from the sales department.”

And have there been any adjustment issues? He chuckles. “Eating dinner at 5:30 p.m. took some getting used to, but the food is good, and the idea that we can either dine at our own table or with other people is great.”

Then he adds: “We still have our place at Smith Mountain Lake, so we continue to go there as we like. There are other people here who no longer drive, so their life is different. The beauty of it is that the style of life works for all of us.”

Father Stephen Stanley also retired recently as associate rector at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Fincastle. He wrote that he had learned that “all of life is transitional.” By way of explanation he told the following story:

When my father retired from his medical practice, in 1981, a guest, with a drink in hand, at a social gathering asked him, “Why retire, Dr. Stanley? What are you going to do now?” . . . My father simply replied, “I’m going to become a better person.” The questioner just looked at his empty glass and walked away. But I came away with a great epiphany. . . . It’s not about how much or how little you do, in life, work or retirement. It’s about who you become.

Writing from his cabin in the North Carolina mountains, he concludes: “My dog, Annie, is overjoyed that I’ve finally come home. She knows, God knows that this ‘old dog’ will stay busy with learning some new tricks. . . . Tomorrow has always been my favorite day of the week. So, I am not here awaiting the end of my life. I am here working toward its completion. 

“““

Tomorrow has always been my favorite day of the week

— Stephen Stanley

Stephen Stanley





## Stepping into new >

Most women have a perennial problem with shoes. Business dress always looks better with at least a small high heel. However, often after a long day at the office, a woman's feet are killing her and getting to the car can be a painful experience.

Many of us resort to running shoes or ballet flats to finish up the day walking to the car, or perhaps to get some much-needed exercise during lunch. This presents problems with the outfit matching the new change of shoes or looking completely unprofessional. Well, designers are working on the problem and help may be on the horizon.

As reported on the Huffington Post, Canadian-born shoe designer, Tanya Heath, has designed a shoe with interchangeable heels, switching from 3 ½ inch heels to 1 ½ inch heels with just the push of a button! A woman can change only the heels on her shoes throughout the day, rather than changing pairs of shoes completely. Genius! Even better, Heath's shoes are not only adaptable, but they're beautiful! What a boon for the fashionable businesswoman who wants to protect her feet from crippling pain.


Of course the cost of these interchangeable shoes will be high initially — in the range of Jimmy Choo or Christian Louboutins at \$395 a pair and up — but it's only a matter of time before it becomes mainstream and trickles down to the masses, becoming much more affordable. Additional heels for the shoes cost around \$35 – \$50.

Heath's shoes are found in just a few places now — Paris, Toronto, Lisbon, and on her website — [www.tanyaheath.com](http://www.tanyaheath.com).

In other fashion shoe news, former Silicon Valley executive Dolly Singh, CEO and founder of Thesis Couture, is attempting to redesign the high heel into a more comfortable shoe, as well. With a rocket scientist, an orthopedic surgeon and a former NASA astronaut on her design team, she hopes to create a stiletto heel that "feels and functions like a wedge".

Using an advanced polymer, they're widening the support in the shank and heel to increase stability and redistribute weight away from the toes — without sacrificing the beauty and art of the high heel.

Their first collection debuts in Spring 2016, with initial prices ranging from \$350 to \$900 a pair.

Pricey for most women, but more affordable versions should follow in short order. Stay tuned for future developments! 

Comments? Email [Kathy@peacockimage.com](mailto:Kathy@peacockimage.com)

## Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

**Executive Summary:**  
*Designers and inventors are stepping up to the challenge of women's shoe heels, including interchangeable heights.*

## Eating various foods >

In today's busy world, people often eat with their fingers. Breakfast wraps, sandwiches, pizza, hamburgers, hot dogs, the list goes on. My dining skills seminars always include instruction on how to handle a knife and fork properly. However, not all foods need silverware. Here are some guidelines for eating various foods with your fingers. I've also included directions for those foods that require special silverware.

- **Artichokes:** remove each leaf separately with fingers, dip in sauce and pull through the teeth to remove the edible portion.
- **Asparagus** is eaten with a knife and fork in the U.S. In Europe it is eaten with the fingers, or with special individual asparagus tongs.
- **Apricots, cherries, kumquats and plums** are eaten with the fingers.
- **Avocados** are eaten with a spoon when left in their shells.
- **Bacon**, if crisp, can be eaten with the fingers.
- **Caviar** is spread on toast with a knife and eaten with the fingers.
- **Celery, olives, pickles and radishes** can be eaten with the fingers.
- **Fried chicken** is only eaten with the fingers at a picnic or a casual family gathering.
- **Soft shell crabs** are cut with a knife and fork, and eaten with a fork.
- **Steamed clams:** hold by the shell in one hand, then lifted out by the neck with the other hand. The neck is inedible so slip that off, then dip the whole clam in butter and eat in one bite.
- **Corn on the cob** is best eaten at family meals. Season, butter, hold with both hands and enjoy.
- **Lemon wedge:** hold it in your hand and squeeze over food. Shield with your other hand to prevent the juice from squirting onto you or into your neighbor's eye!
- **Fish:** a whole fish is rarely served in America. In other countries fish are often served whole, with the head and tail intact. A fish fork and knife are used to debone the fish. It might take a lesson or two from someone like me to feel comfortable with this process.
- **Lobsters** can also be difficult to eat. Crack the claws with a nutcracker. Extract the meat with a seafood fork. Pull off the small claws and suck – like you were sucking through a straw.
- **Oysters, mussel, and fresh clams:** Hold the shells in your hand and remove the oyster, mussel or clam whole with an oyster fork. Dip in sauce. 

*"No man is lonely while eating spaghetti – it requires so much attention"*

—Christopher Morley



## Etiquette & Protocol

By Kathleen Harvey Harshberger

**Executive Summary:** *Civilized dining doesn't mean you never use your fingers; here's a handy guide to how you should tackle that next item you're unsure about on your plate.*



Dr. Brian K. Unwin

## Give us more trials >

### Executive Summary:

*The fight against dementia is not an easy one; Dr. Unwin wants more trial studies to help with the battle.*

### By Sarah Cox

Dr. Brian K. Unwin, the section chief of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine with Carilion Clinic for Healthy Aging, knows this to be true: "Health care for persons with dementia is inconsistent, often suboptimal, and largely unplanned. Peer-reviewed studies of dementia care document inconsistency in outpatient care, high rates of potentially preventable episodes of acute care, and increased numbers of locus of care transitions. These findings suggest that much of the health care for

patients with dementia is reactive and unsystematic." This was taken from a 2013 article, "Quality Improvement in Neurology: Dementia Management Quality Measures," that appeared in the *American Academy of Neurology* journal. Unwin, like the authors of this article, feels that there is a lot of room for improvement in the United States' care for the elderly.

He has had, he said, a combination of learning, experiencing and witnessing of elder care, as well as receiving a fellowship in geriatrics and board certification in family medicine and geriatrics. While he and his brother were in the military, his parents were on the decline. He saw the "lousy care" his parents received. Today, he is an advocate and a ready fount of knowledge about what we can do to age healthfully as well as help our seniors find resources to soften the blows of aging.

One of those heavy hits is dementia, an umbrella term for many different types of memory impairment, including Alzheimer's. He has formulated a presentation, "Mind Your Memory", that details the normal and abnormal signs of aging, what people can do to age healthfully, and what can cause memory problems and threats to brain health. While he has shown his presentation to senior groups, he says he should really be presenting it to 40 and 50-year olds, "so we can enter late in life with preserved function."

Eat well, don't over imbibe in alcohol, don't smoke, exercise, be careful taking medications that may be sedating, and take care of your sleep. Those are the standard pieces of advice that he gives, knowing full well that "as a species, we undervalue how delicate our brains are and how we abuse our brains with drugs, medicine and alcohol."

Ultimately, Unwin feels that what people want, both patient and caregiver, is to preserve their maximum independence, and that is to stay in their homes. Not only is their home their greatest financial investment, but their safety net. He said

that there are a lot of reasons for caregivers to strive to secure maximum independence for their family members, "and one of the biggest issues is cost. In 2010, it cost about \$200 per day to stay in a nursing home, and that's basically room and board, not medical care, meds, or doctors. Just staying at Shady Acres." Unwin goes on to state that in 2010, it was about \$100 per day for assisted living, and adult day care was about \$50-\$60 per day.

That's out of pocket, unless you qualify for Medicaid. Unwin points out that national data reveals that the majority of Medicaid expenditures goes toward paying nursing

and clubs and organizations. Then they are most likely to stay at home."


Unwin says that while there is an increased awareness of dementia and Alzheimer's, the best way to improve diagnosis is for people to become involved in clinical trials. There are about 220 ongoing trials in the United States, some at Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute. "The hope for diagnosis and treatment advances comes from these trials happening right now. The issue is that Alzheimer's is a really difficult disease to treat," he says. The brain is complicated and the period of time between onset and signs of the disease can be up to 10 years.



There are about five medications that are used to slow down the progression of the disease, but none to prevent it

home care for disabled adults. There need to be changes, he says. While there is a rise in continuing care communities, where an adult can segue from independent to assisted living to nursing care, "I have my worries about that, because I don't want to see older adults living outside of our communities. I want to see them on Main Street, at Grandin Village, at the mall. Some of the best longitudinal studies (20 years old until death) point out that those who most successfully age have multigenerational relationships, and this is equally wonderful for the people around them." He says that the greatest support that an elderly adult can get is "family and friends and church

Furthermore, there are no evidence-based practices to do an early identification. On top of that, there are about five medications that are used to slow down the progression of the disease, but none to prevent it.

"There is recognition that there is plenty to be done. Doctors are becoming more aware of the limited abilities of medications. Also, the stigma is going away ... and research dollars are starting to flow in." Today, Unwin is part of the pack that is dispensing knowledge and encouragement to anyone who will listen, urging participation in the local and national trials, and advocating for his patients and their caregivers. 

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## Young Professionals

By Ariel Lev

**Executive Summary:**  
*If your business plans to use remote employees, whether by trial or necessity, make sure they are adequately equipped to ensure the arrangement can be sustained.*


## Remote working >

Advances in technology have increased the number of remote employees in today's workforce by a large margin. Remote employees work from a location that is physically separate from their employer or business headquarters, but typically stay connected to their coworkers in the virtual realm. The ability to work remote has increased productivity for many, allowing employees to work closer to home or have the freedom to move with a spouse while still keeping their job.

This type of worker is seen frequently in a coworking environment. Coworking spaces provide a community for trailing spouses and recent transplants who are not able to work from home. The CoLab proudly houses Floridians, Coloradans, Californians, New Yorkers and District of Columbians (just to name a few), who have made the move to Roanoke for just as many reasons. Their work is mainly completed via a cell phone and Internet connection, allowing them to work from just about anywhere. They sport titles like "Internet technologist," "app developer," "cyber security analyst," among others. They chose CoLab, in many cases, because of the community of coworkers that is missing in a coffee shop or home office.

Organizations have a lot to consider when deciding whether to allow their employees to work from locations physically far from headquarters. There is an ongoing debate on the effectiveness of remote employees and many organizations have tried this system only to watch it fail. Beyond these considerations, organizations also grapple with an interesting situation: remote employees, most of whom are not public relations professionals, are consistently required to represent the organization from afar.

"So, tell me about your job," is a frequent request, a rite of passage, when coworking space members meet for the first time. As the sole representative of the organization, it is then that person's responsibility to accurately represent the company - and do so over and over. The phrase "that's not in my job description" is inaccurate when it comes to the remote workers across the world who are frequently faced with the task of managing PR for their organization without the council of those hired by the organization to do just that.

Adding this responsibility to the employee's plate should not necessarily be added to the "cons" list of whether to allow employees the right to work remote. Rather, it is an opportunity to trust employees as stewards of the organization's mission. More trust equals a higher degree of ownership and diligence when it comes to each representation of the organization. Allowing for these employees to spread the mission of the organization through their unique lens can be positively impactful in a way traditional PR cannot. When organizations make room for this type of leadership, a new kind of employee is given space to grow. 

## The power of effective delegation >

Back in my high school cross country days, my coach would sometimes send us out on the track at the end of practice for a team run. Once finished, practice was over, so we had every incentive to complete the run quickly. Inevitably, our slowest runner, Jim, would hold up the entire team and fall behind. We couldn't finish until everyone finished.

One day our coach told Jim to go to the front and the rest of the team to follow. To my surprise, we completed the run faster than ever.

So what does this story have to do with delegation?

Effective delegation is the act of giving someone else the responsibility and authority to carry out an assignment or to represent you or your organization in a specific role. Conducted skillfully, delegation is one of the most powerful actions a leader can do to improve organizational performance. Through delegation, a leader can free up time for high payoff activities (see my article in May, 2015 issue), and develop employees for future advancement. But there is an equally important third benefit that is not as well-known.

When my cross country coach sent Jim to the front, he empowered Jim with real responsibility. He gave Jim the opportunity to "lead" instead of "follow". With that responsibility, Jim gave that little extra effort that helped the entire team. He was more engaged. The same will happen with members of your team when you delegate real responsibility to them.

Despite the many benefits, leaders sometime struggle to effectively delegate. Often, they are hindered by fear and negative attitudes:

"I can do it better myself."



## Business Operations

By Mike Leigh

**Executive Summary:**  
*Putting someone in charge can affect the whole organization; in better ways than you might have considered.*



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Our strength is in noticing when there are signs of trouble — Page 9




At 10:24, he gets a ping — Page 57



"It will be easier if I just do it."

"He already has too much to do and I don't want to add more."

If you are tempted to put off delegation, remember that at some time in your career you didn't know how to do what you can easily now do. Someone invested time to teach you. Training someone may involve considerable time and effort, but weigh this against the long-term permanent savings that will eventually be yours. Effective delegation will maximize the strengths and contributions of others, and provide motivational and developmental opportunities for your team.

Effective delegation requires much more than simply handing out a new task. It requires thoughtful assignment and training. Next month I will describe the specific methods and techniques you can use to improve the effectiveness of delegation in your organization. 



Conducted skillfully, delegation is one of the most powerful actions a leader can do to improve organizational performance.

## FROM THE Grapevine

The Source for Roanoke's Commercial Real Estate Buzz  
By Richard Wellford & Bryan Musselwhite



### The Demand for Apartments Continues.

Investors purchase income producing real estate to make money from cash flows, and that is exactly what a properly managed and maintained apartment building will bring. The manageable risk of multiple tenants is one of the things that makes multifamily properties a favorite vehicle for many investors.

Another advantage is that multifamily property typically offers a higher ratio of building to land value which means more of the capital investment can be depreciated. Additionally, the depreciation life of residential income property (27.5 years) is shorter than other commercial property types (39 years). Combined, these two factors can result in higher annual depreciation write-offs.

Industry projections show apartment demand and multifamily property values rising over the next 5-10 years. In Roanoke, apartment building values have held steady or increased even in the face of the increased supply. That's a result of increased tenant demand and the low cost of money.

So, let's review; cash flow, low risk, tax advantages and increasing values. Sounds like a good time to buy.



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Darden and Smith confer on design

## Permaculture expertise >

### Executive Summary:

*Darden's Gardens in Blacksburg puts its "place-based" landscaping to work for its native clients in native habitat.*

### By Becky Hepler

Anyone in a service business knows the importance of listening to your client. But Sydney Darden, founding partner of Darden's Gardens, a NRV landscaping business, takes it a step further. "I listen to the client, to find out what they want, what they can do, but I also like to listen to the land. What does it need, what will it support?" she said.

This kind of uber-concern comes from Darden's education and value system. A native of Blacksburg, she graduated from Warren-Wilson College five years ago with a degree in Environmental Studies and a concentration in Sustainable Agriculture. Darden has always

had a deep appreciation of nature and gardening. Two years ago, she completed requirements for the Permaculture Design Certificate. She tries to include as many organic practices as she can in her work. "We call it Place-Based Landscaping," she said.

For the uninitiated, Permaculture is a system of design principles centered on using patterns and features found in natural ecosystems, the idea being, don't fight your environment, use it. It does get more complicated than that, but that is what connects with Darden. "I like the way that permaculture makes gardening more accessible, emphasizing low maintenance so that you're not fighting nature, but embracing natural systems and using them to help you," she said. "I love gardening and I want people to enjoy it, but if it's too hard, they won't want to do it."

Darden is joined by long-time family friend, Scott Smith, originally from Texas, who had wrapped up a career in international rural development with several non-profits and was looking for something that would use his degrees in Soil Sciences. "I had thought about landscaping as a career, but then I got



David Radcliffe, happy client


involved with a mission project overseas, and that lead to a full time job," he said. "This gets me back to that original plan but in a totally different environment." While they come from different backgrounds, trainings and perspectives, even generations, they both appreciate having the other to bounce off ideas and using all their skills to create the right design.

Darden's Gardens offer a range of services, from designing to implementing that design and maintaining the finished product. "Much of the design work is done there on the property, sketching as we walk around trying to figure it out," said Darden. "It's like a puzzle, trying to figure out the best plant for the right place, all in a design that works for the client."

The company is committed to using as much native/local plantings in the design as possible, and while esthetics are important, so is functionality. It's the idea behind their logo, which features a serviceberry leaf. "It's native to this area, it's a most welcome sight, being one of the first trees to leaf out in the spring, and it's pretty," said Darden.

So far, the business is depending solely upon word-of-mouth advertising to get their

clients, which is how David Radcliffe, whose daughter went to school with Darden, came to be one. When a big maple tree in his yard came down, he was left with a big mess and no idea what to do about it. After Darden and Smith finished, the straight concrete walk was replaced with a curvy flagstone one, edged with a colorful bed. Another bed with a mix of perennials and herbs replaced a big section of lawn and the whole thing is bounded by a blueberry hedge. Thyme growing between the flagstones makes the path "...the most fragrant walk in Airport Acres," smiled Radcliffe. "We love it." There's even cat mint for Puffin, resident feline.

The partners would like the business to grow, but in a measured way. "It would be interesting to be working on larger, community-based projects," said Darden. "I want to grow, but not so much that we can't do the right thing for each project." Smith's goal is even simpler. "I don't want to be known as the guy with the best equipment, I just want to be the experts for New River Valley landscaping." 

*For more information, see the web page at [www.dardensgardens.com](http://www.dardensgardens.com)*



**Puffin the cat approves**



## Senior tooth attack >

Older adults often encounter significant problems with tooth decay. There are several parts of this reality.

- First, as we grow older, we retain most of our natural teeth.
- Second, as we age, our sense of taste diminishes, so what is considered to be “healthy food” might not taste as good as it used to.
- Third, sweet tasting foods continue to taste good—as they have throughout life—but they sometimes comprise more and more of the daily caloric intake with senior adults.

What is important to realize is that increased frequency of eating sugar sets up an accelerated tooth decay process. Among often unintended sources of sugar intake in older adults are meal replacement/supplements. These are promoted as “high in protein”, but they are also high in sugar to make them taste good and to encourage consumption.


There is little question that meal replacements are often important for increasing daily calories, but virtually no one appreciates the tooth damage associated with their use. It is not uncommon for senior adults to experience 8-15 cavities in as little as one year when they use meal replacements frequently.

Fortunately, there is something that can be done to prevent this “collateral damage” to seniors’ teeth. It is a prescription fluoride toothpaste.

Here is what you need to know about tooth decay, and how and why the fluoride works. First, there is a basic biochemistry used by bacteria in the mouth to convert glucose—sugar—to energy. A by-product of this biochemistry is acid that causes decay. Fluoride, at a concentration of 5,000 parts per million, predictably stops this biochemistry, thus controlling decay. The prescription toothpaste has this fluoride concentration.

If senior adults would use this product each morning, the bacteria would not be able to make acid, thus controlling the decay process, even if meal replacements are involved.

It is actually not important that a senior adult brush or floss teeth. The concept is to simply get the fluoride into the senior’s mouth on a daily basis. The fluoride is effective at a microscopic level by stopping the biochemistry and has little or nothing to do with actually brushing teeth.

Please share this information with your family member’s primary care physician or dentist. It is very easy to get a prescription for this toothpaste and simply substitute it for whatever other oral care product is being used. 

## Wellness

By John Eby, DDS

### Executive Summary:

*Seniors consuming nutritional supplement beverages are damaging their teeth even as they are helping their diet; but here's one solution.*

## Investor” can be a four-letter word >

I was on the phone with the president of a small local manufacturing company. “I need you to reply to a letter for me,” he said. “Business has been bad, and I barely have enough cash to make payroll. Now one of my investors wants me to refund his investment.”

“Investors?” I said. “You have investors?”

“Yes,” he said. “This past Christmas I sold shares in the company to several of my family members.”

“Really! I had no idea,” I said.

“They just wrote me checks in the kitchen after Christmas dinner,” he said, “and then I gave them share certificates. My brother-in-law bought \$50,000 worth. But then he divorced my sister, so he’s not my brother-in-law any more. Now he says he wants his money back.”

“OK, got it,” I said. “I have two questions. First, does he work in the business?”

“No,” said the President.

“Second, does he live in Virginia?” I said.

“No, he and my sister always have lived in Florida,” he said. “But what difference does that make? Can you please just write him a letter and tell him that I don’t have to give his money back?”

“It might not be quite that simple,” I said. “After the 1929 crash, to protect the public against investment scams, Congress decided to pass laws regulating stock offerings. The laws apply whenever you sell stock to a ‘passive investor,’ which means an investor like your ex-brother-in-law, who doesn’t work in the company, but who instead just sits back and waits to receive his profits.”

“Yep, that’s him, that’s all he does, he just sits around,” said the president.

“Under these laws, company shares have to be ‘registered’ with the government before they can be sold. So for example when you use E-Trade to buy shares of AT&T or Apple or GoPro on the New York Stock Exchange or NASDAQ, those shares are all ‘registered,’ which makes them OK to buy and sell.”



## Shark Patrol

By Keith Finch

**Executive Summary:**  
*Selling shares in your business is much more complicated than it seems, and there are lots of ways to get it wrong. When you take on investors, be sure to do it the right way.*







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"So I was required to register the shares in my company?" he said.

"No, because actually there are three types of stock offerings," I said. "Offerings of registered stock are the first type. The second type of stock offering is called 'exempt from registration,' or just 'exempt.' Exempt stock offerings don't involve trades on a stock exchange. Usually they're just private transactions."

"Well, that's what I did," the president said. When I sold shares to my family it certainly was private. So was it exempt?"

"Sometimes, if you're lucky, an offering can be exempt if the company and all the investors are in the same state," I said. "That's why I asked where your ex-brother-in-law lives. But since he lives in Florida, that rule doesn't help. You would have had to do a bunch of paperwork for your stock offering to be exempt."

"What sort of paperwork?" he said.

"In particular you would have had to file a document with the Federal government called a 'Form D,'" I said, "and depending on the circumstances you might have had to file documents with the government of Virginia too."

"Whoops," he said. "I didn't do that. Is it too late?"

"You have to file the Form D within fifteen days after your first sale," I said. "Also, the stock only can be sold to people who have \$200,000 in income (or \$300,000 as a couple) or who have a net worth over \$1 million (not counting their house)."

"Well, I didn't do that, either," he said.

"So your stock offering wasn't exempt," I said. "And it wasn't registered. Unfortunately there are only three types of stock offerings: registered, exempt, and illegal."

"Damn," he said. "So what happens now?"

"Your ex-brother-in-law actually is correct," I said, "you have to give his money back. If you sell shares to someone in an illegal stock offering, then the investor has one year to demand his money back, and you can't refuse."


Eventually we were able to work out a repayment plan with the ex-brother-in-law. (Luckily no one else asked for their money back, and the securities regulators decided not to prosecute.) Many months later and after a lot of "cleaning up" the company's affairs, we were able to help the president do another stock offering—correctly, this



If you sell shares to someone in an illegal stock offering, then the investor has one year to demand his or her money back, and you can't refuse.

# PERSPECTIVES

time. In addition to making sure that his stock offering was exempt from registration, he also gave his investors a “private placement memorandum”—containing a detailed description of his business and of the investment risks—in order to protect him against the possibility that an investor might later claim to have been tricked or misled.

Taking on an investor is not something to be done casually. It is a complex process with a lot of very nasty hidden traps. If you fall into one, then you’ll see why “investor” can be a four-letter word. 

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

**Note:** *facts have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Oh, and this isn’t legal advice—you should consult a lawyer before actually seeking investors or selling shares in your company, etc.*



There are only three types of stock offerings: registered, exempt, and illegal.



*Jim and Janet Johnson*

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**Front Row:** Barbara Newton (Village Trim), Lisa Gardner (New River Caregiver Service), Sarah Beth Jones (NoBS Business Coach), Terri Norton Welch (WineShop at Home), Charlie Whitescarver (Whitescarver Photography), Marcus Morris (Main Street Insurance), Justina Sumpter (United Way NRV). **Back Row:** Janelle Tornwall (representing Crimper's Climbing Gym), Alice De Sturler (Blogging Coach), Kenny Poff (Pebble Brook Landscaping), Allison Shaw (Dominos Pizza), Belinda Blodgett (Farmer's Insurance), John Johnson (Coldwell Banker Townside), Shirley Gillispie (Green Eyed Designs), Lynn Gregory (National Property Inspections), Kathie Dickenson (Editor and Writer), Lisa Flora (First Piedmont Waste Solutions).

## Camaraderie in the NRV >

### Executive Summary:

*Network NRV is a community-minded business group with good traction and a diversified base in its first year.*

### By Kathie Dickenson

"Who are your chickens?"

Keith Finch, an attorney with The Creekmore Law Firm, posed this question during the education segment of a recent Network NRV meeting. He explained that for real growth, businesses must identify not just clients, or "eggs," but "chickens," those who can provide eggs for them.

Identifying chickens is one reason for networking, but not the only one, according to Sarah Beth Jones, the NoBS Business Coach. "I think of networking as open-

ended relationship building," says Jones, "not just getting business."

Relationship building and community support were common priorities for Jones and two other entrepreneurs who co-founded Network NRV in June 2014. Charlie Whitescarver, owner of Whitescarver Photography, and Terri "The Wine Lady" Norton Welch, of WineShop at Home, developed a vision for bringing together small businesses from a large geographic region into an affordable, effective, non-exclusive group with a focus on supporting each other and the community. Their mantra: "A rising tide lifts all boats."

Whitescarver says they considered making membership free, "but we thought if people didn't have buy-in they wouldn't take it seriously." They set inexpensive dues and decided that any funds not used for the actual running of the group would be donated to a charitable organization.

With 25 members, an average meeting attendance of 15-20, and money in the bank designated for charitable giving,

Network NRV had a good first year.


Member Lynn Gregory, co-owner with her husband, Steve, of National Property Inspections, says relationship building has been strong. "As we get to know each other, we are able to feel comfortable referring each other. I enjoy everyone in the group and not only do I want to refer them to others, when there's a good fit, I use their services." She adds, "The other thing I really like about Network NRV is its mission to give back to the community."

Network NRV has supported United Way of the New River Valley – a nonprofit member of the group – with volunteers, funds and goods. Nonperishable foods are collected at every meeting for food banks. Whitescarver says the group has donated about 100 pounds of food to the Floyd nonprofit Plenty!, to the Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, and to the United Way. "We also collected supplies for Stuff the Bus," he adds. The network has founded a Little Business Library at Idego Coffee; members donate business-related books that can be borrowed by anyone.

The group meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, 8:45 a.m., at Idego Coffee on Main Street in Christiansburg. Each meeting offers an education segment, presented by a member or an outside guest, and an individual member spotlight. Every

member presents a 30-second pitch for his or her business – a good chance to polish and practice. Networking happens pre- and post-meeting and at personal meetings scheduled between members who want to explore ways of supporting one another. Membership dues for businesses are \$50.00 per year or \$30.00 for six months. Nonprofit membership is free.


Unlike some networking groups, Network NRV is non-exclusive, which means more than one of the same kind of business can be represented. Members include writers, graphic designers, attorneys, realtors, insurance agents and home inspection, construction, waste disposal, lawn care, floor care, printing and recreation businesses. Localities represented include Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Floyd, Radford and Roanoke. Network NRV has "created a group with a robust membership," says Whitescarver. "Members have told me that our speakers have helped them. I've made friends and business contacts, and it's helped my business."

"I've been involved in a fair number of groups over the last 11 years," says Jones, "and I've never run into a group like this, where there is warmth, camaraderie, and commitment. I feel very lucky to be a part of it. I think it's how business can and should be done." 

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## It's not you, it's me >

We need to talk.

I never thought this day would come. The newness has worn off; and though we were warned that the magic couldn't last forever, I always thought we were the exception. Remember how it felt when we first met? How I held you, how I couldn't take my eyes off of you? And you... you were always there for me. Every day was like a brand new adventure. We explored and took on the world together and discovered new horizons.

But something happened.

Remember how everyone said we were the perfect match? Now, we seem to be going in different directions. I'm no longer Mr. Right for you. And it's just not fair to you for us to continue as if everything is alright. I know now that there is someone else out there who is better for you. Our time together really was something to behold. Though we will surely separate and no longer be together, I know you'll move on to greater things that are in store for you.

I hope we can remain friends.

\* \* \*

P.S. Actually, can we remain a bit more than just friends? I still need you and can't be completely without you.

P.P.S. Okay, so maybe I got a little ahead of myself. What if we don't separate entirely, but have... I don't know, occasional breaks from each other? A little distance from time to time. I mean, is it really so terrible for me to say we just don't need to be with each other constantly? Right up on top of each other and in each other's space nearly every minute of the day?

I see now that I can't abandon you. I guess I can't survive without you in my life. You're a part of me now, and one way or the other you will always be here. You really weren't ever going to leave me anyway, now were you, technology?

Love, 



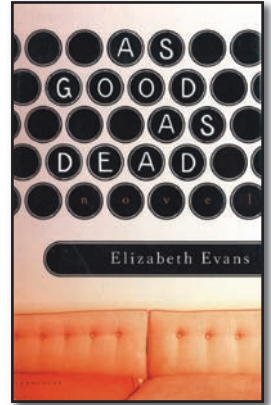
## On Tap from the Pub

By Tom Field

**Executive Summary:**  
*Breaking up is hard to do; in this case— it's impossible.*

## Books @ the FRONT >

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



### Trust issues

*As Good As Dead* (Bloomsbury; 2015) by Elizabeth Evans is as chic-lit as it gets and soap-operatic; but I didn't put it down. Our protagonist-narrator shows betrayal in such a real and personal fashion, we're left with the classic sympathetic character in the 'I sinned, but it's not like any of the others can cast the first stone' mode. Should a book club include this quick read novel in its lineup, I'm happy to suggest the first prompt for the group: Does insecurity and submissiveness make one less likely to experience trustworthiness and reliability in a relationship? And if you're curious how some people move past their indiscretions—or not—you won't put this book down either.

—Tom Field

### Game over

Roanoke College political science professor Harry Wilson should know and when he says the debate over gun control is over, he backs it up. And backs it up. And backs it up.

In his new book, *The Triumph of the Gun-Rights Argument: Why the Gun Control Debate is Over* (Praeger, at a whopping \$48 in hardcover), Wilson concludes that "the old strength of the NRA is the new strength of the NRA." That means the five million active members of the strongest gun advocacy group—many insist it is the gun *manufacturers'* advocacy group—are a vital force.

Gun-owning Wilson, who bases his argument

in references that took 30 pages to document, is an old hand at the gun argument. He is the author of *Guns, Gun Control and Elections*, and is on the editorial board of *Guns in American Society*.

The gun debate, insists Wilson, has been a difficult and contentious one with control groups pouring money and people into the fray with little effect, even in the face of potential opinion changing mass murders in the U.S. His approach is dogged, mostly predictable and sometimes surprising (as in a survey that asks if you would let your child marry a gun owner).

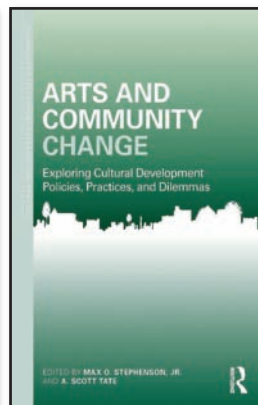
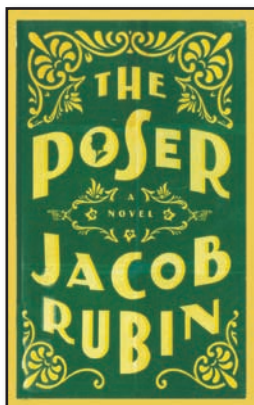
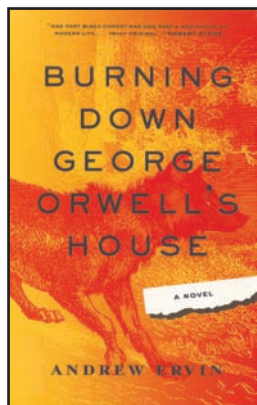
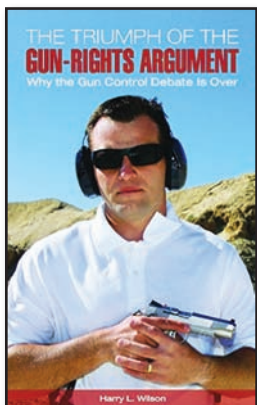
This is a dry, academic, "just the facts, ma'am" approach to an important topic, but as a reference, it will be invaluable.

—Dan Smith

### Roughing it

*Burning Down George Orwell's House* (Soho; 2015) by Andrew Ervin will undoubtedly be one of my favorite reads this year. Chapter 1, in particular, was perfection (and there are only five). Fewer novels these days cause an ol' sap as myself to laugh out loud, but our ol' boy Ray Welter's adventures made the best storytelling I've experienced in a long time. His exodus from corporate American advertising and collapsing marriage to abandon modernity by renting George Orwell's very remote cottage on the Scottish Isle of Jura was illustrated with pure brilliance. Add in copious amounts of wee drams of the globe's very finest liquid





gold single malt scotch, eccentric locals who run the full gamut of hospitality towards foreigners, a potential werewolf, and enough sogginess to over-moisturize a seal, and you're left with a tale that will stick to you with permanence as you ponder your lot in life. Slainte! indeed.

—Tom Field

## Impress-ive

*The Poser* (Viking; 2015) by Jacob Rubin is well written. Given the protagonist, the character development could have easily gone astray. I mean, imagine meeting a person who is compelled to mimic others. A perfected talent that is both mesmerizing and annoying at the same time. And the only way to survive your own persona, is to have some vaudevillian agent capitalize on it. "You do a dead-on imitation like that with no warning and someone will slap you," the agent says. "Hell, they might wait for you to fall asleep and urinate on you. But do it on a stage, do it for an audience, and they'll piss themselves."

But beyond the captivating plot of "The World's Greatest Impressionist"—or perhaps below it—our *Poser* is a study in the color of humanity. A quick novel with near brilliant first person narrative. Freaks deserve sympathy in their own right, but can you ever really trust one? Uncertainty is the very root. Like certain diseases or conditions, you never really escape; and the only hope you have is finding one person who can live with that truth.

—Tom Field

## Art force

Many community leaders see the arts as a means of promoting economic growth, but Max Stephenson Jr. and Scott Tate believe the arts have the potential to do much more for a community.

*Arts and Community Change: Cultural Development Practices, Policies and Dilemmas*, co-edited by Stephenson and Tate of Virginia Tech, is for leaders working to further social change and development in their communities. The book contains chapters with contributors including artists, performers, professors, practitioners and more.

In the first chapter, Arlene Goldbard draws connections between culture and development in communities. From then on the book carries on a logical flow, discussing successes and hardships faced by those working to implement arts-based initiatives in their communities.

Overall, Stephenson and Tate illuminate an important idea – that the arts can be used to assist communities who need a way to address issues and concerns they face in their everyday lives.

—Hannah Samlall

(**The reviewers:** Tom Field is a creative director and publisher of FRONT; Dan Smith is a writer and blogger on Roanoke happenings; Hannah Samlall is a communications major at Virginia Tech currently interning with Outreach and International Affairs.)



## Caring is sharing >

United Way of Montgomery, Radford and Floyd recognized supporters of its 2014-2015 campaign on June 25 at Warm Hearth Village in Blacksburg; **Robert Lambert** with the Community Health Center and **Bev Walters** with NRV CARES were among the 90 attendees.



## Play on, parkside >

Elmwood Park in Roanoke held its dual outdoor concert of Jefferson Center's Bela Fleck & Abigail Washburn and Punch Brothers to a sizeable crowd estimated over 1,500 on July 15, despite the ominous storm that blew in at the back end.



## Impasto presents >

**Market Gallery** in Roanoke held its Art by Night opening August 7, including the works of Ann Glover and Jamie Nervo (her "Abstract!" painting shown here).



## Giving back >

**Kroger** store at Ridgewood Farms in Salem received a \$10,000 bonus from the Virginia Lottery with its winning \$1 million ticket sale to a customer in June; per policy, the company donated the money equally to four charitable organizations selected by store associates: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia (shown above with Kroger store manager Randy Hawley holding check and June House of BBBS in center); Meals on Wheels program of Local Office on Aging; Saint Francis Service Dogs; Virginia Wounded Warrior program.



## 'Hood agent >

**Grandin Agency** celebrated its ribbon-cutting on July 16 at its new office located at the intersection of 5th Street and Campbell Ave. Owner Jason Roggensee and marketing specialist Alexandra Chitwood say the firm brings a "new residential brokerage concept" to downtown, with agents focusing on specific zip codes and target market knowledge.



FRONT

## Marketside theatrics >

Mill Mountain Theatre's *Rootabaga!*, a touring children's musical, held performances on Roanoke's downtown City Market at lunch hour on Wednesdays and Saturdays during June and July, including this show July 8.



FRONT

## Space celebrants >

Roanoke Blacksburg Technology Council hosted its TechWorking social function at the Grandin CoLab on July 15, with an emphasis on entrepreneurial spaces from organizations such as CoLab, NuSpark, VT KnowledgeWorks, Roanoke Chamber Business Incubator, and TechPad.

# FRONT 'N ABOUT



## Stretch >

**Roanoke River Greenway** celebrates yet another section opening at a dedication July 24 that meets the Salem City line next to MB Contractors office; ultimately this new section will connect west at Rotary Park in Salem and east at Bridge Street in Roanoke.



## Jane's jazz >

**Jane Powell**, local Roanoke / Salem favorite and award winning touring vocalist who announced she recently retired, performed among others at Salem's annual Jazz in July concert at Longwood Park on July 18.



## There for you >

**Dr Pepper Park at the Bridges** presented Slippery When Wet, a Bon Jovi tribute band on July 16 to a mix of nostalgic as well as young fans at the new event venue resting at the foot of Mill Mountain in Roanoke.

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

# Career FRONT

## FINANCIAL FRONT

**Chris Bowen** has been named managing director of Northwestern Mutual's Shenandoah District offices in Roanoke and Harrisonburg.

**Alisa O'Donnell** has joined as loan officer at Sun Trust Mortgage in Roanoke.

**Matt Huff** has been appointed as an associate board member at Member One Federal Credit Union.



Meadows

**Shana Meadows** has been promoted to Vice President Risk Management at Member One Federal Credit Union.

## LEGAL FRONT

**Brooke Rosen** of Johnson, Rosen & O'Keefe was named young lawyer of the year by the Roanoke Bar Association.



McKell

**James McKell Jr.** has joined as an associate in the Business and Corporate Practice Group at Woods Rogers.

## WELLNESS FRONT

**Dr. Ross Taylor** has been named chief medical officer for Danville Regional Medical Center.

**Dr. Paul Lenkowski Jr.** has joined LewisGale Physicians in Salem.

**Dr. Fletcher Matthews** has opened Southwest Virginia Nephrology Medicine in Roanoke.

**Tory Baker, C.O.** has joined Asthma & Allergy Center of Roanoke.

**Kimberly Lunsford** has received the 2015 Emergency Dietetic Leader award from the Virginia Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

## DEVELOPMENT FRONT

**Michael Price** was named Service Technician of the Year and **Ron Smith** was named Service Support Technician of the Year by HHHunt Property Management / Foxridge and Hethwood Apartment Homes.



Duffy

**Gail Duffy** has been named settlement processor at Virginia Title Center.



Martin

**Amanda Martin, Matt Spencer, and Elizabeth Simpson**



Spencer



Simpson

of CMG Leasing have earned their NALP (National Apartment Leasing Professional) designation from the National Apartment Association.

**Mary Kaye Willis** has been promoted to director, property services, overseeing western Virginia; **Jenny Perkins** has been promoted to portfolio manager; and **Brian Eades** has joined as assistant portfolio manager at Cushman & Wakefield | Thalheimer's Property Services Group.

## RETAIL/SERVICE FRONT



Harris

**Nelson Harris and**



Cochran



Strickland



Harrison

**Brent Cochran and Wayne Strickland** have joined the board of directors and **Judith Harrison** was re-elected to the board at Freedom First Credit Union.



**Britt**

**Donna Hopkins Britt** have been designated as Certified Funeral Celebrants / Life Tribute Specialists for Oakey's Funeral Service & Crematory, a new service to assist families not affiliated with a local church or pastor.

**Caleb Pierce** has joined Firefli digital



**Pierce**

team as a front end developer.

## *Have a career announcement?*

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

**Amy Ward** has joined as account executive at WDBJ 7 television.

## EDUCATION FRONT

**William "Mac" Babb III** has been named deputy chief of police, assistant director of



**Babb**

security for Virginia Tech.



## ROANOKE - BLACKSBURG TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

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# Career FRONT



Wagoner

**Heather Wagoner** has been named director of student engagement and campus life at Virginia Tech.



Sarangi

International Kenneth K. King Award.

**Grant Holmes** has been appointed chairman of SCORE Roanoke chapter.



Patton

Past Chair, **Mike Patton**, Town of Floyd.

Opera Roanoke officers for the new term include **Vernon Danielsen**, president; **Dr. Bruce Johnson**, vice president; **Carol Danielsen**, secretary; **George Lester**, treasurer; and newly elected managing trustees **Richard Macher**, **Barbara von Claparede-Crola**, **Lorraine Lange**, **Fourd Kemper**, **Frank Carter**, **Jeffrey Marks**, **Betsy Head**, **Bruce Johnson**; and newly elected consulting trustees **David Kunca** and **Priscilla Richardson**.

## CULTURE FRONT



Wise

**Chris Wise** has been named assistant vice president for student affairs at Virginia Tech.



Cally Smith

**Cally Smith** has been named director of membership and branding strategies of the Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Sullivan



Carpenter



Law



Perdue

**Rick Perdue**, professor of hospitality and tourism management at Virginia Tech, received a lifetime achievement award.



Bart Smith

**Bart Smith** has joined as director of the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center.



Bopp

## MUNICIPAL FRONTS

**Jonathan Sweet**, county administrator of Grayson County, was named County Leader of the Year by American City and County magazine.

**Cyndee Moore** has been named regional vice president of operations for American National University in Indiana and Virginia, and National College in Tennessee.

**Sudipta Sarangi** has been named head of department of economics at Virginia Tech.



Phipps

**Bruce Phipps** received the Goodwill Industries

New River Valley Regional Commission has announced its 2015-16 officers: Chair, **Kevin Sullivan**, Virginia Tech; Vice-Chair, **Joe Carpenter**, Radford University; Treasurer, **Leon Law**, Giles County; Member-at-Large, **Charles Bopp**, Pulaski County;

*Compiled by Tom Field*



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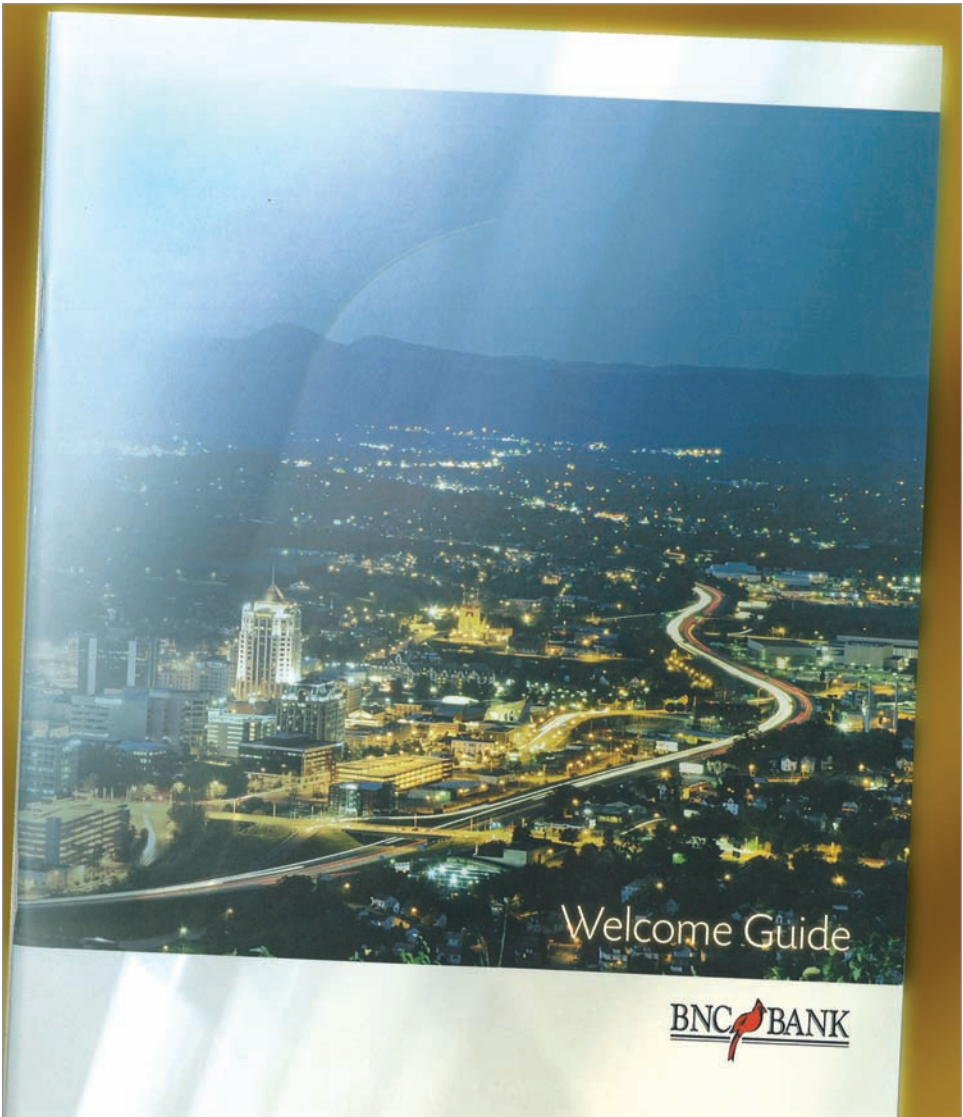
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Valley Bank customers received a 50 page Welcome Guide from BNC Bank

*Bank bigger*

**BNC Bancorp** of North Carolina has completed its purchase of Roanoke's Valley Bank; the new BNC Bank entity now combines 58 offices in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and produces an estimated \$5.2 billion in total assets.

*Riding coach*

**Wells Fargo** announced it plans to hire more than

500 people at its operations center in Roanoke County.

*Exploring a plan, again*

**Explore Park** will get another master plan as Roanoke County has hired Wallace, Roberts & Todd planning firm in Philadelphia to develop a feasible strategy for the outdoor recreational site; a significant tourist type theme park was planned

in the mid 1980s that failed to materialize.

*Last slice*

**Cork and Crust** pizza parlor at 16 West in downtown Roanoke has closed.

*Taubman times*

Roanoke's **Taubman Museum of Art** has announced new hours of operation: Wednesday

through Saturday from 10am–5pm; Sunday from 12pm–5pm; and open until 9pm for first Fridays and third Thursdays of the month.

*Blacksburg's prime property tease*

The former **Blacksburg Middle School** site on Main Street is being considered for a mixed-use commercial development via a proposal from a developer

working with Fiddler's Green Partners; a previous project with Modea and other stakeholders failed two years ago, and both Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg are considering vested interests.

### *Ponying up at the opera*

**Opera Roanoke** is making headlines again after The Secular Society patron/donor issued a \$40,000 matching pledge in mid-July; this following a successful Spring challenge and recent \$100,000 anonymous donation; Roanoke's professional opera

company is in the midst of celebrating its 40th anniversary.

### *Large complex east Roanoke*

Blue Ridge Companies, a developer based in High Point, NC, and developer of The Orchards in Roanoke County, is planning to build a 324-unit apartment complex on Orange Avenue, east side of the City, pending rezoning.

### *Fore! stall*

**Vista Links** municipal golf course in Buena Vista continues to struggle with

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a debt service and dispute between the City and ACA Financial Guaranty Corp.; municipal property was used as collateral, and the facility is not meeting its operating costs.

### *Leaseback*

**Tread Corp.**, a manufacturer of explosive-related equipment, sold its facility

in northeast Roanoke County, but is leasing it back; the sale was reported at \$2.7 million.

### *Spin off from advertising*

**Modea**, a digital ad agency in Blacksburg, has announced a major rebranding of its company; spinning off a software development service for

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**VT Dairy Science Complex - Kentland Farm**

wireless and mobile (with emphasis on healthcare applications), still headed by David Catalano and Aaron Herrington; newcomer Ted Boezart from Publicis advertising will lead the existing Modea.

---

#### *VT got milk*

Virginia Tech has opened its new **Dairy Science Complex – Kentland Farm**, an 1,800-acre site with 11,900-square-foot milking parlor, computerized milk-monitoring, 46,000-

square-foot barn for 232 cows.

---

#### *Snuffed out*

**Mundet-Hermetite**, a manufacturer of cigarette components, is closing its plant in Buena Vista; affecting about 50 employees; the company citing declining cigarette sales as the reason.

---

#### *Big contributions*

**Washington & Lee University** raised more than \$542 million in its

five year campaign; reported to be the second largest fundraising amount by a liberal arts college in the U.S.

---

#### *New inhabitants sought*

Roanoke's **Poe & Cronk** Real Estate Group has joined with Colliers International to represent the selling of the Norfolk Southern regional headquarters office building in downtown Roanoke; the 11-story granite structure was built in 1992 and became available with the departure of nearly 500

jobs when the railroad announced departmental consolidations to Atlanta and Norfolk.

---

#### *State in black*

**Governor McAuliffe** announced in mid-July that the State of Virginia has a \$553 million budget surplus for the Fiscal Year 2014-2015; the largest on record.

---

#### *Childhood assistance*

**Family Services of Roanoke Valley**

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Also get more stories and pictures at [morefront.blogspot.com](http://morefront.blogspot.com)

(www.fsrv.org) has started a "What About Me?" support group for middle school-age children with an incarcerated parent; the Pew Charitable Trust reports one in 28 children have a parent in jail.



### *Hoppy treasure map*

**Virginia Tourism** presents an interactive map of local breweries on its website at [www.virginia.org/craftbeer](http://www.virginia.org/craftbeer) including the craft brews in our region; be sure to zoom in at the concentrated areas as some pins are right on top of each other.

### **Find your beer!**

**Kollmorgen** of Radford; and **Premium Steel** of Roanoke; these companies increased their international sales by an average of 36 percent during their two years in the Program. The VALET program began in 2002 and now has 211 graduates.

are planning a merger to complete in 2016.

### *Fireflies on the move*

**Firefli** digital media agency in Roanoke has moved from its studio at the Grandin CoLab to a new office at 215 Market Street in the downtown City Market, above Adobes Mexican Grill.

virginia.org) has received a \$1 million gift via Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, via board chairman Barbara Fried.

### *Internet money channel widens*

Virginia's State Corporation Commission has announced the regulations for business fundraising through **crowdfunding** have been relaxed to allow up to \$2 million in contributions.

### *International grads*

Virginia Economic Development Partnership's (VEDP) Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) Program announced 12 graduates of its latest two year program, including **Dynamic Aviation** of Rockingham County;

### *Central VA marriage announcement*

**Region2000**, an economic development facilitator organization and the **Lynchburg Regional Chamber of Commerce**

\$1M to VA's reference book

**Encyclopedia Virginia** ([www.encyclopedia](http://www.encyclopedia))

*Compiled by Tom Field*

**Additional FRONT Notes posted online at [moreFRONT.blogspot.com](http://moreFRONT.blogspot.com).**  
 Read extended versions of items listed above, plus photos and many more current listings each day on the [moreFRONT](http://moreFRONT) blog, also available by link at [vbFRONT.com](http://vbFRONT.com).



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Uber driver Mike Scarry drives to the next pick up

## Uber confessions >

### Executive Summary:

*Ride sharing app Uber has finally made it to Roanoke; our embedded reporter takes you along for a Friday night ride.*

By Anne Sampson

For those of you not in the know, there's a new way to get from Point A to Point B in the Roanoke and New River Valleys. It's called Uber.

Headquartered in San Francisco and available in 57 countries, Uber is a prime example of a sharing economy. It's a transportation service, but there are no cabs or buses. Instead, individuals



all photos: Anne Sampson

drive their own vehicles as contractors or “Uber partners”, and riders use a smartphone app to summon the closest driver when they need a ride.

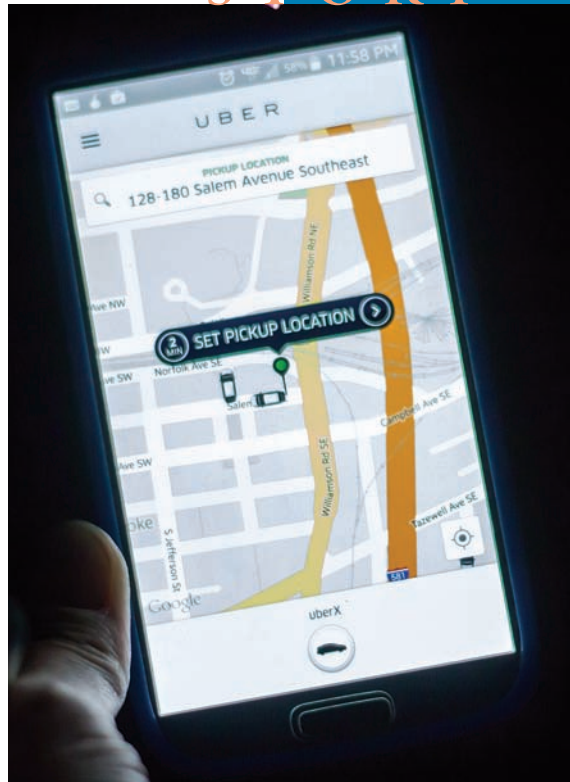
On the rainy Friday night, I rode with Uber driver Mike Scarry from 10 pm until 2 am. Mike lives in Christiansburg and usually drives in Blacksburg, but he came to Roanoke for our ride-along.

Mike, who owns Hometown Security in Salem and also works as a project manager for McGrady-Lambert Electric, started driving for Uber in March. “It’s flexible,” he says. “I usually drive two weekends a month. With my job, I don’t always know what time I’ll get off work so it’s hard to go in on a schedule.” Mike and his wife Shilah have two children, Ireland, 4, and Tom, 9 months, and Shilah



Cab waiting for fares at Corned Beef





**The Uber driver app shows the location of other Uber cars, as well as the next pick up**

stays home with them. Income from Uber helps make that possible.

"Shilah's fabulous," says Mike. "She takes care of everything at home." Shilah was featured in a 2007 Roanoke Times article when she was working at Rick Woodson Honda as a mechanic.

Mike picks me up at 10 pm, driving a silver Honda Odyssey van with a car seat in the back. He shows me the Uber driver app on his dash-mounted smartphone.

"I can see the other Uber drivers and their locations," he says, which makes a little strategizing possible.

At 10:24, he gets a 'ping'. "There's our first real ride," he says.

We pick up Bryan and Kerri at Soaring Ridge Craft Brewery on Shenandoah Avenue. They're ready to head home. Mike offers them water from a cooler in the back.

"Uber is easy to deal with," says Kerri, "and it's interesting to meet the drivers."



**(L to R) Charles, Elizabeth, Stephanie and Hunter seem to be typical Uber users: 25 and under, tech savvy, native to smartphones and app use**

They've tried cab services. "Going through a cab company is just not good. They say they'll be there in 10 minutes and it's 45."

Uber users connect their accounts to a credit card, and the app automatically figures the fare and charges the card. Uber takes \$1 off the top, which goes to driver background checks. The next 20% goes to Uber, and the driver gets the rest. Uber's insurance covers the car when it's carrying passengers. In between fares, Mike's Geico ride-sharing policy kicks in.

At 11 pm, another ping. This time we pick up Lee, Randy, Mike and Scott at Jimmy Sardine's on Memorial Avenue and drop them at Fork in the Alley on Crystal Spring.

"Definitely cleaner than a cab," the guys agree. "Smells better."

Our 11:25 pm ping is Elizabeth, Charles, Hunter and Stephanie, whom we pick up at home and drop off at Billy's Ritz on Salem Avenue. Charles has given a lot of thought to Uber.

"They're timely and safe," he says, "and there's accountability. I've used Uber 100 times and had two problems, which were taken care of immediately." He likens Uber to bitcoin, a digital currency which operates peer-to-peer, without the intermediary of a bank. "It's exciting," he says. "In the next 10 to 20 years more businesses will operate outside the corporate shell."

We hit a lull after that, which is typical for this hour, Mike says. At 12:40, we drop off some promo cards at the Wasena Tap Room on Wasena Avenue (\$20 off your first ride!), and at 12:45, we get a ping from the Tap Room.



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Mike waits for his passengers at Corned Beef and Co.

We are taking Amy and Paul home. "Uber is wildly convenient," says Amy, "and I love that it's an app. And no Dooies (DUIs)." I have been reminding riders to rate their driver. Uber requires drivers to maintain a 4.6 out of 5 rating. Mike's rating is 4.9. He also has to rate the riders before he can continue driving.

The heavy rain slows down and Mike says that this is going to hurt us. By 1:15, we're circling the block at Corned Beef and Co., on Jefferson Street, along with all the local cab services. We find a parking place and wait. At Corned Beef, the party has spilled onto the sidewalk. A uniformed police officer stands among the crowd and a police van circles among the cabs. At 1:43, we get a ping from Corned Beef.


Although the Uber app will notify the rider when their car arrives, showing a photo of the driver, the car and a license number, Mike usually calls the rider.

"Take your time," he says. "I'm out front in a silver Odyssey." He opens the door, gets out of the van, and waits. Five girls trickle out of Corned Beef. One has to finish a cigarette. Mike doesn't allow smoking in the car.

Amy, Samantha, Amelia, Haley and Alyssa use Uber "because we are responsible adults who don't drink and drive. No DUIs!" There is much laughter, singing and taking of selfies as Mike drives them home.

By 2 am, Mike says we'll call it a night. He's made \$50 in 4 hours. On a good weekend in Blacksburg, during the school year, he might make \$250-\$300 in 10 hours.

The typical Uber user is 25 and under, comfortable with smartphones and apps. They prefer the personal feeling of "riding with someone" to calling a professional driver, and the app makes it easy to split a fare. All of the female riders asked Mike about himself, even learning the names of his children.

"People are pretty nice," says Mike. "And nobody has thrown up in the car." 

## Advertiser Index

|  |    |                                |         |
|--|----|--------------------------------|---------|
| AAF / Roanoke .....                            | 38 | Duncan Audi .....              | 63      |
| Ameriprise Financial .....                     | 38 | Ethos .....                    | BC      |
| Berryfield .....                               | 38 | The Glebe .....                | 59      |
| Bethel Ridge .....                             | 38 | MKB/Burchett & Dickinson ..... | 49      |
| Brandon Oaks .....                             | 35 | Opera Roanoke .....            | 3       |
| Carilion Clinic .....                          | 2  | Poe & Cronk .....              | 25      |
| Citizens .....                                 | 53 | The Proofing Prof .....        | 38      |
| CoLab .....                                    | 38 | RBTC .....                     | 38 & 47 |
| Creekmore Law Firm .....                       | 23 | Richfield .....                | 21      |
| Crowning Touch Senior<br>Moving Services ..... | 38 | VCOM .....                     | 51      |
| Davis H. Elliot Company .....                  | 38 | Donna Wallace–Stylist .....    | 38      |
|  |    | Woods Rogers .....             | 4       |

“ ”  
Bacon, if crisp, can be eaten with  
the fingers — Page 19

“ ”  
I don't want to see older adults living  
outside of our community — Page 21

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