

Roanoke's creativity goes green (literally)

Plants take center stage



THE BEAUTIFUL centerpieces for Tuesday's awards lunch banquet were lovingly crafted by Dana Long from Let's Party Creatively. Dana used the centerpieces to tell the story of Roanoke and to commemorate the splendor of the fall season in the Roanoke Valley.

Origins: "Roanoke" is a word from the Powhatan language spoken by the Powhatan tribe of Tidewater, Virginia. It comes from the word "rawrenock," which means, "things rubbed smooth by hand" and referred to polished shells that were used as currency. The City of Roanoke was first called "Big Lick" owing to the salt deposits in the area.

Railroads: Members of the Roanoke Valley Model Train Club loaned examples of train engines manufactured in Roanoke. VML greatly appreciates R. David McCall for heading up this effort and for coming up with such great models! These included:

- The "Y" class was one of the strongest pulling steam locomotives in the world, earning their nickname as the "workhorses of the Norfolk & Western."

- The "A" class (aka "The Finest Steam Engine Ever Built") was equipped with the most up to date features in North American railroading.
- The "J" class, designed for first-class passenger service, were as reliable as they were beautiful. Number 611, the last one in existence, has been designated a National Historic Mechanical Engineering Landmark.

Beer: Brewery-themed centerpieces included examples from Big Lick Brewing Company and Soaring Ridge Brewery. Big Lick Brewing and The Hotel Roanoke recently launched a pre-prohibition style beer to commemorate "The Grand Old Lady on the Hill" – a documentary about the history of this iconic Roanoke landmark. The beer was brewed in the style from the time period with locally sourced ingredients. Soaring Ridge Brewery has named its flagship brews after regional landmarks such as Tinker Creek, Virginia Creeper, and White Top.

Market Square: A highlight of every VML conference in Roanoke is Host City Night held in Market Square. The historic Roanoke City Market (popularly known as the Farmer's Market) is the oldest continuously operating open-air market in the Commonwealth. It began in 1882, when licenses were issued to 25 area "hucksters" or vendors. The Historic Roanoke City Market has been recognized as a "Great American Public Place" by the Lyndhurst Foundation (along with the likes of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, DC and Central Park in New York City).



"Planternoon" guest activity planters

Dana Long also led the "Planternoon" activity Monday afternoon which found several of the spouses and guests of conference attendees getting their hands dirty while creating unique planters. Gnomes were provided; dinosaurs were optional!

