



Valley Business
FRONT

**FOR THE UP AND COMING
AND ALREADY ARRIVED**

\$3 • Vol I: ISSUE 7 • APRIL 09

FRONTthinking

Fashion

What is
professional
attire?

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WELCOME to the FRONT

Somebody asked us the other day if we had any plans to concentrate our coverage on youthful business people in the future, much as other publications have done. We paused for a moment, then in our snarkiest voice said, "No, we're a business magazine not a comic book."

OK, we weren't serious, but you have to admit it's a good line. Truth be told, though, we don't have any special plans to appeal specifically to youth. Or to women. Or to minorities. Or union members. Or to rich old white men. We want them all because they are a genuine reflection of our readership, of the population of our region, of what business looks like.

You can look at our staff and contributors photos and see what we're talking about. Young and old; men and women; minorities and WASPS; liberals and conservatives; SUV drivers and scooter riders; owners and entry-level talent. We have them all right here and because of that we believe we get a good read and a good sounding on what makes life interesting in these parts and what's important to know.

"Diversity" is not just a word for HR, a word that when used in work seminars cuts you some slack with the federal regulators. It is an attitude, a philosophy, a smart way of doing business. That's what we have in mind when we say, "No, we're not concentrating on any one group. We're concentrating on them all because they are equally important."



Tom Field



Dan Smith

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Valley Business FRONT

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A *Passion* for Professional *Fashion*

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It's **'FAIRLAWN'**
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!



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*PEANUT BUTTER
LAWYER WORKS
STICKY CASE*



Page 38

Fix Your Antiques!

Valley Business FRONT

MARCH

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Courtney Phillips



Dick Robers

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 meet as a group periodically during the 18 months of the first board's service. It will turn over every year and a half.

The board will be given the task of helping FRONT understand the issues and develop coverage. "We're journalists," says Editor Dan Smith, "and not business experts. This group of distinguished business professionals—whose range in age, experience, level and specialty is impressive—will give us a solid handle on how business runs and what the primary issues and key players are in this region. My guess is that our coverage of business will be especially useful because of this group of people."

CONTRIBUTORS



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Leigh Ann Roman



Dan Smith



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Greg Vaughn

Biographies and contact information on each contributor are provided on Page 77.

2008 / 09 Members

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Warner Dalhouse retired banker, community activist
Cory Donovan NewVa Corridor Technology Council
Nanci Hardwick Schultz-Creehan
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George Kegley retired journalist, community activist
Terri Jones Access PR
Cynthia Lawrence Design Marketing
Stuart Mease Roanoke City
Mary Miller Interactive Design & Development
Bill Rakes Gentry, Locke, Rakes and Moore
Court Rosen Walnut Creek Development, Roanoke City Council
Jay Turner J.M. Turner Construction
Ed Walker Regeneration Partners
John Williamson RGC Resources

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.



Lori White



Joel S. Williams

“blogging about
your company...
can cost you a
job. — Page 19



Kathy Baske-Young: “You carry yourself differently when you are dressed well.”

Dan Smith

A *Professional* Passion for Fashion

Looking
the part >

Executive Summary:
Regardless of what the economy is doing, the way you look is an important part of who you are as a professional, a job applicant, as a ladder-climbing corporate type. Nobody escapes it.

By Kathy Surace

Today’s professional business attire is as varied as the many types of businesses in operation. At one time, a suit and tie were required dress to conduct business. However, we now realize that being properly dressed concerns more than clothing design.

Being properly attired includes:

- Considering the client and dressing to make her feel at ease.
- Dressing for the work site, i.e. architecture or engineering.
- Dressing for safety, as in manufacturing.
- Projecting conservatism and trustworthiness, as in banking, law, or accounting.
- Conveying creativity and knowledge of a specialized field, i.e. fashion and media.
- Expressing “thinking outside the box” attitudes, as in advertising and marketing.



Mimi Coles of Permalite: “My advice is to shine your shoes.”

Dan Smith

Experts agree it’s best to decide what level of formal or casual attire is appropriate for your business or industry. Use common sense: if you have to walk through a construction site three days a week, then jeans or khakis and a collared shirt are appropriate. If your office is in the Wachovia Tower and your clients are valued investors, you will do well to dress in a business suit. If you are unsure, better to be too dressed up than too dressed down, those who know will tell you.

Today these differences are good reasons to dress uniquely to meet the demands of each profession or business. While many different outfits are considered proper business attire, the region’s best-dressed people agree they all have these points in common:

- Professional clothing should be the best quality you can afford and current design.



It is not necessary to spend a lot on business attire to impress.

—Mimi Coles

FRONTList15: Best Dressed Execs

Ed Hall of Hall Associates and Cynthia Lawrence of Design Marketing in Roanoke are our Best Dressed of the Best Dressed. Presented here in alphabetical order are the men and women who have a reputation for always looking professionally attired for their industry.

Men

Ed Hall, Hall Associates



The Others:

Glenn Austin, Chemsolv, Inc.
 Vinod Chachra, VTLS
 Nick Conte, Woods Rogers
 Barry Henderson, Suntrust
 Mike Kemp, Meridian Group - Smith Barney
 Lee Mastin, MKB Realtors
 Pat Matthews, Mailtrust
 Randall Neely, Joran’s
 Mike Pace, Gentry, Locke, Rakes and Moore
 Tyler Pugh, Wachovia Securities
 Gordon Shapiro, Shapiro & Kurtin
 Brent Watts, WDBJ 7
 Dennis Weiserbs, Gastroenterology Consultants
 Bart Wilner, Entre Computers

Honorable Mention

Jim Shaver, Goodwill of the Valleys
 Jim Sears, Center in the Square
 Olin Melchionna, Spilman Thomas & Battle
 Jay Warren, WSLS 10
 Lonnie Wood, pharmaceutical sales

continued to Page 10

FRONTList15: Best Dressed Execs

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Women

Cynthia Lawrence, Design
Marketing

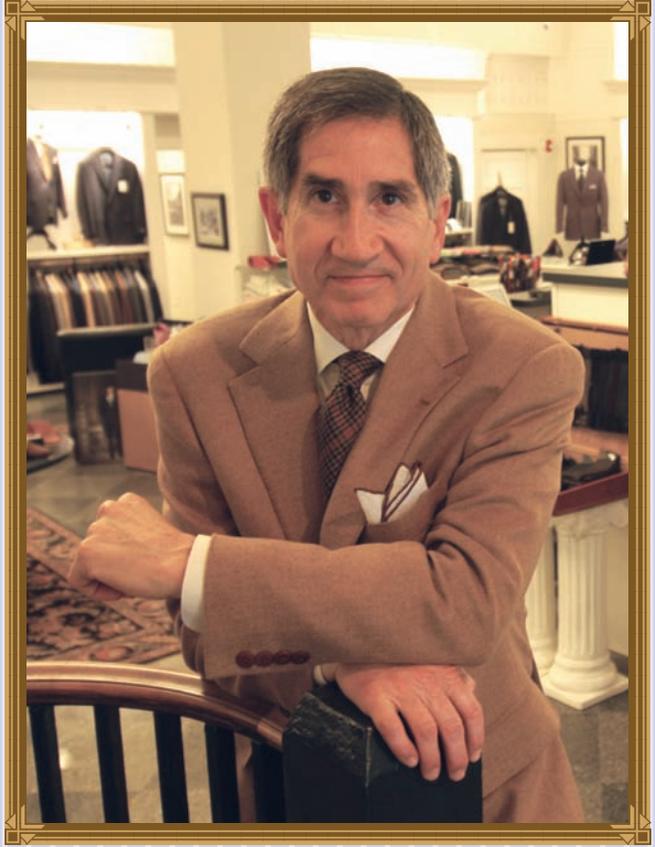


The Others:

Nancy Agee, Carilion
Kathy Baske-Young, Blue
Ridge Resources
Judith Chambers, Lewis-Gale
Mimi Coles, Permatile
Callie Dalton, Callie Dalton &
Associates
Nancy Gray, Hollins
University
Nanci Hardwick, Schultz-
Creehan Holdings
Kathy Kronau, Shenandoah
Life
Jill Livesay, Advance Auto
Kim Snyder, Valley Bank
Susan Still, Hometown Bank
Kimberly Templeton,
Taubman Museum of Art
Karen Waldron, Fralin &
Waldron, Inc.
Linda Webb, United Way

Honorable Mention

Mary Miller, IDD
Peggy Mayfield, Olsten
Ginny Jarrett, Davenport &
Company
Valeta Pittman, Halifax
Fine Furnishings
Beth Doughty, Roanoke
Regional Partnership



Dan Smith

Larry Davidson: Some men are “leaving the tie off but still wearing a suit.”

- It should be clean and pressed. Wrinkled or dirty clothing is unprofessional and disrespectful to clients. Even uniforms and work boots should be cleaned daily.
- No frayed edges or holes should be evident.
- Wear clothing properly, shirttail tucked in, shoelaces tied, shirt buttoned, belt through belt loops, tie properly tied, etc. Wearing the right clothing in a sloppy manner does not look professional.
- Leather dress shoes should be shined.

In today's tight economy, proper business dress is more important than ever. Nancy Hardwick, CEO of Schultz-Creehan in Blacksburg, notes, “Professional business dress indicates a level of sophistication and competency.”

Proper dress conveys respect for the company and the customer. In a global economy, proper business dress shows respect for other cultures and a certain standard of appearance. It is good business to avoid offending potential customers.

Dressing well for business can indicate that you are a team



Dan Smith

Doug Kidd of Tom Jones: “Khaki has no place in business casual.”

player, indicating pride in your work and often conveying your level of training and education.

Kathy Baske-Young of Blue Ridge Resources in Roanoke, works with leadership teams and future leaders in her job as an executive coach. She believes that “professional business attire sets you apart. It is part of your overall image. You carry yourself differently when you are dressed well.”

So what is professional business dress in 2009? The Wall Street Journal recently reported a return to the business suit, likely as a result of recent economic woes. The new business suit silhouette is slimmer and sleeker than in recent decades. Narrower at the shoulder, waist and trouser cuffs, it exudes a clean and streamlined feel.

In our region, Charley Campbell has seen a change in his customers lately. He estimates that at Men’s Wearhouse at least 40 percent of his clients are opting for a suit this season rather than business casual.

“ ”

A weak economy demands a strong wardrobe.

—Doug Kidd



Dan Smith

Men's Warehouse's Charley Campbell: Men are looking more to the suit in this economy.

If employed, they want to look sharp to survive any layoffs. If they are in a job search, stiff competition forces them to use every available tool to enhance their resume. If they run their own company, their appearance must convey professionalism. As a result, business at Men's Warehouse has remained constant, seeming to have avoided the slowdown other retailers are experiencing.

Change is seen at custom clothiers in Roanoke, too. Doug Kidd, haberdasher at Tom James, speaks of "a return to power dressing and an up-tick toward suits."

He suggests a business casual look that is a business suit with an open-collared shirt and no tie. He believes that the khaki trouser and navy blazer business casual look is predictable and needs updating. In his estimation, "Khaki has no place in business casual."

He encourages his clients to try the suit with open-collared shirt for a fresher look. Doug helps his clients add a personal touch to their wardrobe by trying unusual color and pattern in their suit, shirt and tie, resulting in "sharp casual." According to Doug, "A weak economy demands a strong wardrobe."

Larry Davidson of Davidson's in Roanoke agrees that these



Recognize her? Nanci Hardwick of Schultz-Creehan is our FRONTcover model. The Elizabethan hair style was our idea.

changes “can be seen in our market also. First, more men are taking their current positions more seriously, many more are starting to interview, and slowly younger men are rejecting the casual “khaki twill pants with a sport shirt” look of the previous generation. They are choosing from the beginning a different way to dress casually that never included “cotton twills”. A look that includes a suit, is seen at business meetings in Roanoke as well. “Some men who might have worn a suit with a tie are leaving the tie off but still wearing a suit, having seen this look in other places,” Davidson says.

Women’s business attire is harder to find in our region, with retailers stocking more casual wear and less professional attire. While retailers believe that more casual clothing is in demand in our region, businesswomen indicate that they need professional attire but find few retailers offering it locally. Men can do “one-stop shopping” for their business wardrobes, but women often must shop at various stores, trunk shows, or online to find all that they need.

““”

Professional business dress indicates a level of sophistication and competency.

—Nanci Hardwick

FRONTList of Top 5 Clothiers

Clothiers that focus on professional dress are often off the beaten path. Here we spotlight a few shops that provide local business people with attire appropriate to their business and a high level of customer service. In alphabetical order.

Menswear

Davidson’s, Roanoke. Custom clothing with superior styling and fabrics. Exceptional customer service and quality. Alterations and personal shopping.

Garrett’s, Radford. Serves the clothing needs of discerning men in the NRV Complete line of custom shirts and suits. Complementary alterations, wardrobe planning, and custom ordering.

Jos. A. Bank, Roanoke. Nationally-known clothier. Prices ranging from medium to high. Good value. Catalog for sizes not available in-store. Corporate discount available.

Men’s Wearhouse, Roanoke. Medium-priced clothier with wide range of suits, shirts and ties. Dependable customer service and great sales.

Tom James, Roanoke. High-end custom clothing for impeccable dressers. Variety of fabric selections and endless design features for a one-of-a-kind suit. Superior product and excellent service. By appointment.

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Top 5 Clothiers

continued from Page 13

Womenswear

Bonomo's, Blacksburg. High-end clothing collection that is timeless. Shown by appointment.

Et Cetera, Roanoke County. Designer fashions in classic styles sold four times yearly by home-based consultants. Colors carryover from season to season.

Frances Kahn, Roanoke. For the discerning fashionist who loves and can afford the designer look. Top-notch customer service. Understated styles and colors for seasonal carryover.

Meg's, Radford. Upscale women's clothier in the NRV. Numerous trunk shows. Complementary alterations, wardrobe planning & consulting, and custom ordering.

Talbot's, Roanoke. Collections in classic colors that mix-and-match solids and prints in a variety of pants, jackets, tops. Useful for wardrobe- building and travel packing. Catalog available: misses, petites, plus sizes.



Jane Bonomo: "Women on the job always need to wear a jacket."

Jane Dalier

Clothier Jane Bonomo of Bonomo's in Blacksburg, knows it is important to give customers what that they want and she seems to have succeeded in that. She has a loyal following of customers who check in regularly. Says Jane, "I get feedback from my customers on how they need to look for their job. Often, their basics are still in good shape and they just need some new jackets and accessories to spice up the basics they already have. Women on the job always need to wear a jacket."

Typical business dress—for women or men—is a matching suit in a mid-weight wool or wool blend with a smooth finish in a neutral color. Variations on this theme are numerous. Central to all business dress is neutral color, refined fabric and a classic design and fit. Bright colors, coarse fabrics, and a busy or trendy design create a more casual appearance. Jewelry should be a classic design—nothing dangly—and just a few pieces suffice. Understated fabric, design, and jewelry allow the focus to be on business.

When Mimi Coles of Permalite shops for business attire she looks for classic, understated styles that she can mix and match with other suits and separates in her wardrobe. She invests in classic jewelry and accessories that remain stylish for years and make simple outfits eye-catching. She avoids

trendy or too-casual pieces for her business wardrobe, even though she is in construction. She favors clothiers that carry colors from season to season to coordinate with those in her closet.

Most important, she keeps her wardrobe in top condition. Mimi believes that "it is not necessary to spend a lot on business attire to impress. My advice is to shine your shoes. I look at a person's shoes and if they took the time to shine them, then I know they pay attention to detail."

And, after all that, it's about detail, big and small. 

Fitness and fashion >

By Kathy Surace

Central to a polished professional image are fitness, healthy skin, good nutrition and plenty of sleep.

Fitness centers can provide personal trainers who can plan a personalized regimen of exercise.

Spas abound in our region that provide facials, massages and skin treatments to keep that healthy glow.

Dermatologists keep the skin flawless and repair sun damage.

Nutritionists can address vitamin deficiencies with supplements and dietary suggestions.

The best resume and the most expensive clothing cannot make up for a stressed and neglected body and spirit. Plan regular visits to health and wellness professionals to keep your physical assets in top shape.



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Signs say “Radford,” but the heart says “Fairlawn.”

all photos: Tim Jackson

It's

'FAIRLAWN'

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Executive Summary:

While Fairlawn is its own community and part of Pulaski County, many New River Valley residents commonly refer to the area's businesses as being part of Radford. Many residents and business owners want that to change.

By Tim W. Jackson

In Fairlawn, an identity crisis >

Drive along Route 11 in the Pulaski County community of Fairlawn, and you'll see signs such as Radford Plaza and Radford Animal Hospital. Many New River Valley residents describe a string of businesses such as Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Motor Mile Speedway, Sheetz, and Wendy's as being in Radford.

In February, a handful of concerned citizens met at the Motor Mile Speedway to discuss how the oft-overlooked Fairlawn could have its own identity and how they could inform people that the aforementioned businesses—including those with a Radford moniker—are indeed in Fairlawn.

Misunderstandings often arise because Fairlawn uses the Radford zip code of 24141. Most Fairlawn residents and

businesses also have Radford phone numbers and some purchase their electricity from the City of Radford.

Lifetime Fairlawn resident Benny Keister entertained and educated the small crowd at the February meeting with an overview of Fairlawn's history, going back to the 1940s when the Radford Arsenal came to the Montgomery County side of the New River and a community built up in Pulaski County to support it. Even back then, the "Radford" name was used in the wrong places.

Scott Arnett of Horace Mann Insurance in Fairlawn and president of the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce led the February meeting designed to discover ways to recognize Fairlawn as its own entity. Later, Arnett described a community as being defined by the people that live, work, and recreate in that area.

"The businesses that serve that community, such as retailers, should be concerned with the people that reside there and respect their need to have and identify with a community area," Arnett says. "Businesses can set the tone by being a viable part of that community by participating in treat trails, a Christmas Festival of lights, adopting a road, landscaping a median, or being part of a chamber or community action committee."

Arnett says, "Fairlawn is acceptable to the Post Office as being the city while using the historical Radford ZIP code," Arnett says. "We are not asking businesses to change their address ZIP code, but simply adopt a 'pro-Fairlawn attitude' out of respect for the people that live there and for potential customers or clients trying to find them. Every community deserves and benefits from having its own identity."

While Fairlawn does have a post office, Pulaski County Administrator Peter Huber says it is a contracted post office and not an official part of the U.S. Postal Service. Postal service for Fairlawn still goes through Radford.

Shawn Utt, Community Development Director for Pulaski County, says, "The sense of community pride needs to be instilled into the residents and business owners of the Fairlawn area."



Benny Keister



Scott Arnett



Peter Huber



Peggy White



“Fairlawn” occasionally adorns a sign.

Tim Jackson



Every community deserves and benefits from having its own identity.

—Scott Arnett

Utt says that he would like to see the Fairlawn become a town or village: “The County government ... should support the effort, but not necessarily be a leader in the effort.”

Robert Hiss, assistant county administrator for Pulaski County looks at the logistics of serving Fairlawn and helping it to develop its own identity. “The County will continue to serve Fairlawn by recognizing its density versus other areas of the county,” he says. “The county is working ... to coordinate the adoption of certain medians for landscaping improvements. This small act will make a positive difference in the

overall appearance of the community.”

Pulaski Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Peggy White has been leading the charge to build an identity for Fairlawn. Hiss says that organizations such as the fire department, homeowner’s associations, churches, and union halls need to play a crucial role.

Says Fairlawn business owner Ken Bowling, “I think the first step should be some type of survey to determine if the Fairlawn businesses agree there is an identity problem. If there is, are they willing to support a program to change it?”



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Rules for social networking >

When it comes to landing a job, it's been said often that it's not what you know but who you know that will help you succeed. These days, more than a perfect cover letter and resume is needed to land a job. For recruiters and job seekers, social networking sites are increasingly popular.

Jim Durbin uses social media to recruit candidates for various employers. He says job searches are meant to be taken seriously for social media users. Linked in is the most professional of the social networking sites.

General tips for people who are using social networking to job hunt are as follows:

- Provide information that is relevant to your job search.
- Update your postings regularly.
- Express your interest in a field or company.

Having a blog may or may not be beneficial, depending upon what topics you write about. You won't impress a prospective employer if you write about how you like to party every night and drink to excess.

Bloggers should be aware that once you've landed a job, blogging about your company in a positive or negative manner can cost you a job. Check out the Electronic Frontier Foundation's great information on how to blog safely.

Be certain that your prospective employers will research social networking sites and blog sites when considering a prospective employee. You want your social networking site to be a results oriented marketing tool. If there's anything on your Facebook posted that you would not want posted on a billboard alongside a busy interstate, remove it.

Other tips for job seekers from job seeking expert and writer Alison Doyle are listed below:

- Consider creating a personal Web site if you're unemployed specifically related to your job search including your resume, samples, your portfolio, and certifications.



Business Etiquette

By Donna Dilley

Executive Summary:

The approach is serious and the rules are as precise as they are in person.

- Don't list your blog on your resume unless it's relevant to the career field or position you are interviewing for. For example, if you are seeking employment as a financial planner and you have a personal finance blog, include it. If you have a blog about your dog, don't.
- Write a job search blog. There's a trend toward job seekers blogging to track their job search and market their skills.
- Be careful what you write. Keep in mind that just about anything that is online can be read by someone—or everyone. If you don't want the world to read what you've posted, make sure they can't. Don't put it online or post it anonymously. 

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Vinton

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540.890.5010

Mon-Sat 8-6, Sun 1-5

Roanoke

2303 Williamson Rd. NE

540.362.1868

Mon-Sat 8-6
Closed Sunday

HOLLINS

7650 Williamson Rd.

540.777.1230

Mon-Sat 8-6, Sun 1-5

Roanoke

3647 Brambleton Ave.

540.989.5245

Mon-Sat 8-6, Sun 1-5

Pay increase: The right perspective >

Dear Anne: *I work for a small business that has been affected by the current economic crisis. Money is tight and contracts are hard to come by. But I really need to increase my income because we have a new baby. I love my job, but it is necessary that I make more money. How do I approach the owner to ask for a raise?*

Dear Raise: Before you approach a company owner—or a boss, or a supervisor—for a raise, whether in the midst of an economic downturn or economic upturn, always ask this question first: “What’s in it for the company?”

From your point of view, you may need, merit and deserve a raise. From the company’s point of view, its budget includes you doing what you’re doing at the current rate. The company has a legitimate and basic business question to ask you: “How will paying you more money make more money for the company?”

That’s why, when you ask for a raise, you’ve got to pitch a project or a role that demonstrates your value and addresses what’s in it for the company.

As you think of ways you can use your strengths to be of greater value to the company, be careful of dreaming up projects or roles that will be more work. You’re already working full-time. Generate ideas that ask you to work in other ways, not more ways. Play to your strengths, not to your time, so you’ll be working well for your company and be home in time for dinner with your spouse and new baby.

Getting a Grip: As one of its employees, you’re an expert on your company. You’re also an expert on your own skills. Take that expertise up in a hypothetical airplane ride and look down on you, your company’s owner, and your company objectively. What could that person—you—do differently or other to make more money for that company and that owner? The answer is your pitch.

Your company’s owner may say no to your request for a raise. By seeing your own skills in a new way, however, you will have strengthened your understanding of what you can do. And by sharing your ideas, along with your request for a raise, you’ve demonstrated to the company’s owner that you are of current value, can be of future value, and you think you’re worth it. The owner may well have that in mind the next time raises are added to the budget. 



Workplace Advice

By Anne Giles Clelland

Executive Summary:
Need to start “Getting a Grip” on a personal problem at work?
E-mail your question to grip@handshake20.com.



Preparing for the job market >

Every spring college seniors find themselves facing the harsh reality of the job interview. This year it is even more important to make a good first impression. Competition for jobs is increasing. Dressing well for the interview can be one more advantage as the field of candidates is narrowed.

Many universities give their graduates a jump start by offering seminars on etiquette and proper dress through their career centers. Hollins University offers an annual etiquette dinner and business dress seminar to its students. Men's Wearhouse sponsors a "Dress for Success" program for young men through Virginia Tech, Roanoke College and Ferrum College. Radford University has an impressive spring seminar. With so many students taking advantage of these programs, it only makes sense to give serious thought to appearance before interviewing.

To make sure you are dressed appropriately for the interview, first consider the business itself. As Executive Coach Kathy Baske-Young says, "Look at the company you are interviewing with and think about not where you are, but what you want. Take interviewing very seriously. Ask yourself how you want to be perceived."

When preparing to be interviewed keep in mind these suggestions:

- Wear a suit for a job interview in a formal workplace. For a more casual workplace, men can wear khakis, a dress shirt and tie, and women can wear coordinated separates. Check the company's dress code to stay within its guidelines.
- Try on the clothing you want to keep and ask a trusted friend for an opinion. Retain only clothing that obviously flatters you.
- Make sure your clothing is freshly cleaned and pressed.
- Shine your shoes.
- Keep jewelry simple and wear just a few pieces.
- Avoid flashy styles or colors. Wear understated neutral colors to keep the focus on your qualifications.

Business Dress

By Kathy Surace

Executive Summary:
New college graduates will hit the job interview trail next month. Here are some clothes tips to put on your refrigerator.

- Above all, realize that professional business dress does not include jeans, collarless shirts, mini skirts, low-cut tops, sporting goods, athletic shoes, boots, hats, shorts, tank tops, or flip-flops.

Proper dress for the interview indicates that you have researched the company, respect its culture and will be a team player. Pressed clothes and shined shoes convey enthusiasm for the job and self-confidence.

If you are fortunate enough to find work at an enterprise that conducts business while allowing jeans, polo shirts and athletic shoes every day in the office—congratulations!

However, the rest of the world still calls for professional business dress. If you want to get ahead, Baske-Young reminds us, “Don’t dress for where you are now. Dress for the job you want.” 



Competition for jobs is increasing. Dressing well for the interview can be one more advantage

—Kathy Surace

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Liberty University fashion
Illustrator Brooke Kersey

Elizabeth Arden >

Compiled by Deborah Nason

Overview:

Elizabeth Arden, Inc. is a global ... beauty products company with an extensive portfolio of ... fragrance, skin care and cosmetics brands. Our ... fragrance portfolio includes ... celebrity, lifestyle and designer fragrances. It has a large central distribution facility in Roanoke.

Its operations are organized into the following reportable segments:

- *North America Fragrance—North America Fragrance segment sells fragrances to department stores, mass retailers and wholesalers in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. This segment also sells Elizabeth Arden products in department stores in Canada and Puerto Rico and to other selected retailers.*
- *International—International segment sells our portfolio of owned and licensed brands ... in approximately 90 countries outside of North America through perfumeries, boutiques, department stores and travel retail outlets worldwide.*
- *Other—Other reportable segment sells Elizabeth Arden products in department stores in U.S. and through the Red Door beauty salons.*

Excerpted from the company's annual report.

Market Commentary

It is generally agreed that Elizabeth Arden's performance is influenced by the fortunes of major retailers and airport stores, as well as foreign exchange rates.

February 5, 2009: Total sales [in 2Q08] fell 12.4 percent ... Incremental sales resulting from the recently acquired Liz Claiborne fragrance portfolio were not enough to offset the softness in the company's other brands, as retailers cut back on purchases significantly in their attempts to better manage inventory levels. Additionally, the company experienced softness in its travel retail business, driven by declines in airport traffic. Elizabeth Arden said it ended the quarter with excess inventory, which should take the next six months to resolve. ... "We expect continued pressure throughout the remainder of the fiscal year,

especially considering that the company has excess inventory to work through. However, we continue to believe that the firm will maintain a formidable presence in the long run."

[Source: Morningstar.com]

February 5, 2009: [Elizabeth Arden] expects net sales in FY09 to decline by 4-5 percent, or 1-2 percent excluding an expected unfavorable impact from foreign currency. [The company] maintains outlook provided in January 2009 and expects net sales to decrease by 1-3 percent for 2H09, or to increase by 1.5-3.5 percent excluding an expected unfavorable impact of foreign currency, as compared to the second half of the prior fiscal year. [Source: moneycentral.msn.com]

Executive Compensation

As of Nov. 12 2008 (basic compensation plus "other" compensation) from SEC Schedule 14A:

Name	Title	Amount
E. Scott Beattie	Chairman, CEO	\$2,457,847
Stephen J. Smith	EVP, CFO	\$871,870
Ronald L. Rolleston	EVP	\$756,086
Joel B. Ronkin	EVP	\$1,016,411
Jacobus A.J. Steffens	EVP	\$878,111

Board of Directors

Name	Primary Company	Age
E. Scott Beattie	Elizabeth Arden, Inc.	49
Fred Berens	Wachovia Securities, Inc.	65
Maura J. Clark	Direct Energy Services, LLC	49
Richard C.W. Mauran	Private Investor	76
William M. Tatham	NexJ Systems, Inc.	49
J.W. Nevil Thomas	Nevcorp	70
Paul West	Elizabeth Arden, Inc.	58

Institutional Stock Ownership

There is significant interest in RDEN by institutional investors. The 81.90 percent of the shares outstanding that RDEN controls represents a greater percentage of ownership than at almost any other company in the Household/Personal Care industry.

[Source: investing.businessweek.com]

Top Non-institutional Stockholders

Name	Shares held
Richard C.W. Mauran (director)	1,720,000
Fred Berens (director)	791,810
E. Scott Beattie (executive)	793,651
J.W. Nevil Thomas (director)	176,688

Sources

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 [part of corporate.elizabetharden.com]
 [investing.businessweek.com]

Note

This article is meant for information purposes only and is not intended as an investment guide.



Medical insurance premiums rise at a rate faster than inflation and rise at a rate faster than we're able to recoup through price increases to our customers.

—Glenn Thomsen, Davis H. Elliot



Glenn Thomsen

Dan Smith

Insurance: No longer a guarantee >

Executive Summary:

As profits dwindle or fall flat, businesses cope with rising health care costs.

By Jay Conley

The struggling economy has forced employers to take a close look at one of the benefits that full-time employees hold dear: health insurance.

An increasing number of small businesses, and even some big ones, are struggling to pay rising health premiums for their employees as profit margins are affected by poor economic conditions.

"Personally, from talking to small businesses, what we're seeing is, they're trying to cut costs because their profits are down," says Tommy Via, president of Brown Insurance in Blacksburg.

According to the National Coalition on Health Care, employers have seen a 120 percent increase in health insurance premiums since 1999.

"We, like the rest of the world, get frustrated with the fact that year after, medical insurance premiums rise at a rate faster than inflation and rise at a rate faster than we're able to recoup through price increases to our customers," says Glenn Thomsen, chief financial officer at Davis H. Elliot in Roanoke, a construction service provider that works primarily with utility companies.

Thomsen's company employs about 1,300 workers in 15 states, and is examining ways to reduce health care costs through employee wellness programs and alternative types of coverage.

Other companies are hiring workers from staffing agencies to avoid paying health insurance.

"I think it is a growing trend right now while the economy is this bad," says Coy Renick, president of The Renick Group, a Roanoke-based professional recruiting and staffing agency. "I'd say there's always been some need for it, but back last September when the banking industry started to fail, is when it really picked up."



Dan Smith

Coy Renick: Using staffing agencies is “a growing trend right now while the economy is this bad.”

Renick has 15 employees who pay for their own individual insurance policies. They’re on his payroll but work for other companies.

Across the nation last year, 49 percent of the smallest companies, those with three to nine employees, offered health benefits, according to an annual survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research and Educational Trust. That’s a 16 percent reduction since 2001.

Among those small businesses that provide health benefits, employees typically face higher deductibles and pay about \$1,100 more annually than workers in larger companies, according to the survey.

For workers whose employer doesn’t provide health benefits, there’s the option of buying an individual policy. The rates are based on an individual’s age, gender and overall health.

“For healthy people, individual coverage is sometimes a lot cheaper than group coverage,” says Kent Dodge, an employee benefits specialist with Brown Insurance.

Bigger companies, too, may be poised to switch from group coverage to individual coverage in the future.

“They’re getting to the point where they’re saying, I don’t think a group plan is something we’re going to be able to afford in the future,” says Dodge, who works with businesses in the Roanoke and New River Valleys.

Even insurance companies are looking at

how they insure their own employees.

“It’s something we’re constantly looking at,” says Via, noting that his own company’s insurance costs rose 30 percent last year. “Do we cut the benefits back some to save dollars? Do we look at other plans? Do we have our employees share

in the cost of the health insurance? There are options out there.”

Inevitably, companies may be forced to pass on more of their insurance costs to employees.

“There are some companies that go above and beyond to really take care of their employees, who are careful to soften the blow of a transition,” says Brooke Rosen, an attorney with Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore LLP who advises companies on employee benefit matters.

Since 2006, more companies are switching from a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) or Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) type of plan to a Health Savings Account (HSA) or Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA). Such plans offer health insurance with a tax-free savings account for paying health-care costs. But while the premiums are cheaper, the deductibles are often higher.

The plans, which Thomsen says Davis H. Elliot is considering as an option for next year, can save companies about 13 percent on an employee’s family coverage, according to the Kaiser Foundation.

“I would say in terms of the companies that are looking to make a change, that’s a very popular option,” says Rosen.

“For us,” Thomsen says, “it’s mostly a matter of trying to be fair with our employees and also making sure we’re competitive with what the other folks in our industry are doing.” 

It's a matter of perception vs. attitude >

Executive summary:

It's the same old mantra: create an investment plan and stick to it, even in times of great stress.

By Joel S. Williams

We are in an extremely challenging market that is affecting us all, especially those who have lost their jobs, have had to retire early, are faced with housing issues and other concerns. As a financial advisor, it is especially worrisome to hear people in the process of making decisions that my experience tells me may not be in their best interest.

Fear is a powerful motivator. Unfortunately, it often colors or completely blocks one's ability to see clearly. In my opinion, two of the most important criteria for successfully getting through this difficult period are your "perception" and "attitude."

Perception: In the 20th Century, the United States endured two world wars and other traumatic and expensive military conflicts; the Depression; a dozen or so recessions and financial panics; oil shocks; a flu epidemic; and the resignation of a disgraced president. Yet, the Dow Jones rose from 66 to 11,497. Still, investors incorrectly timed the market and lost money.

There is a delicate balance between your investments and your retirement plan. You

can position your investments at very low risk; yet this often times guarantees your life expectancy will outlast your money. Numerous research studies (Brinson, 1989 et. al.) have proved timing the movement of your investments works less than 4 percent of the time. So, that is not a viable investment strategy.

Today, people are moving into cash and treasuries at a time when future gains in value are very much in question. In my opinion, investors should not hold cash today, except for short term spending needs. Cash is a terrible long-term asset that pays virtually nothing and will likely depreciate in value.

Governmental policies to alleviate the current crisis will probably prove inflationary and therefore accelerate declines in the real value of cash accounts.

Sticking to a plan based on your particular cash flow needs that includes non-market related assets in your portfolio is what has worked for our clients in the long run. Difficult times may have us tweaking asset classes, but not our basic strategic plan.

Attitude: Charles Swindoll has said, "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities, brilliantly disguised as impossible situations."

Bad news and bad times can be an investor's best friend. Regardless of the media, history indicates the stock market will rise. What is your plan, what areas will likely move up first and is your strategy poised to take advantage?

(Joel Williams is required to say that this is for informational purposes only and "should not be used as the primary basis for an investment decision or as investment advice.") 



Nicholas Conte: “I like to have the whole board in agreement when we can because it represents diverse interests in the firm.”

Carrying on a tradition >

Executive Summary:

Nick Conte recognized from the beginning that his task was bigger than running a law firm.

By David Perry

“ ”

You want people that take pride and you want people that know their own practice area. And then once you have that, you have to deal with it.

—Nick Conte

Nick Conte is slow to take credit.

“It’s very easy to overstate it,” he says of his role as Chairman of the Board of Woods Rogers, Roanoke’s largest law firm. Just 46 years old, Conte is the head man at a firm where many of the attorneys were born during the Roosevelt administration.

Instead, he defers to firm President Thomas Bagby, as well as Executive Director John Hulak, who supervises the firm’s administrative staff. “A great deal of the staff reports up through him and not to me ... thankfully,” he jokes. “The great majority of my day is spent practicing law.”

A child of the LBJ era himself, Conte chose the legal profession out of a natural desire to serve.

“I think a lot of people start out wanting to help,” he said. “It’s a way to be of some service.”

He graduated from William and Mary law school in 1987. The New Jersey native dismissed all thoughts of moving to Manhattan to pursue a legal career when his wife, Virginia native Alison, decided they were staying in the Commonwealth. Woods Rogers was on Conte’s short list of firms he was considering, and he accepted a job having never set foot in Roanoke.

Conte started out learning the whole range of Woods Rogers’ practice.

“In those days, you were expected to do a little bit of everything, so when you got older, you would have enough experience in everything that you could at least spot issues and supervise,” he said.

Talfourd Kemper Sr. was assigned as his mentor. "I think he got stuck with me," Conte said with a laugh. "I've been privileged to work with people at the top of their companies. I've learned a lot from those people and they've been very kind to me."

Conte became a partner in 1995 and chairman of the Corporate Law Group shortly thereafter. He cites his experiences within the firm as the key to being an effective leader.

"Your education doesn't really prepare you to deal with business issues," he says. He adds that working with the "old guard" at the firm is not as challenging as some might believe. "They've trained [us]. They're the ones that gave [us] the opportunity, and we in turn give others the opportunity, so it's not like they're fighting you," he said.

Conte says his leadership style is more about group unity than being a standout.

"We try to build consensus among the elected board," he says. "The staff and I try to bring some suggestions and think through the direction and bring it to that board."

Strong interpersonal skills to manage equally strong personalities are also essential. "It's people that produce the product here ... it's not machines," says Conte. "You want people that take pride and you want people that know their own practice area. And then once you have that, you have to deal with it."

He adds, "I like to have the whole board in agreement when we can because it represents diverse interests in the firm. All you do is try to move the firm forward with the rest of the board and the partners."

Speaking of moving the firm forward, Conte knows he still has big shoes to fill.

"We've had some real giants here—people who stressed involvement in the community," says Conte. "They're not just really great lawyers ... they're also respected, in some cases revered, counselors."

Conte hopes to add his name to that list. "When it's all done, you'd like for somebody to say that about you ... besides your mother." 

In Brief

Name: Nicholas C. Conte
Age: 46
Company: Woods Rogers PLC
Location: Roanoke
Type of business: Law firm
Title: Chairman of the the Board, Chairman of the Corporate Law Group
History: Born in Vineland, New Jersey, and moved to Virginia as a senior in high school when his father, a grocery store manager, was transferred. Earned a bachelor's degree and a law degree from William and Mary before joining Woods Rogers in 1987. Made partner in 1995 and has been chairman of the board since 2008. Active with the Taubman Museum and Virginia Western Community College and lives in south Roanoke with his wife and two children.



Drawing by Polly Branch



Pigeon Photography

“ ”

The peanutbutter company’s bankruptcy “creates potentially a lot of very large claims. That’s something that has to be dealt with.”

—Andrew Goldstein

Andrew Goldstein: “Obviously I know it’s a very emotional case. I try to be cognizant and respectful of that.”

When the client is a scandal >

Executive Summary: *Roanoke lawyer Andrew Goldstein has hold of a hot national case, but he can’t let emotion rule. It’s about a company going into bankruptcy.*

By Gene Marrano

Andrew Goldstein has already fielded calls from CNN, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post and other national news outlets over his role in dealing with the now-notorious Peanut Corporation of America (PCA), which is based in Lynchburg, home of owner Stewart Parnell.

The case has become a curiosity, much like that of Octomom, in that it is ubiquitous: its exposure ranges from CBS Evening News to Entertainment Tonight to the blogosphere.

As partner in what he terms a boutique bankruptcy law firm, Goldstein must separate himself from all of the unsavory stories involving PCA. “I’m trying to help the company from a financial standpoint,” he says. “Obviously I know it’s a very emotional case. I try to be cognizant and respectful of that.”

He’ll leave the headlines for lawyers involved with other aspects: “At this point in time it’s not ... my role to get overly caught up in the emotion of the case.”

“I have to admit that’s not an everyday event for me,” quips Goldstein, a partner with the Roanoke law firm of Magee Foster Goldstein & Sayers, which is handing the Chapter 7 protection sought by Peanut Corp. in United States Bankruptcy Court (Western District).

Chapter 7 means that PCA intends to liquidate, not reorganize, after it was accused of shipping salmonella-tainted peanut products to some of its vendors. A trustee has been appointed to oversee the liquidation of assets and will send out a notice to those that might seek to file a claim.

“We’ve done a number of high profile cases,” says Goldstein, “[but] this is probably the one that’s had the most far-reaching implications. It’s one of the first ones with so much national interest.”

Goldstein is a serious student of bankruptcy and even sat in on a U.S. Supreme Court case last month involving that issue and a conflict of interest.

“Certainly the fact that there is a large recall going on impacts the bankruptcy,” says Goldstein (47), a University of Virginia undergraduate and University of Bridgeport (CT) law school alum. “It creates potentially a lot of very large claims. That’s something that has to be dealt with.”

What happens nationally will impact what goes on in the Lynchburg bankruptcy courtroom, notes Goldstein. There is no court date as of yet; that depends on the number of claims filed and the possible sale of assets.

Bankruptcy filings list between \$1 million

and \$10 million in liabilities, with company assets in the same range. Creditors were scheduled to meet several weeks ago to stake their claims. Attorneys representing victims are hoping to have the bankruptcy stay lifted so that litigation can continue. PCA carried a reported \$24 million in liability insurance.

More than 640 people (in 40-plus states) are believed to have been sickened and nine have died from cookies, candies, ice cream, nutrition bars and other products that used peanuts processed at PCA plants. The Salmonella Typhimurium illnesses were first reported in the summer of 2008 but were not linked to Peanut Corporation of America until January. PCA has also been accused of shipping tainted products with the knowledge that salmonella contamination had been detected. 

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Authorized by Nicholas C. Conte, Chairman, on behalf of the firm.



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www.CarilionClinic.org

Fertility implants the right way >

Executive Summary:

Marwan Shaykh sees the risks and benefits of implants and he chooses to do it the safe way, as do most physicians, he says.

By Leigh Ann Roman

Reproductive endocrinologist Dr. Marwan Shaykh has run an assisted fertility practice in Florida since 1985 and a satellite program in Roanoke since 2003 and in that time, he says he has never run into the kind of conflict we're being overdosed on with Octomom.

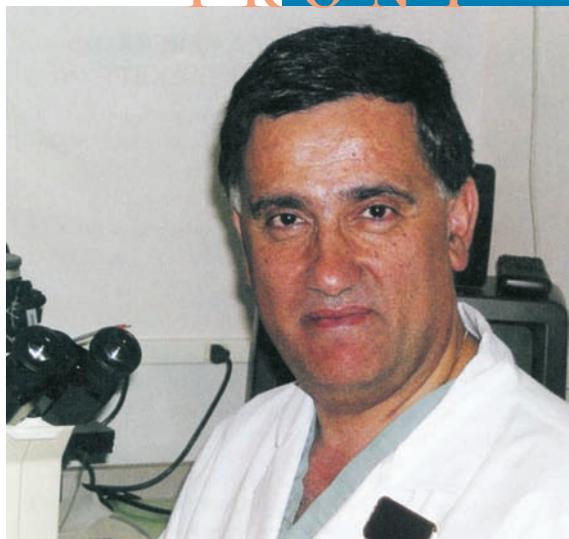
While no federal laws in the United States govern how many embryos a doctor can transfer to a patient, guidelines recently have been published by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART).

For a woman younger than 35 who has a favorable prognosis, one to two cleavage-stage embryos or just one blastocyst should be transferred to the mother, according to the guidelines. A cleavage-stage embryo is one that has developed just two or three days since fertilization. A blastocyst has developed five or six days from fertilization.

For a woman older than 40, however, SART recommends transferring five cleavage-stage embryos or three blastocysts if the prognosis is favorable.

His assessment of the situation surrounding California Nadya Suleman is simple: "I think the doctor was a bad doctor. He put six embryos (two split) in a young patient. In this day and age that should never, ever happen," Shaykh says.

Shaykh finds the guidelines helpful and follows them, but says multiple factors come into play in working with patients who have



Dr. Marwan Shaykh: "In this day and age [Octomom] should never, ever happen."

fertility issues. For example, about 10 years ago the wife of a firefighter came to his practice after going through four expensive IVF cycles without getting pregnant. When she came to Shaykh, the result of her IVF cycle was five embryos and she insisted on transferring all five, although he urged her to just transfer two.

"We did put five and she got pregnant with four. That shows you how the patient pushes the doctor," says Shaykh, adding that all four babies were healthy. "Today, I wouldn't do that."

Shaykh established his Virginia fertility practice at Lewis-Gale Hospital in 2003, but went into private practice in the Roanoke Valley in 2007. All of the patient preparation is done locally, but the actual IVF transfer for Virginia patients is done in Florida because it was not cost-effective to keep an embryologist and laboratory open in Roanoke, Shaykh says. The doctor pays to fly his Virginia patients into St. Augustine where he pays for their hotel while they undergo the IVF transfer. Then he flies them back to Virginia. Shaykh's practice web site is <http://www.assistedfertility.org>.

Shaykh has planned a fertility awareness program in the Roanoke Valley April 25 at a location to be determined. It is free, and participants can sign up to win one free basic IVF cycle. More information is available at swafertility.com or by calling 1-800-777-4831. 



Dining room has a view of the mountains.

all photos: Tim Jackson



Obviously, we'd rather not lose money, but profit is not the first motive whatsoever.

—Rebecca Ellis

Hospital food? No joke >

Executive Summary:

While hospital food may not be a major profit line for area medical centers, the service can definitely enhance the bottom line.

By **Tim W. Jackson**

The choices are many and varied. Perhaps a grilled cheese sandwich and a salad? Or maybe sliced turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, and carrots? Or perhaps just a burger and fries? It might surprise you, but such choices are available at a hospital.

Carilion New River Valley Medical Center offers dining in an atrium setting with huge windows opening to a pastoral view. On warm-weather days, visitors to the cafeteria can enjoy a respite outdoors at one of the tables near the small pond. Or they might want to take their grab-and-go meal and sit in the shade of the gazebo.

A hospital's food service takes a lot of resources, but Carilion's Director of Food & Nutrition Services Rebecca Ellis says that the point of the hospital's food is not to make a profit.

"Obviously, we'd rather not lose money, but profit is not the first motive whatsoever," Ellis says. "We provide food for our visitors and staff as a service, and that's the main thing."



Pam Kazee and Dana Brumfield are dining services managers at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center.



It's not your mother's hospital food.

Ellis says that in major metro areas a hospital's food service has more potential to be a profit center, but she says most rural or small-town locations don't expect to make a lot of money from food.

Don Halliwill, president and hospital director at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center agrees with Ellis that the most important aspect of the hospital's food is to provide a service. Halliwill says that service is a large part of what a hospital does. Like every business, hospitals, too, are judged by the services they offer and great food is something in which Carilion takes great pride.

The NRV location is unusual in that no restaurants are within walking distance and, in fact, you have to drive a couple miles to the nearest dining establishment.

Overall, Carilion has about 270 employees in food service, including 28 registered dietitians, at seven hospitals. The NRV location has 26 food service employees. On an average day, Carilion NRV serves food to

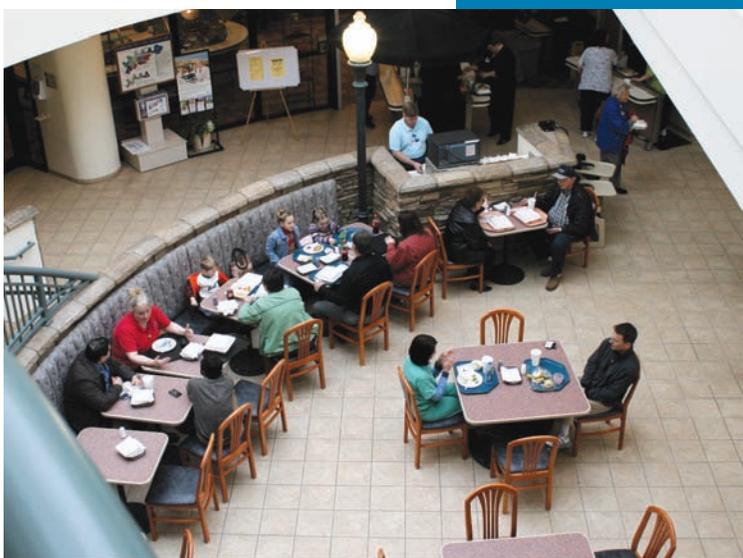


Salad bar at the center.

80 to 100 patients, but another 650 to 700 meals are served to visitors and staff in the cafeteria. And sometimes those visitors aren't there to see family or friends in the hospital; they're simply there to eat.

"Occasionally we have people from the community to come in here," says Pam Kazee, who is the co-manager—along with Dana Brumfield—of dining services at the NRV location. "Especially on Sundays after church it's common to have a few folks from the area here to eat."

"While profit is not the goal of our food service," Halliwill says, "service is the goal. And good service can definitely contribute to a hospital's profitability." 



Diners enjoy the open setting at Carilion New River Valley.



Shirley Allen McCall: “Fortunately, dental hygiene is a requirement for all of us and a blessing for my family.”

Linda Nardin

Necessity, the mother of intention >

Executive Summary:

When the bottom fell out of the real estate market, newly-minted real estate sales person Shirley Allen-McCall went back to basics.

By Linda Nardin

Shirley Allen-McCall likes to say, “I came in near the end of the party. I had a few chips and dip and shortly thereafter the market dipped.”

The year was 2006. Shirley had studied for and obtained her real estate license and joined Long & Foster at Smith Mountain Lake, a significant firm in the region.

Undeveloped land and homes had soared in value. Hopeful buyers streamed to the lake. Properties essentially sold themselves. The majority of agents needed only to make certain that their clients were first in line at the front doors of new listings.

Shirley, like so many in the business, was riding her wave of success. But the neophyte real estate sales person began to sense something ominous on the business horizon in 2007. Sales volumes began slacking off. Homes remained on the market a bit longer than before.

She and her husband William—whose own career is tied to the real estate industry on the construction side—made a necessary decision late that October. They agreed the best course of action for both of them and their son Jahleel would require Shirley to return to her first career—that as a dental hygienist.

“Fortunately, dental hygiene is a requirement for all of us and a blessing for my family,” Shirley says. “It’s something I know well, enjoy doing and it has been a wonderful income supplement with the downturn in the real estate market. I am able to work in both careers.”

Weekdays, she is in Roanoke at the dental office of Dr. R. Doug Ross. Wednesdays, Fridays and weekends, she is building her real estate practice at the lake.

Others might have hit the panic button in a shaky economy, but Shirley says the smooth transition as a “career dualist” is the product of her solid upbringing.

She was born in St. Johns on the British West Indies island of Montserrat, and at the age of four immigrated with her family to London. In her 16th year, the Allen family moved again, this time to the United States, settling in Boston.

While living there, Shirley attending Northeastern University where she earned a bachelor's degree in health science. In 1992 she married William, another Bostonian.

One of her co-workers coaxed her to visit Smith Mountain Lake, which became an extended stay. Subsequently her husband joined her in Virginia.

Her careers complement each other, she says: "When they're in the dentist's chair I want to help my patients relax through a very stressful situation ... In real estate, when you work with someone in home

In Brief

Name:	Shirley Allen-McCall
Status:	Married with one child
Career:	Dental Hygienist within the practice of Dr. R. Doug Ross in Roanoke; Realtor, Long and Foster at Smith Mountain Lake, Moneta
Hometown:	St. Johns, Montserrat, British West Indies
Education:	Northeastern University, Boston; B.S. in Health Science
Recommended Reading:	<i>One Person/Multiple Careers: A New Model for Work/Life Success</i> by Marci Alboher.

buying or selling, you also want to put them at ease and help them make the most important decision." 

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GOOD BUSINESS

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Airon Shoemaker and Dick Patch with the old truck.

all photos: Jay Conley

Executive Summary:

"Antiques Road Show" experts often tell those with antiques to have their prizes carefully restored. Here's a shop that can do it for you.

By Jay Conley

“ ”

You get to work with beautiful wood. You get instant gratification when you make it look nice. You make somebody happy. And they pay you real American money

—Dick Patch

Low tech for the old stuff >

Dick Patch's job is proof that the devil really is in the details. As owner of Astonish Antique Restoration, he has to be both a sleuth and a historian when he's repairing an antique table or undertaking an architectural restoration in older homes in Raleigh Court or South Roanoke. And the results are often, well, astonishing.

A tour of his shop on Old Cave Spring Road near Cave Spring Corners reveals an assortment of stains, glues, lacquers and hardware needed to tackle furniture dating back hundreds of years. Patch takes pride in restoring furniture in a manner that won't alter the integrity of the piece. He follows the guidelines of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and routinely consults with contacts at the Smithsonian Institution.

If you call Patch with a Civil War-era table that's falling apart, he has the nails that were used back then to repair it. Or maybe there is peeling veneer or a blemish on your dining room table that's been in the family for generations. Patch can match up the veneer and the color of the stain for a seamless transformation.

What's clearly exciting to him is the next job, solving the mystery of how an artifact was cared for, where it came from, who made it. "This is the best job in the world," Patch says. "You get to work with beautiful wood. You get instant gratification when you make it look nice. You make somebody happy. And they pay you real American money."

Patch also fixes the mistakes made by weekend warriors, the ones who overdo it on the glue to repair broken chair legs and spindles, but never seem to get them quite right.

But his work doesn't stop at tables, chairs and dressers. Patch will come to your home, often in his vintage 1950s Chevy truck, to pick those things up and quote a price.

He uses his three-man crew to strip the paint from banisters and restore them to their original wooden glory. He'll touch up the stain on your cabinetry and built-ins, or restore your weather-beaten oak door to its original luster. They're the kinds of jobs most people don't want to tackle on their own.

"Part of what I do is that I'm the Mohawk finishing products distributor for this area," he says. "So I've got a machine where I can fix thousands of different colors." That service can be a good resource for businesses that hire Patch to maintain their furniture. He's done touch up work for law offices, hotels, even a synagogue.

"Eventually, the wooden counters get scratched and marred. We can save thousands of dollars by sending my touch up man on site," Patch says.

"In general, the people that come to me value the furniture and it either needs fixing or its time for us to refinish it. A lot of the stuff that they have is so much better than what you can buy now." 



Newly-repaired ornate drawers.



Dick Patch works on a chair.



A door frame is laid out and ready for work.

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Bernie Cosell

The men who turned on the 'net >

Executive Summary:

You just can't always know who your neighbors are. In Giles County, one of the neighbors is the guy who gave us the Internet.

By Rachael Garrity

One day last January, a Giles County sheep farmer welcomed a houseguest who had come to visit for two reasons: the two were old friends who had worked together in the technology industry and the guest was strongly considering buying a sheep farm himself.

Interestingly, the host, whose name is Bernie Cosell, is one of the group of men who actually "turned on" the Internet; and the guest, Ray Tomlinson, is the man who effectively launched e-mail by creating a way to send a message first from one user to another within a local system and then from one system to the next. (He chose the @ symbol because it appeared in no names.) When he showed what he had done to a colleague he was warned not to tell anyone, because "this is not what we're supposed to be working on."

The two had worked together in the mid-1960s at Bolt Beranek and Newman (BBN), a research engineering firm based in Cambridge, Mass., that had a government contract to work on ARPANET, the precursor to today's Internet. (ARPA stands for Advanced Research Project Agency, then part of the Department of Defense.)

"At that time," Bernie remembers, "BBN was almost the only private company working on this type of project. The rest were universities. We were divided into two teams: one hardware and the other software. It was a very difficult program. I can honestly say in retrospect that we didn't know how good we were. We started in January and turned it on in September 1969. It hasn't been turned off since."

A book on the origins of the Internet titled *Where Wizards Stay Up Late* describes Bernie as the "ace debugger" on the team. Ray, interviewed as part of the "Legends" series at *Forbes* in 1998, stayed with BBN. He has since received a series of awards.

Bernie's life took a radical turn after he and his wife, Lynn, traveled to Australia and New Zealand in 1986 to view Halley's Comet. The couple was so impressed with New Zealand and enamored of the sheep farming style of life that they began planning to move there.

When logistics intervened, they investigated appropriate U.S. sites for a sheep farm and looked hard at Oregon. Meanwhile, Lynn



decided she wanted to raise merino sheep, which thrive in a drier climate.

While both had “retired” by the early 1990s, Bernie realized that it might be important to supplement their income with continued office work, so being near a technology center was important.

They moved to Giles County in February 1992. This year when the professional shearer arrived on Presidents’ Day, there were 170 sheep in residence. The Cosells participate in the wool pool in Christiansburg and also sell about a third of their fleece to friends.

Bernie works a flexible schedule at RevNet, an Internet service in Roanoke. Lynn is a weaver and is beginning to learn how to work with stained glass in anticipation of building a new home on the property.

In January, Virginia Tech held the Virginia-North Carolina Shepherds’ Symposium, which Bernie insists is “really good symposium.” And, he adds, Ray truly is seriously thinking now about buying a farm and raising sheep himself.

When it comes to wool-gathering, it’s clear these people would prefer to do it with their hands than with their minds. 

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Dan Smith

Mike, Tom and Bill Branch: "You can be flexible and creative" as the property manager.

Branch Management: A change in mission >

Executive Summary:

The Branch family has changed its primary business role from creating space for business to locating space and leasing it. It's called "progressive real estate investment."

By Gene Marrano

Family-owned Branch Management Corporation has morphed from the role of general contractor to commercial property owner and landlord over the years. Rather than build for others, as the Branch family once did, it now develops or purchases all of the properties leased to clients.

Vice President Mike Branch (55) says that owning the office buildings, warehouses and retail spaces leased by Branch Management allows for faster response time to any problems and fosters a closer relationship

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with the lessee/tenant. The middle man is eliminated, since Branch is the landlord.

"You can be flexible [and] creative," says Mike Branch, whose brother Tom (43) is company president/CEO, while founder and chairman Bill Branch, their father, is gradually turning over control of the company to them at age 80. "It's a win-win for the landlord [and] the tenant."

Bill Branch had partnered in highway construction and general contracting with his father-in-law about 50 years ago but has since shed that business via an ESOP. The Branch Group (which includes Branch Highways) retains the family's name, but is otherwise not related.

When Bill Branch "retired" in 1993 The Branch Group became a 100 percent employee-owned company, a process that began with partial stock transfers in 1983. Branch Management was created shortly after that. Now, "we work for our tenants," says Bill Branch, who still comes in to the office and remains quite active.

Several properties he had owned and managed on the side became "the genesis of the new [company]," notes Mike Branch. "When Tom came along all of a sudden it became a big thing." He admits that at times it is hard to explain exactly what Branch Management does, but in its current role the company can "concentrate on our expertise ... we work for our tenants, to find them space that they want. We are strictly in the

business of finding space for our tenants."

Branch Management employs a maintenance manager and subcontracts for the services needed. Keeping clients satisfied, treating them like partners in a sense is "the moral angle that Dad has taught," says Tom Branch, adding that Bill Branch's history of being a "good, honest business person" has given his sons something to shoot for.

Clients for Branch Management (which now owns and leases more than 40 properties) include Advance Auto Parts, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Carter Machinery and Carilion Clinic. They are all "within an hour of Roanoke," notes Mike Branch, a three-decade construction and development veteran who left the company several times as a younger man before coming back into the fold. Responding initially to tenants within an hour is a primary goal.

Tom Branch, who is "always on the phone," according to his father, would classify the family now as being "progressive real estate investors," on the lookout for properties that would fit with the corporate mission—such as maintaining those close relationships with lessees. He credits his father as always being "straightforward, to the point," with clients and aims to maintain that legacy.

"They count on us to service their needs," says Mike Branch of the firm's industrial/commercial tenants. Branch Management aims to please; after all it's a family affair. 



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Executive Summary:

Dave Sarmadi is a guy who is so customer-centric that he's gone smaller in order to accommodate their needs.

By Dan Smith

Dave Sarmadi Mitsubishi was growing so large that it had become one of the most successful of its kind in Virginia. So what does Dave do? He moves into a smaller building with less space to put his cars.

But who's to argue with this first-generation Italian whose big-toothed smiling visage is

on TV screens far and wide? Nobody. Late last year, Sarmadi went looking for a spot closer to his customers—most of them in Roanoke—and closer to the action in general. He had been at the far reaches of West Main Street in Salem and the customer base he had built—he has a folder full of fan mail from “not just happy customers, but very happy ones; happy is not good enough”—had only one complaint: he was too far away.

Sarmadi found the perfect location, if not necessarily the perfect size, on Franklin Road in South Roanoke, so he compromised and employed an innate resourcefulness to make the former West Motors dealership work for him.

Serving as his own designer and contractor, Sarmadi set out to create a space that felt more like a living room than a show room. He wouldn't have cars inside on the floor; he would place furniture around the room for comfort, tables for talking about car deals and a general feeling of relaxation.

His own office fronts Franklin Road with a mass of glass on two sides, making him a virtual advertisement for the dealership. He built offices around the showroom floor—“there were no offices up front,” he says—and he installed new equipment in the service area.

Service was one of the primary motivators for his move, so the department had to be good, though a bit smaller. It is bright, compact and full of cars on most days, a sign that he is accommodating more business in less space. He insists it's a good thing.

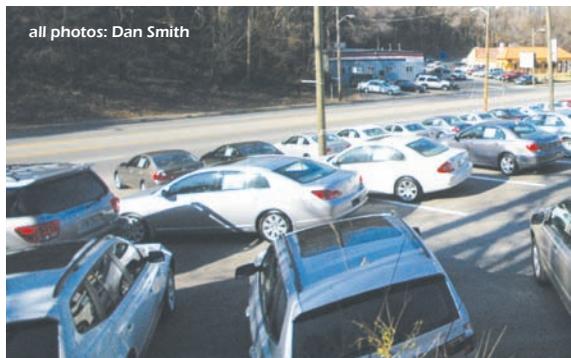
The lot is arranged by car size: small cars aligned—and alignment is a virtual obsession—out front and as they go back on the lot, they get bigger. You can see every car from the



Dave Sarmadi's corner office fronts on Franklin Road. He likes the exposure .



The showroom at Sarmadi Mitsubishi has no cars on display.



The car lot has new vehicles on one side of the arranged by size and always in perfect alignment.

all photos: Dan Smith



Customers determined the color scheme for the dealership.

street. He has new cars to the right of the main building and “extremely low mileage, high-end” used cars on the left. He swears that if you put the used cars on the showroom floor, not many people would have any indication that they have already been driven by someone else. It’s part of the show: gleaming cars everywhere.

In the course of a conversation, the earnest Sarmadi says, “my customers,” as often as President Obama says “the economy” in a typical speech. They’re dear to him and they appear to be at the center even of the color of the building.

“We painted it three times trying to find the right color,” he says. “The customers decided on this color,” a brick-red cap on a white foundation that is, it not striking, then certainly in keeping with the neighborhood.

The neighborhood, by the way, is something of a car strip, which Sarmadi says is good for all the dealerships in the same way that clustered fast food restaurants serve each well.

So, smaller is bigger. In the end, says Sarmadi, “We gained more than we lost.” 



The service center stays busy and is a strong profit center.



The parts department is smallish, but the parts are there.



building and “gently used” cars on the other,



The waiting room features a large-screen TV.



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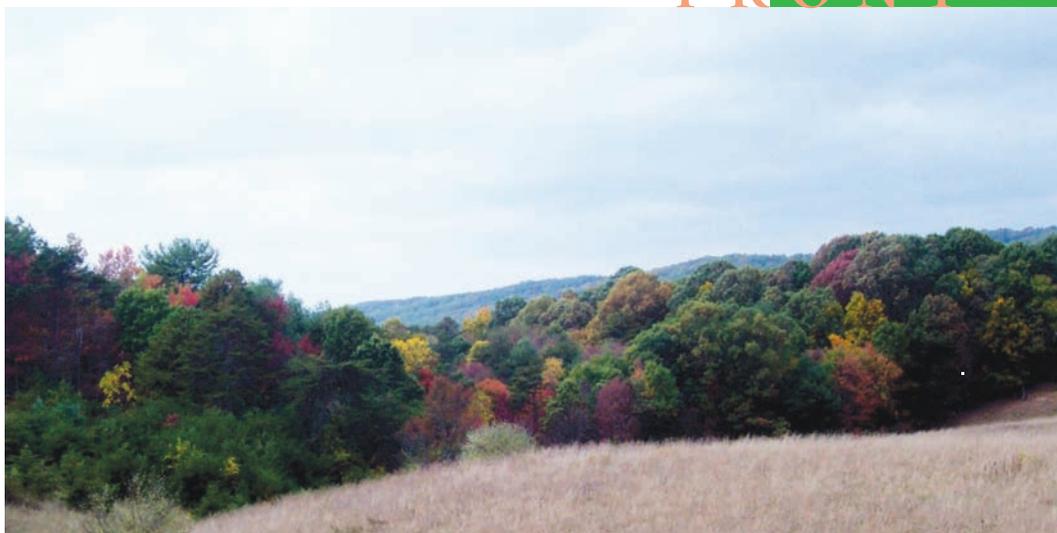
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The Travises held events to introduce builders to Sturgill Estates.

Bucking the odds in homebuilding >

Executive Summary:

OK, we're smack in the middle of a downturn in the economy—and especially in the building trades. So why in the world would John Travis pick this time to go out on his own? Because he wanted to.

By Rachael Garrity

On a good day, a really good day in early 2009, a business owner who seems to ride outside the current economic crisis quietly states his case. He is less interested in proving he is brave than that he is solid; he is bold than that he is selective. He has chosen his business because he likes where he lives and wants to let other people know they, too, can live here without dropping the proverbial bundle to do so.

Meet John Travis. Originally from upstate New York, this 54-year-old developer came to the New River Valley to work for Pulaski Furniture, where he became plant manager. Then, with a prescience that still provides a bedrock for his decision-making, he realized that it was time to ask, "What next?"

By 2,000, John and his wife, Donna, had formed J and D Builders, complete with a design center in their basement. By last December, that center had morphed into a showroom in Christiansburg, but the business itself has stayed focused on its basic mission: provide quality homes at a good price, and make sure the process rewards other local businesses and creates a product both builder and owner point to with pride.

J and D began in Pulaski, where the Travis family lives. English Forest Estates, a project in that town initiated three years ago, focused on building 21 homes. The company's newest development, Sturgill Estates, is in Christiansburg, not far from New River Valley Mall.



John and Donna Travis of J&D Builders.



Construction is done in a rural setting.

included ideas such as giving those realtors an incentive to sell new construction by paying them up front a part of the commission – specifically \$2,500.

John notes that the company's success has been helped too, by the talents of the couple's son,

In his characteristically understated manner, John explains that the land was originally a farm, owned by the father of the current owners, a man who very much wanted to see it developed. In working with the heirs, J and D has made that dream a reality, and also created a development that is at once affordable—under \$300,000 per home—and representative of construction that is both sound and environmentally friendly.

who built a Web site, and daughter, who used the skills she has gained working with an advertising agency to enhance the visibility of that site.

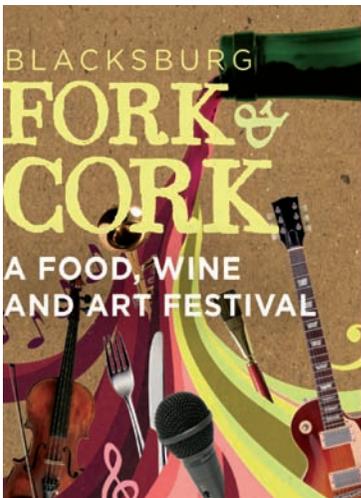
Obviously, it is a formula that works. The last week in January brought a contract to build a custom home—not exactly the order of the day during the nation's economic doldrums. 

All homes constructed by J and D meet the test to become EarthCraft certified, which means the energy efficiencies inherent to that building approach are available, whether or not owners apply for the certification. (There is a cost for certification, but it carries with it tax credits.)

The first Sturgill Estates home was available in March, but before then J and D held a series of events at Bull and Bones Brewhaus and Grill in Blacksburg, to introduce selected realtors to their development concept, which



A sign shows the plan for Sturgill Estates.



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Executive Summary:

For Estate Specialists in Lynchburg—a huge warehouse for selling off estates—this is the best of times. Not so much in spite of the economy, but because of it.

By Lori White

Since 1987, Betty Davidson of Estate Specialists has been “playing house” in a big way. Founded as a means of dabbling in the antique business and simultaneously moving toward a less hectic lifestyle, Davidson’s estate liquidation operation boomed almost overnight.

In the 21 years the business has been around, it has grown into what Davidson refers to as a “big job.” She works six days per week, employs 15, and retains 3 warehouses, comprising 85,000 square feet of space. She chuckles wryly, reflecting on her earlier statement about wishing to move toward a “less hectic” lifestyle. “That didn’t last long.”

Davidson is aided, though, by her 15 employees, who include her son and an assistant who “does everything I do.”



Betty Davidson: “They just have to come in the store once, and that’s it. They’re hooked.”

While business may be dropping off for many other retail businesses, that is certainly not the case for Estate Specialists. Consumers are finding a renewed merit in less expensive, gently used goods. Most of Davidson’s customer base is in the

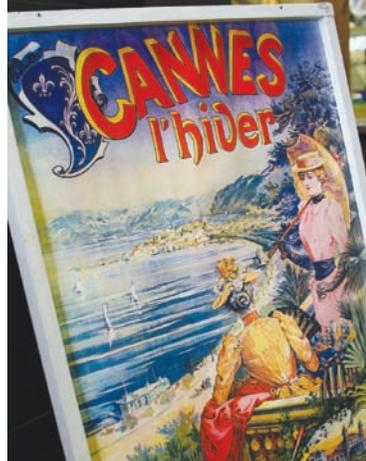


This is the way to buy... especially for younger people like college students and just-marrieds setting up house.

—Betty Davidson of Estate Specialists

all pictures: Lori White





40-ish demographic, looking for a find and a deal. "This is the way to buy, though," Davidson says, "especially for younger people like college students and just-marrieds setting up house."

The trend today is to buy new, but Davidson finds that true quality lies with older furniture and goods of the past. "They just have to come in the store once," Davidson says, "and that's it. They're hooked."

Davidson has learned that there is a market for almost everything—good quality

reproductions and classic furniture along with everyday tools such as stainless steel flatware and sheets and pillowcases. In an effort to organize and categorize, the three stores are divided according to type of goods carried.

The Commerce Street II store is the largest and most diverse. Commerce I is more country-oriented. The Main Street carries the most classic of goods. Her training with the American Society of Appraisers, plus thirty to forty years experience at auctions, shops, and seminars has given her a sharp

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RETAIL FRONT

eye for how to price things, as well as what will sell and what will not.

It is this training, for example, that led her to purchase an estate containing an old magazine. Some of the page edges are curled and yellowed with age, but that doesn't seem to bother the couple that comes up to show off their purchase to Davidson.

Taking the time to root through the magazine, they have discovered a find—vintage Canada Dry advertisements that will look great framed and hanging on an

office wall. Davidson remarks on how many customers make similar finds that they turn around and sell on EBay.

For Davidson, confidentiality is prime; her clients know that they can place their trust in her, but Davidson loves that “behind every purchase there is a story. And many of the stories are unbelievable. On the good side and the bad side. I wish I could tell people...”

And indeed, in wandering through the warehouses, it is easy to wonder about the stories each piece bears witness to. 



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Enjoying 'your time on the seat' >

Executive Summary:

The bicycle industry is not recession-proof, but it looks like the nearest thing.

By John A. Montgomery

It was just over 30 days ago that the area was greeted with its only serious snowfall of the winter. The temperature dipped remarkably close to single digits.

For secondary-school students and nature lovers, the snow-drenched landscape provided a beautiful and welcome respite. But The Big Chill is long gone—for the next seven or eight months, anyway.

A random survey indicates that in addition to the change of seasons serving as a catalyst, the challenging overall economy may be giving bicycle retailers a boost.

Says David Mayhew of Cardinal Bicycle in Roanoke, "We've been selling the heck out of commuter bikes." Cardinal is owned and operated by Scott Leweke, who understands that the recent spike in gasoline prices incited a similar surge in bicycle sales. But as gas prices have ebbed, the interest in



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RECREATION FRONT



Dan Smith

bikes vehicles has remained high.

Steve Hetherington, for the past seven years proprietor of Just the Right Gear, on Va. 311 north of Salem, says the economy has been a double-edged sword. "We're probably selling fewer newer bikes than we were," says Hetherington, an All-American cross-country runner at Virginia Tech in the early 1980s. "But we're definitely seeing more

repairs and bringing up more [used] bicycles from the basement."

Hetherington has noticed an increase in business among long-distance cyclists, those interested in traversing major segments of the country.

The Internet is dotted with success stories of bicycle shops around the country that thrive in tough times. Cycling is perceived as an attractive alternative for many, combining a healthy activity with cost savings.

At a time when the automotive industry is ailing, Subaru announced in late December that it has entered the bicycle business, promoting the Subaru XB steel hardtail

mountain bike that is built to order and retails for \$3,880 -- not exactly what you would spend at a yard sale.

But cycling appeals to more than just those looking to survive on the cheap. Cole Harden, lead fitter and sales manager for East Coasters in Blacksburg, says new bikes at his store start at about \$500 but you can easily spend thousands, topping out at what some might allot for a new car. "\$20,000 gets you a sublime ride," Harden says, "perfection on wheels."

Regardless of your budget, area bicycle shop staff members agree that proper fitting is paramount in selecting the right bike.

East Coasters, with locations in Blacksburg and Promenade Park on U.S. 419 in Roanoke, is owned by Chris Betz and Wes Best. The company has been in business since 1974 and recently announced the implementation of its Dartfish video motion analysis.

"We begin with a personal interview regarding clients' riding interest, exercise habits and injury history before moving on to a detailed assessment of their flexibility and range of motion," Harden says. The video enables riders to record their pedaling stroke and select the most effective, individualized fit.

"Maximum power, efficiency and comfort are what it's all about," Harden says. "You want to enjoy your time on the seat." 

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Virginia Tech's Julie Richardson: "Each university has different requirements and is typically set up differently."

Co-ops give the student a head start >

Executive Summary:

Co-operative education works for both students and businesses because the student gets advance experience and the company gets a potential employee.

By Marianne Koperniak

Imagine being a second year college student majoring in communications; now imagine that you are being offered an opportunity to work "in the real world" for a semester and gain experience in a full-time capacity working in your major field at Walt Disney World Company.

What could possibly be a better venue for putting theory into practice and receiving on-the-job training? That kind of opportunity is what cooperative education is all about.

Cooperative education opportunities join education with work by creating real-world experience for a student. Co-ops are made available by business, industry, and government as full-time, paid assignments, and create mutual benefit.

A student is given an educationally-related work and learning experience that integrates theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development on the job.

As a student works with professionals, she can learn about the potential in her chosen career. She develops personal and professional maturity and ethics, picking up career-related experience while still in school. She can also apply classroom knowledge to the workplace. The student can test a career field before graduation and become more a competitive applicant to employers. That could mean a higher starting salary.

According to Julie Richardson, the coordinator for the co-op/internship program at Virginia Tech, "Schools and organizations differ in their definition of what exactly a co-op or internship is and often use the terms interchangeably." Richardson stresses how specific it is: "Each university has different requirements and is typically set up differently."

Sometimes there is confusion between an internship and a co-op. Richardson says, "Students [in the Tech program] are required to obtain a full-time, paid, position which is related to their major. An internship, through our program, consists of one work term which spans over an academic semester. A co-op ... consists of more than one work

term which spans over two or more academic semesters.”

An employer may use a co-op student for several academic terms. Pay is likely to differ, depending on a student’s major and will vary based on the employer, location, student academic level and how many terms the student has worked for the employer.

“We have about 130-150 students out at work each semester through the [program at] Tech,” Richardson says.

At some point, a college student will make a career choice. Richardson says, “Although the vast majority of students have outstanding work experiences, even those

who do not can benefit from learning what they are not interested in doing.”

Savvy employers can attract and develop future talent. Many employers in the region provide cooperative education opportunities including GE Power Systems, Norfolk Southern Corporation, ITT Night Vision, McLeod & Co., Novozymes Biologicals, American Electric Power, Mattern & Craig, Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield, Shenandoah Life Insurance Company, Altec Industries and Atlas Copco.

Employers are likely to be most impressed with co-op experience in an applicant. Employers get the experienced employee and students get to be that employee instantly. 



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Dan Smith

Historic properties get their own list >

Executive Summary:

City planner Erica Taylor wants a comprehensive list of Roanoke's historic properties, and she has plenty of support from preservationists and economic-development types.

By Bobbi A. Hoffman

A sign in Erica Taylor's office sums up her philosophy about preserving historic properties: "It's not good because it's old; it's old because it's good." Taylor wants to ensure that Roanoke's good, old properties are around for a long time.

The first step, she says, is making a list.

Taylor, 30, knows the advantages of having a comprehensive historical survey from her

previous job with the Historic Landmark Foundation of Indiana. Its street-by-street book—which included historical-district boundaries, exterior photos and information about building style and age—was Taylor's "first resource" when homeowners asked about their house's history or developers needed an historic district's boundaries.

The survey will include more than buildings. "Any man made structure may have some historic importance to it. The Roanoke Star is on the national register because it's a man made engineering marvel," says Taylor. Bridges and cemeteries could also be included.

There are two primary benefits to receiving an historic designation: tax credits and protection from government interference.

Attractive tax credits may be available for renovating historic properties. Virginia offers a 25 percent tax credit for residential and commercial property rehabilitation. An additional 20 percent federal tax credit is available for income-producing properties, such as apartments, so rehabbers could see 45 percent of their expenses returned.

Some of Roanoke's better-known renovations used tax credits, including the Cotton Mill condos on Sixth Street, the Hancock Building on Campbell Avenue, the Higher Education Center and Fulton Motor lofts on Salem Avenue.

Historic designation also provides protection from any project using federal funds.

"Any time a state or federal project is undertaken, a formal review has to occur.

If it's a highway project that comes through an historic neighborhood—if they know it's eligible for the national register—they will have to come up with an alternate plan or concept," Taylor explains.

Kent Chrisman—Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation board member and chair of the city's planning commission—is onboard with Taylor's plan. "We need to do a comprehensive survey to help with planning and economic development," he says.

Identifying historic properties means they won't "die of neglect or get torn down," says Chrisman. He cites a house in the city's West End that was half demolished before anyone recognized the bones of the 1860s log home beneath it. "Had the community known it was there, they would have organized to keep it."



Erica Taylor is putting together a list that an historian would die for.

Bobbi Hoffman

Chrisman sees the project as a great public-relations tool for Roanoke's economic development. "It will help with marketing the city and increase tourism."

Taylor estimates the survey will cost \$143,000. She applied for Community Development Block Grants that require matching funds she hopes to get from Preserve America—a White House initiative under the National Parks Service. Consultants will survey properties, which will take eight months to a year; Taylor hopes to begin this fall.

"A lot of people don't know—if they get past the market—what else is out there. And it's a lot," says Taylor. "If we get [funding], it's going to be so worthwhile to know what's here." 

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The hammer comes down on Agnew >

My View

By Dan Smith
Editor

[fromtheeditr.blogspot.com]

Executive Summary: *Agnew Seed Stores had the longest run of any store of its kind in Virginia. But it's over now and we have to get on to other things.*

There was something undeniably right about the auction. Maybe it was the Mennonite bidders in the second row, looking for an old fashioned bargain. Perhaps it was the quiet, unassuming couple from Natural Bridge far back in the corner of the 100-year-old building who eventually forked over \$551,000 for it—generally considered a good bit more than Agnew Seed Stores was worth. Could have been the overalls, the general excitement, the mother and baby on the front row, the press of media, the presence of auction superstar Ken Farmer.

Probably, though, it was the simple authenticity of a genuine American antique, one that still has a good bit of life in it, despite the buckets sitting on the floor of the second story, collecting rain water.

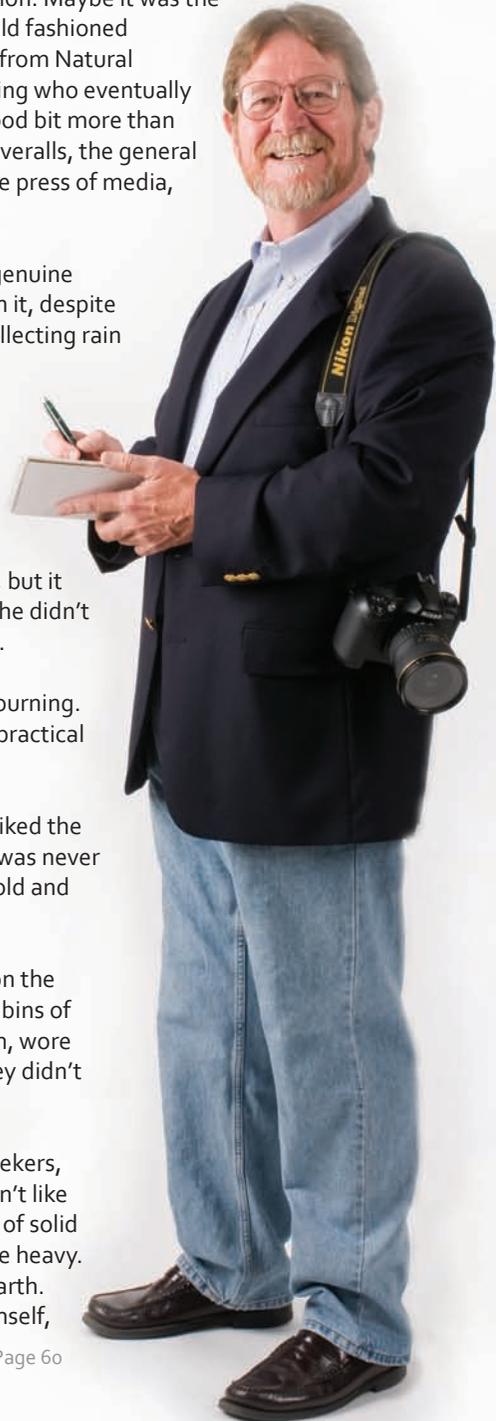
The store was built a little more than 100 years ago in the middle of Roanoke City Market before it had earned the historic designation and it had had never been anything but a seed store, never wanted to be anything else. Now it might become a boutique or a restaurant or a living space or something else entirely, but it won't likely be what it was ever again. Kirk Miller said he didn't know what he would do with it. Tina, his wife, nodded.

The store's first life is over, but let's not spend time mourning. Agnew is entirely too graceful, too rural-realistic, too practical for that.

Everything ends and Agnew had a good run. I always liked the musty smell, one that never changed, never diminish was never especially pleasant. This was unusual and distinctive, old and never to be confused with the K-Mart Garden shop.

The stoneware jars in the corner and the iron skillet on the shelves, the large-brimmed straw gardening hats and bins of top-rank seeds were bought by people who used them, wore them out and came back 50 years later asking why they didn't last forever.

The customers were a mixture of tourists, curiosity-seekers, practical gardeners, religious fundamentalists who don't like electricity and backyard gardeners who covet the feel of solid things like shovels that last and wheel barrows that are heavy. The owners were Garrison Keillor people, salt of the earth. One had a deep, dark secret and last year he killed himself,



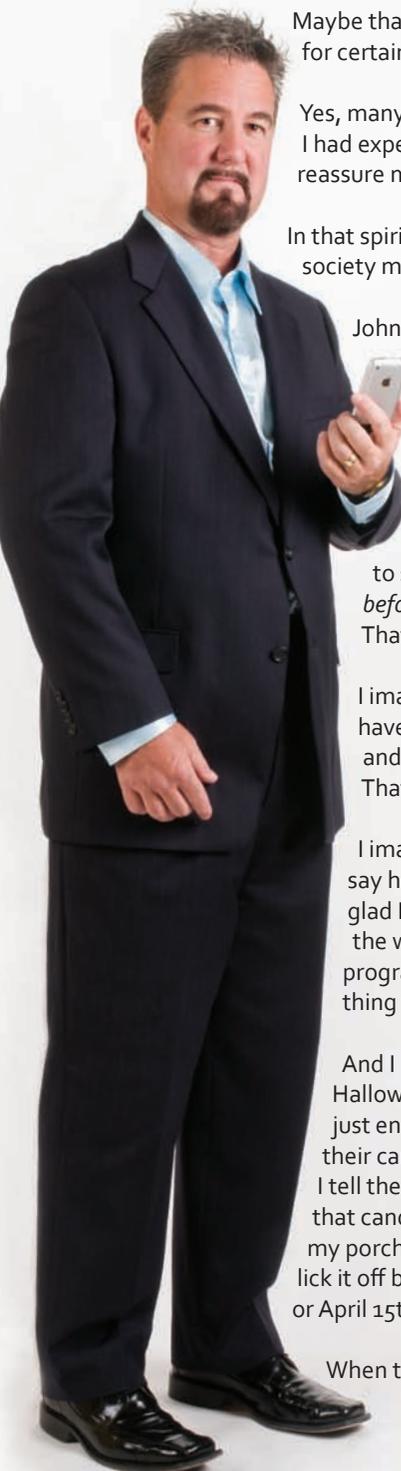
continued to Page 60

The fair thing to do >

By Tom Field
Publisher

On Tap
from the Pub

[ontapfrompub.blogspot.com]



There sure is a lot of talk about being fair these days. A fair tax. Fair and balanced news coverage. Even a doctrine for fairness. Maybe that's because those most enlightened among us know one thing for certain: Life is fair.

Yes, many a time in my early childhood I recall crying about some injustice I had experienced, and my wise and sympathetic parents leaning over to reassure me: "Well, Tommy, life is fair."

In that spirit, it's high time we step up and do our part to see that our society matches that universal and superior truth.

John Lennon imagined a world with no heaven. A fairer place indeed.

I imagine the next time I see a little girl drop her ice cream on the sidewalk, I'll run around as quickly as I can to smack the ice cream cones out of the hands of all the other little children I see. That's the fair thing to do.

I imagine turning on the tele at next year's March Madness to see a score of Virginia Tech 18, UNC 0, at the opening tip-off, *before* the game starts, to make the competition more even. That's the fair thing to do.

I imagine no need for secret or open ballots for unions, because we have just one universal union for all laborers, employees, players, and non-management / owners. No one should be excluded. That's the fair thing to do.

I imagine turning on the talk radio station to hear one guy at noon say he hopes President Obama fails, another guy at 1pm say he's glad President Bush failed, and another guy at 2pm say he wishes the whole two-party system would just go away. And then the program hours are rotated or shuffled the next day. That's the fair thing to do.

And I imagine a fair economy. One that complements our new, fair Halloween holiday. The doorbell rings, I open it, and give the children just enough time to say "trick-or-treat." Then, I lurch out and grab all their candy. I stamp their little sticky hands, so I know they were there. I tell them to shut their quivering lips and quit crying, because none of that candy was theirs in the first place. And then I shoo them off my porch and tell them not to worry. Keep the stamp on your hand. Don't lick it off because you miss your candy. Just come back here tomorrow, or April 15th (whichever comes last), and you'll see. Life is fair.

When they all reconvene, I'll hand each child one piece of candy at time

continued Page 60



Workers remove the prized seed bins following the auction

Dan Smith

Field / On Tap

from Page 59

until it is all equally distributed. Any leftover candy will be destroyed. (Or given to children who didn't make it to my porch; whichever is easier.)

Likewise, I imagine the fairest tax is really no tax at all. Everyone's income is confiscated (no, that sounds too harsh... simply "collected," or better yet, "contributed"). Two-thirds of all the money is put into the benevolent fund, which operates all the services each citizen is entitled to. Neonatal care, childcare, senior care. Healthcare, penal care, welfare. Education care, defense care, transportation care, house care, pet care.

And though, by that time, you don't really need the money—everyone gets an equal share of that remaining one-third. To buy a birthday present for his Aunt Sally, I suppose.

Our new pledge will be:

"Care, care. We all care.
Equal shares
Or, you're not fair!"

Oh yes, Mr. Lennon (or is that Lenin?), I too, imagine a fair life.

One that matches the only thing that's already fair and equally distributed to all of us: death.

And since none of us is perfect, we've all made mistakes—you're right—there's no need to imagine a heaven. We can all die and go to hell.

That is the fair thing to do. 

Smith / My View

from Page 58

leading to the sale most of us never thought would come. In our lifetime anyway.

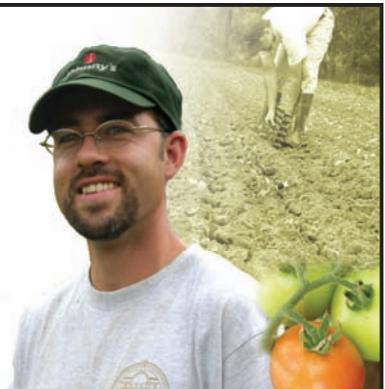
But there it was. The auctioneer warned that the clock would start, signalling the eminent end of the sale, any second now. He pleaded for more money, exerted, threatened, scolded bidders to come up with \$5,000 more, \$10,000 more. Don't insult the old store. It's got a lot of life, it needs love. Pay more for it. But \$551,000 was enough and when the clock ran out, Tina and Kirk Miller didn't even smile. They just looked at each other, a little anxiously, I thought. And Ken Farmer left them to their thoughts for a few seconds until the reporters swarmed them.

(See Dan Smith's live blog and photos from the auction in his March 5 entry, at www.fromtheeditr.blogspot.com) 

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Letters

Editor,

Your magazine brings a fresh approach to regional business and I always look forward to the next issue of Valley Business FRONT. While surprised to be included in your "all-star" group (FRONTList15: The Entrepreneurs, March, I was disappointed to be listed as a second generation (owner).

One of my "gloating points" has always been my third generation claim to fame. My grandfather was John T. Morgan; my father, Melvin T. Morgan Sr. and my mother Wanda Morgan, who owned and operated the business at my grandfather's death. We celebrated 75 years of service in 2008 and I obviously haven't been doing as good a job marketing that as I thought.

Cynthia M. Shelor
John T. Morgan Roofing & Sheet Metal Co., Inc.
Roanoke

Clarifications:

Brain Injury Services of SWVA was founded by a couple whose son was brain-injured, not by Helen Butler, the current executive director. That was not made clear in "A navigator for the brain injured" in the March edition.

In the March edition article "The fast track to surgery," the facility profiled is The Interventional Center, a division of the name cited.

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

Editor,

Thanks for sharing [the Entrepreneurial All-Stars list; March issue]. I just forwarded it to my top job candidate that will be traveling here from Utah next week for an in-person interview. I could have not done this with the "old business magazine."

Libby Camper
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Books @ the FRONT >

Following are book recommendations from our editor and business people in the Roanoke and New River Valleys who are inveterate readers. Each month, we will ask readers to submit two or three well-crafted paragraphs about a good book they've read lately (we don't read the bad books, thank you) and would like to recommend.

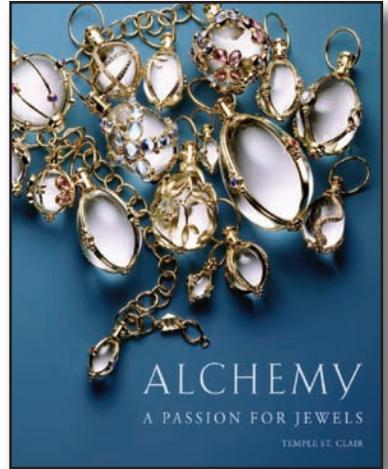
Quite the gem

I might not have known about Temple St. Clair's *Alechemy: A Passion for Jewels* (Harper Collins, \$49.95) if the author's mother had not contacted my mother to tell her about it. Former Roanoke resident Temple St. Clair Carr and I were childhood pals. In her opening chapter she refers to herself as a "Southern Girl" by both heritage and nature, although even back then it was not hard to tell that Temple's life would take her in directions that many of us Southern Girls could hardly dream of. I bought this book in part to learn more about someone long gone from my world, whose career as a high-end jewelry designer I had glimpsed from time to time in national magazines. I had no idea what to expect.

Alechemy blew me away! The photography and design, combined with the subject matter, make it one of the most aesthetically beautiful books I have ever seen. Seamlessly interwoven among the many gorgeous pictures of St. Clair's jewelry pieces are conceptual sketches, details of the kind of fine art and architecture that have inspired some of her creations, photos from her travels and nostalgic images from her past. But the text is every bit as well wrought and engaging as the imagery. St. Clair not only recounts her experiences but melds them with her inner journey as a creative artist, including healthy doses of history, philosophy, mythology, and spirituality that lend authenticity and gravitas to her life's work.

With "Alchemy," St. Clair has offered a thoughtful examination of her remarkable life that can serve as an inspiration to any reader. This book is—dare I say it?—a gem.

—Christina Koomen, City of Roanoke, Public Information

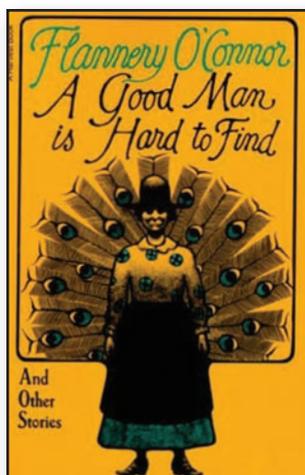
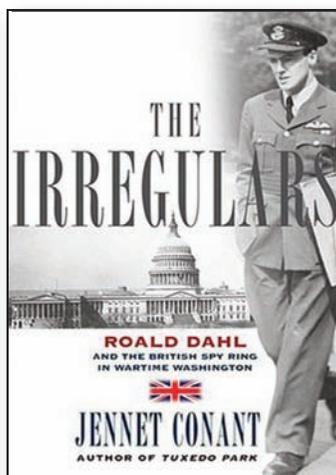
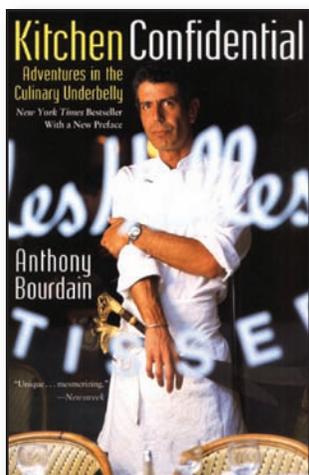


Cooking the ego

A newly updated edition of Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential—Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly* (Harper Perennial, \$10.95, paperback,) was recently issued. Chef, restaurateur, and host of Travel Channel's "No Reservations," Bourdain writes in a style that best replicates the controlled anarchy found in any restaurant kitchen on a slammed Friday night. In this loud book, Bourdain displays the deep respect for the professionals that elevate the production of fine food to a craft, and he's not talking about the ego-centric celebrity chefs polluting cable television. Rather, his respect rests with the ego-maniacs that earn a living over fires, broilers, cutting blocks, steamers, dishwashers, and sometimes linen closets. It's their stories that make up the bulk of the book.

While weaving sordid, sometimes hilarious, tales from his career, Bourdain provides the reader with some helpful tips about visiting restaurants (hint, don't eat fresh fish on Mondays), where to get good home cooking equipment (auction sales of bankrupt restaurants), life (a heroin habit and steady employment surprisingly do not go well together), and how to cook better at home (use fresh foods/spices and copious amounts of real butter). *Kitchen Confidential*, while not for the easily offended, is a rambunctiously fun read that will be especially enjoyed by anyone who has worked, or is considering working, around the restaurant business. Funny stuff.

—Scott Martin, Franklin County



Literary war

Roald Dahl, the man whose literary accomplishments (have entertained children and adults for six plus decades, was a spy for Great Britain during World War II. Dahl, a decorated RAF pilot who had been severely injured in combat, was sent to Washington to spy on Americans who were fighting against joining the war against Hitler. The pro-Hitler, anti-British forces included) and other wealthy and influential celebrities.

Dahl and his colleagues were charged with gathering information about prominent American Hitler allies (Charles Lindbergh, Joseph Kennedy, Clare and Henry Luce) and help devise ways to neutralize them. The goal was to bring America into the war. This intrigue is the focus of Jennet Conant's satisfying *The Irregulars: Roald Dahl and the British Spy Ring in Wartime Washington* (Simon & Schuster, \$27.95).

The obvious deduction: it appears that the real power structure of Washington is firmly and permanently seated at the table where power and influence are the entrees. This book shows how World War II was fought on the home front. More than that, it introduces us to the beginnings of the literary careers of some of the 20th Century's most influential writers, including Ian Fleming and David Ogilvy, Noel Coward, Walter Winchell, Walt Disney, Drew Pearson and Ernest Hemingway.

—Michael Ramsey, Roanoke

Religious perspective

After 10 years as a Christian radio listener, I knew it was time to crack open the Flannery O'Connor again. The macabre short stories of this Georgia writer, full of stark, funny depictions of pious Southern characters, offer a potent tonic for the common religious malady of missing-the-point.

A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories (Harcourt \$30; it's a 17-year-old book and you'll probably have to find it used ... and cheap) is the primary source here, but you can find excellent O'Connor in *The Complete Stories*; *Flannery O'Connor: Collected*; and *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*.

Her characters are trancelike in their platitudes, complacency and insulation from any bigger reality. Possibly the most famous of these characters, "the Grandmother," is only cracked out of her smug bubble when "the Misfit" gangster discusses "Jesus" with her over a gun barrel. She feels a sudden compassion for this thug—just before he blasts her to Kingdom Come. In such savage moments of grace, the real "crisis" of Christianity (love) breaks through the deadening "hypo-crises" of self-preservation.

These are not cozy stories, but more like a sharp shovel, a tool of self-examination that can punch through our superficial hypocrisies and restore some oxygen to life and faith.

—Liza Field, writer/teacher, Wytheville



photos: Jane Dalier

Speedy networking >

Ready...Set...Network, a speed networking event sponsored by the **Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce** on February 26th provided an opportunity for motivated business people to promote their businesses.



photos: Tom Field

Advertisers unite >

The **2009 Western Virginia ADDY Awards**, held March 7th at the Jefferson Center in Roanoke, featured "the singing Frank Sinatras" (**Brad Soroka** and **Chris Henson**); and the new railroad spike award (playing on Roanoke's rail town history). Legendary ad man **Howard Packett** presents the top award for Creative Excellence to **John Griessmayer** and **Whitney Pratt** of ND&P.

FRONT 'N ABOUT



photos: Tom Field

What's in your future? >

Futurist, strategist, media executive and national speaker **David Houle**, author of *The Shift Age* spoke to regional business owners and professionals at the **Virginia Tech Business Forum**, hosted by director **Jim Pilversack**, at the Roanoke Higher Education Center on March 18th.



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photos: Jane Dalier

Pulaski... after hours >

Pulaski Chamber Business After Hours was held February 26th at Mi Puerto Mexican Restaurant in Fairlawn; featuring **Paula Frazier** of BNI, **Peggy White**, Pulaski County Chamber Director, and **Scott Arnett**, of Horace Mann Insurance and Chamber President among those attending.



Economic talk >

Dr. Ed Burton, guest speaker at Roanoke law firm **Spillman, Thomas & Battle** (formerly Wetherington & Melchionna) talks with lawyer **Paul Black** and Roanoke City Manager **Darelen Burcham** before delivering his talk on the economy early in March. Spillman, Thomas' **Ann Melchionna** talks with registering Realtor **Bob Coptly** in the other photo.



photos: Dan Smith

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



photos: Jane Dalier

RU an Entrepreneur? >

The **Entrepreneur Express Workshop**, held February 26th at **Radford University** was highly attended for an afternoon covering all aspects of starting and running your own business. Keynote speaker, **Doug Call**, President of **Virginia Prosthetics** presented a slide show. **Sandy Ratliff** of the **Virginia Department of Business Assistance** from Abingdon was moderator.

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Shawn Murray: “You have to make the difference that gets people to walk through the door. The other part is having them leave happy.”

Dan Smith

‘Fully living the brand’ >

Executive Summary:

Advance Auto Parts wanted more than a little in-house marketing sector. It wanted an agency and Shawn Murray gave it a good one.

By Cortney Phillips

The most recent official tagline for Advance Auto Parts reads, “Keeping the Wheels Turning” and is emblazoned in a red or yellow font on top of a “gritty” red background.

Simple. Logical. But Shawn Murray can attest to the great attention to detail behind the four short words and their appearance.

As the director of creative services and brand development for Roanoke-based Advance Auto Parts, Murray makes the company visual brand his business. “Wherever our logo appears, my team is in charge of making sure it is used properly, whether it’s on a mouse pad, a business card, or the side of a truck going down the road,” Murray says.

Before taking on the position at Advance Auto Parts more than nine years ago, Murray worked for the Packett Group (now Neathawk, Dubuque & Packett) alongside his wife, Sandy for 10 years. Between them they have two children, and more than 300 regional and national advertising awards.

While at Packett, Murray handled a number of different clients’ and companies’ advertising and brand work. The shift from agency work to in-house advertising has enabled Murray to fully “live the brand.”

“Agencies constantly change clients, even if

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

they keep them for 10 years," he says. "They have multiple clients and are constantly learning about them. In-house, the big difference is you have one brand. You have to be part of that brand."

By completely immersing his work into one brand and focusing on one company, Murray says he likes coming to work and not needing to relearn a different company's priorities.

However, building the brand at Advance Auto Parts allowed him to call on his previous experience in agency work. "The overall goal is the same," Murray says. "You have to make the difference that gets people to walk through the door. The other part is having them leave happy; that's part of the brand."

This unifying goal in his past and previous work led Murray to call upon the organizational aspect of his former agency when setting up his department at Advance Auto Parts because, as he remembers, "I was hired to help build the creative group to run like an agency and grow the visual brand for the company."

And in the past nine years, Murray has lived up to his reputation. Heading a team that he believes is the biggest design group in the Roanoke Valley, he works each day to ensure that the Advance Auto Parts brand is evolving to serve their customers, while staying true to the company.

In Brief

Name:	Shawn Murray
Age:	49
Company:	Advance Auto Parts
Location:	Roanoke
Position:	Director of creative services and brand development
Background:	Born in Travis AFB in California, moved to Virginia (from Florida) 19 years ago
Education:	Technical School
Previous Jobs:	Associate creative director at the Packett Group (now Neathawk Dubuque & Packett)
Awards:	2005 AD2 Best in Print for Advance Auto Parts, Ad2 Best in Show for a Public Service Campaign for Deaf Services, among many regional and national awards.
Civic Involvement:	Involved with Juvenile Diabetes Foundation and the Roanoke's Taubman Museum of Art, as well as United Way.

"We use the headline, 'We can't wait to shake your greasy hand' because our old store décor was really clean and white and we decided we needed to make it look and feel more like our customers. We've got a lot more new measurement tools to figure out how to serve customers than we have in the past." ■

A New Building for an Old Neighborhood



Valley Bank South Roanoke Branch

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Career FRONT

FINANCIAL FRONT

Accounting

Gwendolyn Moses and **Brian Gibbs** have joined Roanoke's Goodman & Company and **Marie Wimmer** has been promoted to supervisor.

Banking

Hometown Bank in Roanoke has made the following additions: **Michael Wright**, vice president and information technology director; **Rob Mangus**, vice president, commercial lending; **Barbara Snyder**, loan operations; **Vic Bradley**, senior vice president of commercial lending.



Worley

National Bank in Blacksburg has promoted **Rick Worley** to assistant vice president.

Misty Powell has been elected assistant vice president of the board of directors for Martinsville-based Carter Bank & Trust.

Debra Thurman has been named mortgage loan officer at the Bank of Botetourt and **Cari Humphries** has been named assistant vice president of marketing.



Reeves

Valley Bank in Roanoke has made the following appointments: **Stephen Reeves** becomes a senior VP and mortgage banking manager; **Jamie Hinkle** is a new VP and Lewis-Gale branch manager; **Donald Burgess** is a new VP; **Susan Larkin** and **Cliff Roach** are assistant VPs; **Alan Miller** is a new real estate finance officer.



Hinkle

Mortgage

Prosperity Mortgage in Roanoke's **Sandra Meador** has earned her renovation certificate.



Burgess

LEGAL FRONT



Rakes

Law Firms

William R. Rakes, a partner with the Roanoke, law firm Gentry Locke Rakes & Moore and a former president of the Virginia Bar, has been named "Roanoke Banking Lawyer of the Year" for 2009 by Best Lawyers, the oldest peer-review publication in the legal profession. Gentry Locke attorney **David Cohan** has been named to the Intellectual Property & Information Technology Section Council of the Virginia Bar Association. Attorneys **J. Barrett Lucy** and **Kathleen L. Wright** have attained the level of Partner.

The King Law Group in Roanoke has named **Carolyn McCoy** a trust administrator.

The law firm of Spilman Thomas & Battle in Roanoke has elected **Carter R. Brothers** as a member of the firm.



Larkin



Lucy



Custer



Roach



Wright

Heather Mitchell Custer has been named supervisor for the New River Valley Bridge Program, a post-booking, pre-trial jail diversion program that assists individuals with serious mental illness who are in jail.



Miller

Have a career announcement?

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

WELLNESS FRONT



McKinnie

Dental

Owen McKinnie has joined ETS Dental in Roanoke as regional account executive.

Eye Care

TLC Laser Eye Care Center in Roanoke has named **Andrew Holtzman** medical director and surgeon and **Neysa Angle Allen** clinical director.

DEVELOPMENT FRONT



Moser



Pugh



Rey



Thomas



Altizer



Bonham

Architects, Engineers

Roanoke-based AECOM Design, formerly HSMM AECOM, has made the following additions to its architectural staff: **Darryl W. Moser**, **David A. Pugh**, **Aurelio A. Rey**, and **Athena I. Thomas**. **Jessica L. Altizer** has become an interior designer and **Cory L.**

Bonham is a registered architect.

Roanoke firm Froehling and Robertson has named **Alan Tuck** vice president for business development.

Economic Development

New River Valley Bridge has promoted **Heather Mitchell Custer** to supervisor.



Phipps

Industry

Bruce Phipps, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, has received the J. D. Robins Distinguished Career Award from Goodwill Industries

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Career FRONT

International, recognizing a CEO for career contributions over a span of at least 25 years.

Manufacturing

Inegrated Textile Solutions in Salem has named **Steven Anderson** president and CEO.

Real Estate

Century 21 Gold Key Realtors of Roanoke has hired **Natasha Dudley** and **David Gardner** in sales.

Wainwright & Company in Salem has announced **Penny Hodges** has become a Certified Distressed Property Expert.

Betty Turner of Lakeshore Rentals & Sales at Smith Mountain Lake has become a Certified Distressed Property Expert.

Technology

Kevin Creehan, president and co-founder of the Blacksburg engineering firm Schultz-Creehan, has been selected to present at the 21st annual Society for Health Systems Conference and Expo 2009. He will instruct high-level professionals on "Using Lean Techniques to Improve Turnaround Time and First Case Starts in the Operating Room."

RETAIL FRONT

Auto Parts

Bill Cobble and **Gary Roberson** have been named vice president and director of Argos Fleet Services in Roanoke.

Clothing

Retail innovator **Sidney Weinstein**, who at one time owned 81 Sidney's women's apparel stores and had 700 locations, has died of pulmonary disease at 87. Weinstein was one of the first retailers in the region to offer women credit without a co-signer and was known widely for his philanthropy, especially to the arts. His wife, Ann, an art critic, died last year. The Sidney's chain was finally forced into bankruptcy, then closure in the early 1990s, primarily due to the influence of the big box retail stores.



Williams

Shopping Centers

Tanglewood Mall has named **Laura Williams** mall services assistant.

RECREATION FRONT



Emanuelson

Exercise

Becci Emanuelson, formerly Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Roanoke, is the new Membership Director of the Kirk Family YMCA in downtown Roanoke.

EDUCATION FRONT



Sink



Williams

Chambers

The Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce has named **Lisa Sink** vice president of research and logistics and **Tori Williams** vice president of public policy and administration.

Colleges

Virginia Tech President **Charles Steger** has won the Chief Executive Leadership Award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education.

Sebastian Berger, assistant professor of economics at Roanoke College has won the 2008 Helen Potter Award of Special Recognition from the Association for Social Economics for the most original article by a promising scholar.

Frederic Rawlings II is the new director of the simulated Medicine and Technology Center at Virginia Tech's Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine. The founding director of Virginia Tech's Virginia Bioinformatics Institute, **Bruno Sobral**, has resigned, but will remain on staff to continue his scientific work in cyberinfrastructure and pathosystems biology. **Paul Knox**, former dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies will assume the role of interim director.

Alfred Mah has been named executive director of the Radford University Foundation. **Corey Herd** of Radford has been named to the Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Intervention Services.

Public Relations

The Blue Ridge Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) has

elected **Beth Kolnok** of Vistar Eye Center in Roanoke president.

Other board members include: president-elect, **Thomas Becher**, tba in Roanoke; secretary, **Nancy Simmons**, National College in Salem; treasurer, **Laura Neff-Henderson**, North Cross School in Roanoke; immediate past president, **Amy Whittaker**, American Red Cross, Roanoke; assembly delegate, **Michelle Brauns**, Free Clinic of NRV in Blacksburg; directors at large, **Mary Clemons**, ITT Night Vision; **Jennifer Faulkner**, Foot Levelers, Roanoke; **Melinda Mayo**; and **Shelly Whitaker**, Advance Auto Parts in Roanoke.

tba (the becher agency), a Roanoke public relations and advertising firm, has named **Dave Spangler** business development manager.

CULTURE FRONT

Communications

U.S. Cellular in Roanoke has named **Jim Spencer** wireless business consultant for Southwest Virginia.

Lolly Quigley has been named general sales manager at Roanoke's WDBJ-7 television station.

OTHER FRONTS

Auctions

Tommy Wagner of Counts Realty & Auction Group in Roanoke has won an award for marketing from the Virginia Auctioneers Association.

Roanoke-based Advance Auto Parts has named **Greg Johnson** senior VP and chief marketing officer.

Fitness

Leslie Ann Manning has opened Temple Fitness Studio in The New Century Venture Center, Salem's business incubator.



Sink



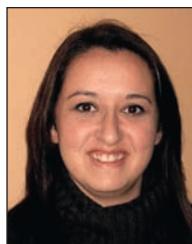
Flora

Funeral Services

Flora Funeral Service in Rocky Mount has added **Randy Sink** and **Garmon Flora** to its staff.

Moving

Mayflower Transit has honored **Lorraine Spaulding** of Premier



Spaulding

Transfer and Storage in Christiansburg with the annual "Heart of Quality" award, recognizing move coordinators.

Publishing

The Roanoke Times has named **Angela Campbell** circulation director. The Times, which has lost both of its metro columnists in the past few months, has replaced recently-departed Shanna Flowers with bicycle columnist, reporter and editor **Dan Casey**. Casey's online columns have been closely followed. The Times' popular Joe Kennedy, who has most recently been writing for two different local publications as a columnist, accepted a buyout before Flowers joined Carilion recently.



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FRONT Notes

Expansions

Galax's Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company plans to add about 100 employees after an investment of \$2.15 million during the next three years. That would raise employment at one of Galax's largest employers to 700. Vaughan-Bassett manufactures wooden bedroom furniture.

The expansion is helped by \$75,000 from the Governor's Opportunity Fund and another \$200,000 from the Virginia Tobacco Region Opportunity money.

Layoffs

Roanoke's **Taubman Museum of Art** has eliminated 6 of its 33 workers, trimming \$370,000 from an operating budget of \$3.75 million. Five employees were laid off and one went to contract status. This is the fourth cultural organization in recent weeks to have been affected by decreased donations and no end appears in sight for that fact. Others hurt have been Mill Mountain Theatre (which closed), the Roanoke Symphony and Center in the Square.

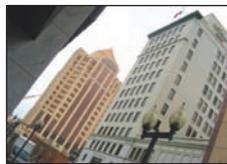
The Christiansburg plant for **Corning Inc.** was to have cut 61 hourly jobs by the end of March as part of a company-wide reduction of about 3,500 jobs. Corning will also trim some salaried employees, but that number is not yet available.

Floyd County's **Hollingsworth and**

Vose, which produces synthetic filter media, has laid off 15 of its 122 workers. The company has operated since 1976.

Hanover Direct in Roanoke has laid off an undetermined number of workers since November, according to published reports. The company, which is in catalogue sales, hopes to save jobs by using reduced work schedules.

Stanley Furniture Company in Henry County has laid off 100 production workers, retaining a workforce of about 1,000. The national economic recession was blamed for the layoffs.



Dan Smith photo: Downtown occupancy is 94 percent.

Occupancy rates high

Poe & Cronk Real Estate Group in Roanoke, in its 22nd Annual Office Market Survey, reports that overall occupancy rates remain the same as compared to the 2008 survey. This year's survey incorporates data concerning more than 100 existing nongovernmental office buildings measuring 10,000 square feet or larger.

Overall occupancy rates remained the same compared to the previous year at 92 percent. The occupancy rate in the Central Business District

(CBD), at 94 percent, continues to reflect limited leasing opportunities. The South Business District (SBD) occupancy rate increased from 88 percent to 90 percent, while the North Business District (NBD) leveled off at 89 percent.

According to Senior VP Thom Hubbard, "The absorption of quality office space and limited offerings of new construction have resulted in slightly higher rental rates. Occupancy in the SBD has improved over previous year. There are still higher than normal vacancies in certain buildings. However, overall occupancy has improved 2 percent since 2006. The NBD continues a positive trend of occupancy from 86 percent in 2007 to 89 percent in 2009."

Turner pulls out

Roanoke construction company **J.M. Turner** has exited the partially finished Cambria Suites Hotel project on Reserve Avenue near Carilion. Turner insists that Roanoke Hotel Group owes it more than \$1.4 million and says its subcontractors are awaiting payment for work done. The company filed two mechanics liens earlier. The project has been on-again, off-again for some time.

Ruling favors Blacksburg

The **Virginia Supreme Court** has ruled that Blacksburg has the right to require an Ohio

company to apply for a special use permit in order to build a 186,000 square foot retail space on Main Street. It has generally been thought the company wants to build a Wal-Mart, according to published reports. The company plans to build a number of stores on a 40-acre center.



Brenda Landes

New architecture firm

Cole + Russell Architects, a national, employee-owned architecture firm, has opened a new regional office in Roanoke. The new regional manager is Brenda Landes, a long-time Roanoke Valley resident. C+RA served as the design architect of the Roanoke Fire/EMS Headquarters, as well as the recently completed Williamson Road Fire/EMS Station No. 3. The firm is providing professional services for the City of Roanoke Police Academy and Melrose Avenue Fire/EMS Station No. 5.

Site purchased

NTelos Network Inc. has purchased a Blacksburg site on Main Street from American Telephone

and Telegraph Company of Virginia for \$635,000 and will operate a cellular switching station at this location. Thalheimer/Cushman & Wakefield Alliance brokered the deal.



Gets new contract

Roanoke-based **ADM Micro**, an energy management, sub-metering, monitoring and control company will provide energy management services to Boddie-Noell Enterprises. BNE owns Hardee's restaurant franchises in several states.

Broadband discontinued

SelecTec Inc. (Citizens Mobile Broadband), a wireless broadband internet provider, will no longer provide mobile broadband service in the New River Valley and will phase out the service on in late April. Customers will be provided a list of alternative solutions in the region. SelecTec Inc is a wholly owned subsidiary of Citizens Telephone Cooperative, a regional communications and entertainment company headquartered in Floyd. The change will not impact Citizens Telephone Cooperative's broadband internet services.

VWCC re-accredited

The Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs

(ACBSP) has awarded reaffirmation of accreditation to **Virginia Western Community College** in Roanoke for its accounting, AST, IST, management, marketing and BAUD courses. Western faculty members Deborah Yancey and Jeff Strom spearheaded the accreditation process.

New chest pain center

HCA Virginia Health System chest pain centers at all of its hospitals in Southwest Virginia have been accredited. The centers are at Lewis-Gale Medical Center, Alleghany Regional, Montgomery Regional and Pulaski Community. To receive this designation, granted by the Society of Chest Pain Centers, each hospital's chest pain center, housed in the emergency room, had meet or exceed a set of criteria and completing on-site evaluations by a review team from the Society of Chest Pain Centers. Among eight areas that a center has to demonstrate expertise in are integrating the emergency department with the local emergency medical system; assessing, diagnosing, and treating patients quickly; and ensuring Chest Pain Center personnel competency and training.

MRH reaches 'Magnet'

Montgomery Regional Hospital has received Magnet status, the nation's highest recognition in nursing excellence from the American Nurses Credentialing Center.

Have an announcement about your business?

Send announcements to **news@vbFRONT.com**
A contact / source must be provided. Inclusions are not guaranteed and all submissions are subject to editing.

Only 5 percent of all hospitals in the United States have achieved this distinction.

Opens in Roanoker

Star City Home Health, a branch of Seven Hills Home Health in Lynchburg, was to open in Roanoke on McClanahan Street. The company offers nursing care and various therapies. It is owned by Robert Lamano.

Imaging site

Lewis-Gale Imaging has opened on Brambleton Ave. in Roanoke with digital mammography, MRI, CT and digital X-ray among its offerings. It is a \$1.4 million facility.

No more rewards

Roanoke-based **Shenandoah Life**, which is in receivership, says it will not give vacation rewards for high performance this year. Sales agents had been given vacation packages for their work. It is a common practice, but the company is in dire straits with bad investments and was seized in February by the State Corporation Commission.

Graduates state program

TMEIC GE in Salem is one of eight companies that recently graduated from the Virginia Economic Development Partnership's Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) program.

DRI exits

Executive Director **Bill Carder**, a former Roanoke vice mayor, and marketing/PR director **Suzanne Gandy**, suddenly left Downtown Roanoke Inc. in mid-March without public explanation from them or the board of directors. Carder, former manager of the Patrick Henry Hotel and Berryhill Plantation in South Boston, was director of DRI for less than a year and a half and was working on major renovations to the Roanoke City Market Building, whose plans had been rebuffed by City Council. The issue is a major one for DRI and for the city.

Gandy had been a marketing and PR representative for Roanoke City Schools until six months ago when she was hired by DRI. Retired Banker and community activist Doug Waters, who is on the DRI board, will serve as director until

Calendar

First Steps to Starting a Business

April 21, 5:30–9:00pm
Roanoke Regional Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Cost: \$25 per person
Call 540-983-0717, ext. 242,
sbdc@roanokechamber.org

NCTC Technology & Toast

April 23, 7:15–9:00am
Holiday Inn-University,
Blacksburg
Information: www.thetechnologycouncil.com/Toast

Smith Mountain Lake EXPO

April 24, noon–6:00pm
Downtown Moneta
Call Jim Shauburger,
540-721-1203

Business Survival Series: Social Media, Search Engines, & You

April 28, 8:00–10:00am
Cost: \$25 per person
Call 540-983-0717 ext. 242,
e-mail
sbdc@roanokechamber.org

Rotary Club of Roanoke Valley

Tuesdays, 7:00–8:00am
Hidden Valley Country Club,
Roanoke
Call Bob McAdam, 540-776-2583

Kiwanis Club of Roanoke

Wednesdays 12:30–1:30pm
Schaal's Metamorphosis,
Roanoke
Call Judy Clark, 540-344-1766

Cosmopolitan Club of Roanoke

Wednesdays, 12:15–1:15pm
Call Mike Russell, 540-772-2778

Toastmasters International Clubs (Roanoke)

(Various times and places)
For second and fourth
Thursdays, 7:00pm,
call 540-342-3161;
For first and third
Thursdays, 7:00pm,
call 540-989-1310;
For noon Thursdays,
call 540-483-0261;
For first and third
Fridays, noon,
call 540-983-9260

We invite you to send your listings to news@vbfrent.com

the position is filled permanently.

Gets new contract

David W. Denny LLC, a Blacksburg based international sales, marketing and economic development firm, has won an exclusive contract with Applied Computing and Engineering (AC&E) of Warwickshire, England for managing sales and marketing in North America. AC&E develops and sells

simulation and integration software for aerospace, automotive, manufacturing and pharm/bio companies around the world.

Tech grants

The **Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute** has awarded five \$30,000 seed grants to support collaborative research between Virginia Tech and Carilion Clinic researchers on medical challenges that include heart care, cancer, infectious disease, obesity, and technology.

Airport contract

Roanoke Regional Airport has been awarded \$2.2 million in grant money from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The funding will be used to rehabilitate Taxiway T, as well as to provide important drainage improvements in the general aviation area.

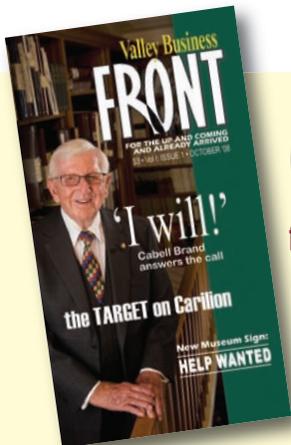
Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, the job training and employment non-profit organization, is consolidating its contract work centers in Roanoke, Rocky Mount and Radford. Work contracts in Rocky Mount will move to

Roanoke and the New River Valley. The impact to clients and Goodwill staff will be minimal, officials say.

New in center

House of Doors, a three-generation family-owned and operated tile and rail wood door manufacturer has opened its newest branch located in The New Century Venture Center, in Salem.

Compiled by Dan Smith



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Marianne Koperniak

is a human resource management professional who has worked in a number of industries and businesses including hotels, higher education, community service, and manufacturing. She is a graduate of Hollins University and earned certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources. She is a member of the national Society for Human Resource Management and the Roanoke Valley SHRM chapter. She has a freelance writer for a number of years. She and her family live in Roanoke.

Gene Marrano

is a former sales and marketing executive in various manufacturing fields, and one of the most prolific journalists in the Roanoke Valley. He not only writes for several publications, but he has a television show ("Interview With Gene Marrano" on Cox Channel 9) and a radio show ("Studio Virginia," WVTF Public Radio). [gmarrano@cox.net]

John Montgomery

has lived in Roanoke for 40 years, and is the publisher of Play by Play, a local sports monthly. [jmonty@cox.net]

Linda Nardin

owns an advertising, marketing and PR consultancy at Smith Mountain Lake. Previously, she worked in business communications management roles for IBM, Pillsbury and Green Giant Company. [blueskypublicrelationsllc@yahoo.com]

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writes for national, statewide and regional publications, focusing on emerging business issues. She has owned several small businesses, has an M.A. in Management and HR Development, and is an active member of the American Society of Business Publication Editors, the Society of Professional Journalists, and the Society of Business Editors and Writers. [dnason@c45b.com]

David Perry

works for the Western Virginia Land Trust, and is an accomplished freelance writer. He is a native of Blacksburg and a James Madison University Graduate. His writing has appeared in Blue Ridge Country and the Roanoker, among other publications. [dave@davidperryonline.com]

Cortney Phillips

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Dan Smith

is editor and co-owner of Valley Business FRONT. A native of Asheville, N.C., he has been a journalist for more than four decades and has won many journalism awards (writing, photography and design), and several awards for Public Radio essays. He is married, has two grown children and a grandchild. [dsmith@vbFRONT.com]

Kathy Surace

is FRONT Business Dress columnist, an image consultant and owner of Peacock Image in Roanoke. She was a fashion consultant for a major clothing chain for a number of years. [kssurace@aol.com]

Nicholas Vaassen

is a graphic designer with ten years experience, specializing in publications. Before joining Berryfield, Inc., and the Valley Business FRONT magazine assignment, his design projects included lifestyle, real estate, municipal, classified sales and cultural organization magazines in the Roanoke and southwestern Virginia markets. [nvaassen@berryfield.com]

Greg Vaughn

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Lori Wray White

is a freelance writer, photographer, and homebound instructor who revels in the freedom to do what she wants when she wants to do it. A former English teacher, she graduated with honors from Lynchburg College with a degree in English and a minor in writing. [hintonrae@msn.com]

Joel S. Williams

is founder and Managing Principal of Joel S Williams & Associates in Blacksburg, specializing in assisting the wealthy with wealth and estate plans. He is a Certified Financial Planner and graduate of the Certified Investment Management Analyst program at the Wharton School. He has a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Florida. [www.JoelSWilliams.com]



David Perry

MARCH > Contributor of the Month

Valley Business FRONT congratulates **David Perry**, who receives the Publisher's Choice and Editor's Choice for our "Contributor of the Month" including a "One Who's in the FRONT" certificate and special gift.

David profiled ADMMicro (a tech company), Bob Copty (commercial real estate), and Sam Lionberger III (construction); with stories that were both informative and engaging. With a lead-in on one company, stating it's "not your usual 'six guys and a frog' story" how could anyone resist? On all his assignments, David hops to it. Good job.

If you missed it, you can see it online (March 09 issue) at vbFRONT.com

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