

# BLUE RIDGE BUSINESS JOURNAL

By Dan Smith  
*Blue Ridge Business Journal*  
May 22, 2006

The Queen of Schmooze departs. There are influences in the evolution of any business that you can point back to with pride, with horror or with some other meaningful response because they were important. I look at Deborah Nason coming by my office five years ago, seeking an opportunity to do something she just knew she could do well, as one of those.

Deborah has been our lead freelancer since that time, a position she so clearly earned that she is the only "contributing editor" we've ever had. Deborah came with little experience, but a lot of enthusiasm and an ability to schmooze the likes of which I was not aware existed.

A little while back, she handed in her 100th story-most of them cover stories-and I think that over that period she made far more friends among our readers than a journalist has a right to expect. Deborah didn't make the friends by pandering. She did it the old-fashioned way by writing stories that were true (not just factual) and by telling readers how business was done right. That means a lot because there has to be a reason to pick up a publication; you have to get some value for your time. Deborah has always presented that. Now she and her husband, Richard, a good guy and an optometric researcher who was caught up in the Johnson & Johnson misfortune recently, will return to The North-New Jersey or Connecticut or New Hampshire or one of those states that all look alike to me. I, among many, many others, wish them both well. But, boy, I'm going to miss Deborah's contributions. She made my job easier and your read better. Deborah asked if she could use this space to say au revoir, les enfants. I said yes.

Here 'tis:

"I want to thank all of you in the Blue Ridge Region business community for being so wonderful to work with over the past five years. It has been a privilege to get to know so many interesting people and diverse businesses throughout this far-flung region. In the spirit of true regionalism, I recommend that you make the effort to visit communities in the area that you have never seen before, and to get acquainted with their business communities. I am sure you will be surprised by what you will learn-I always was. I will miss you."