

THE POWER ISSUE

UNDER

By C-VILLE staff

Maybe they're not the biggest names in their fields. They're not the wealthiest—some of them are still paying off student loans (or accruing them). The companies they run aren't the largest or oldest in town.

But these 15 locals—the focus of our annual Power Issue—are young, they're hungry, and if you don't know them yet, you will soon.

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THE LENDER

Corbin Hargraves, 32

The Providence Group of Virginia

To call Corbin Hargraves a successful young entrepreneur only gets at part of his story.

Hargraves, who grew up in Danville and got a business degree from Virginia Tech, has been a saver from an early age, driven and fascinated by the empowerment that goes along with good money management. After he arrived in Charlottesville in 2006 to work for a financial advising firm, he realized many in the community, especially fellow African Americans, never learned the skills to let them have that kind of relationship with money.

In 2007, he co-founded The Providence Group of Virginia—a money management, insurance, and real estate advisory firm—to help change that. And teaching financial literacy goes way beyond the office for Hargraves: He co-hosts a “Money Matters” show on 92.7 Kiss FM, which is expanding to daily midday airings next month; he holds seminars on financial management at churches and nonprofits around the city; and he serves on the boards of the Young Black Professionals Network and Bank On Greater Charlottesville, a program that offers low- and moderate-income locals inexpensive banking alternatives to high-interest, short-term payday loans.

Working in personal finance is more than just a job for Hargraves, it’s a daily effort to change the community for the better, breaking the cycle of poverty one investment at a time.



Power picks

We turned to prominent locals—many of whom have made C-VILLE's Power Issue in past years—and asked them which up-and-comers to watch.



ERIC KELLEY

PAM MORAN

Superintendent of
Albemarle County Schools

Albemarle County schools are constantly pushing for ways to innovate, and **Chad Ratliff**, 39, assistant director of instructional programs, is “a central figure in the school division’s transformation towards the ‘maker curriculum,’”

according to Moran, who describes the curriculum as “a new wave instructional model that places more emphasis on project-based student learning rather than the memorization and recitation of facts.”

In maker programs, Moran adds, “students conceive, research, design and develop products of their choosing, learning through the trial-and-error development process. A key component of the maker curriculum is partnerships with local businesses and UVA. Those who have visited or worked with the Albemarle program include MIT, Harvard, the Smithsonian Museum and the New York Hall of Science.”

BRIANNA LARROCCO



BRIANNA LARROCCO

THE PROF

Christine Mahoney, 34

Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

A Fulbright, tenure at 33, one book published and another in the works, a major grant from the National Science Foundation to study human rights advocacy in conflict zones: It’s easy to mark Batten School Associate Professor of Public Policy and Politics Christine Mahoney as a rising star among UVA’s faculty based on her bio. But her career is worth watching for reasons that go well beyond her CV.

For years, Mahoney has studied how activist groups—organizations focused on human rights, consumer rights, the environment— influence policy in a world dominated by corporate interests. These days, her focus is on global aid work; she’s done extensive field research on the efforts of advocates for displaced peoples in Bhutan, Burma, Colombia, Croatia, Sri Lanka, Somalia, and Uganda.

Now she’s heading up an effort to put that research to work at UVA, and pass on the passion to a new generation of scholars. The Batten School’s Social Entrepreneurship Initiative aims to teach students how to approach global social and environmental issues from a startup mindset, going beyond charity to develop practical, scalable solutions to the world’s problems. The idea came in part from a group of students who wanted to see Batten offer undergraduate classes devoted to sustainable development. They found their champion in Mahoney, and their work is having real impact close to home. Students in one of Mahoney’s classes landed a \$20,000 grant to implement a prison reentry program in Charlottesville that allowed the city to hire ex-felons for eight-week stints in the parks and recreation department, allowing them to readjust to working life.

Now Mahoney, along with students and other young faculty, is seeking funding to grow the initiative into a full-fledged program with an endowed chair. Over time, “I’ve become more and more convinced that we can achieve social justice through direct action,” she said.

THE MONEY MAN

Jason Vandever, 31

Treasurer, City of
Charlottesville

Jason Vandever has been familiar with Charlottesville politics from an early age. His dad, Tom Vandever, was Chairman of the Charlottesville Democratic Committee and served as the city’s mayor from 1992 to 1994.

But the younger Vandever didn’t think he’d follow the same track. As a kid, an academic all-star at Charlottesville High School, and then as a student at James Madison University, he planned for a career in music education. Then came life after graduation, when he moved to

Texas and started working for a Wachovia branch. Banking and money management came naturally, and he rose through the ranks quickly. He came home to Charlottesville in 2008 to take a job as the city’s chief deputy treasurer, and successfully ran for the top job of treasurer in April 2013 when his predecessor, Jennifer Brown, stepped down, winning in a special election by a huge margin. He’s now the chief taxman, investment planner, and general CFO for a city with an operating budget of \$135 million. It’s a municipal position important enough that, since the 1870s, it has been enshrined in the state Constitution as a role elected directly by and answering to the voters, simultaneously part of but apart from the rest of the city’s governing structure.



BRIANNA LARROCCO

And Vandever is the youngest person ever to hold it here. It’s work that combines his skills in finance with an inherited desire for public service, he said—and he hopes to keep doing it as long as his fellow Charlottesvilleans will have him.

THE UNDERGRAD

Margaret Gould, 21

UVA College of Arts & Sciences

Besides a college career with “most likely to succeed” stamped all over it—dual majors in global development studies and French, Madison House volunteer, Echols scholar—Meg Gould has the distinction of being tapped as a leader by both her peers and the school’s governors.

In February, after several rounds of interviews, she was appointed as the student representative on UVA’s Board of Visitors. A month later, she was elected to the University’s Honor Committee, the body that adjudicates student disciplinary procedures. While the former is a non-voting advisory position and the latter makes her one of more than two dozen representatives, the double appointment arguably gives her a bigger role in University governance than any other undergraduate.

That’s not lost on Gould. She said she wants to use the coming year to encourage the University’s governors and administrators to give students more responsibility, while pushing her peers to step up and get involved. Her school, she said, “is a school with endless

opportunities, yet opportunities that don’t reach all students. I wanted to help UVA at the institutional level see the on-the-ground level of students, as well as work within an honor system I admire, believe in and want to improve.”

BRIANNA LAROCCO



THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stephen Davis, 34

Community Investment Collaborative

Like a lot of young locals in the non-profit sector, Stephen Davis spent time working on political campaigns early in his career, and like many of his peers, the job has always been more than a job. In politics, he said, the idea is that you can achieve change by putting the right people in office. He sees the work he does now as president of the Community Investment Collaborative (CIC), an organization that offers small business education and microloans, in a similar light: Help people break down the barriers that lie between them and the business they want to run, and they won’t

just live better lives, they’ll contribute to a better community.

CIC was founded in 2011 by local entrepreneur Toan Nguyen, who knew from his experience owning C’ville Coffee through the recession that a smart plan and a small loan can make the difference between success and failure for a new startup. Davis came on as the organization’s first president just over a year ago, and oversees a small, young staff that guides clients through the CIC experience. He knew he wanted the job in part because he understood that small financial changes can have big impacts. He learned that himself when he and his wife bought their first home in the county a year before.

“Through the process, I realized how much easier it was for us because we had managed to get just a little ahead financially,” he said. “Just making ends meet or being even just a little behind makes everything harder—whether it’s buying a home, planning for the future or pursuing a dream of starting a business.”

With Davis at the helm, CIC’s leg-up philosophy is having results. Since it launched, the organization has helped 25 business owners in the Charlottesville area open or expand through three 17-week courses and \$46,000 in small loans, and more are in development. Davis still has his foot in politics; he volunteers on the steering committee of the Albemarle County Democratic Party. Helping candidates, helping would-be entrepreneurs—for Davis, it’s about a bigger vision. “These certainly aren’t the only ways you can work towards change in your community,” he said, “but I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to do both.”

KELLY KOLLAR

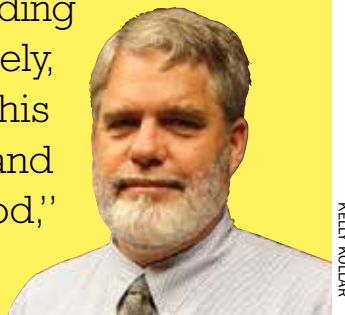


COURTESY UVA

DAVE CHAPMAN

Charlottesville Commonwealth’s Attorney

As Charlottesville’s Commonwealth’s attorney for two decades, Dave Chapman has won convictions in tough, high-profile cases including the murder trial of UVA lacrosse player George Hugueley, but he also has full faith in the legal acumen of his office’s youngest members **Areshini Pather**, 32, and **Nina-Alice Anthony**, 28. “They’re really, really good,” said Chapman. “Stellar young attorneys.”



THE THEATER KING

Matt Joslyn, 37

Live Arts

In the four-and-a-half years since Matt Joslyn took the helm at Live Arts in 2010, he has won rave reviews from his colleagues as a passionate supporter of the arts with a keen business sense who has helped the theater company triple its educational offerings and overcome the financial hardships that nearly crippled it.

“When Matt was hired, Live Arts faced a dauntingly large accumulated deficit,” said Live Arts Artistic Director Julie Hamberg, who praises Joslyn for his “astounding fundraising acumen” and his belief in the organization’s mission. “He not only brought us out of that most difficult of years,” Hamberg said, “but has continued to do so each year since.”

Among Joslyn’s specific initiatives are the Live Arts Generation Campaign, a \$3.2 million fundraising effort that aims to cover costs of improvements to the public spaces in the theater company’s 10-year-old building on Water Street and create an endowment to support the local theater company for decades to come. He also produces the annual Live Arts Gala, a bash that raises one-third of Live Arts’ budget in a single night.

Keeping the money flowing may be Joslyn’s main responsibility, but his involvement in Live Arts goes well beyond financing as he’s directed productions of *The Producers* and *A Chorus Line* and will be the director of *Les Misérables* this coming holiday season.

Says longtime Live Arts volunteer and current Director of Engagement Tracie Skipper, “Matt believes in this place. He gives his life to cultivating and sustaining a strong financial future for this organization. He is the face of Live Arts and his passion for the organization is contagious to all of his employees and our company members.”



BRIANNA LAROCO

THE POWER ISSUE

DAVID HEILBERG

defense attorney

For close to 40 years, criminal defense attorney David Heilberg has fought on behalf of his clients and is one of a handful of local lawyers qualified to defend capital murder cases. A near constant presence in area courts, he’s had a chance to observe countless other local attorneys in action and sees particular promise in 33-year-old **Samantha Freed**, who handled the appeal of convicted murderer Anthony Dale Crawford in 2013. “She’s up and coming. She’s already on the Board of the Virginia Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and I just think Sam is ambitious in a good way,” said Heilberg, who noted that while Freed lost the appeal, she got the court to side with her on several legal issues. “At a young age, she’s taken on some difficult cases,” he said.

THE BUSINESSMAN

Mark Brown, 33

Main Street Arena and Yellow Cab of Charlottesville

Four years ago, when he was still in his 20s, Mark Brown burst onto the development scene by purchasing what was then called the Charlottesville Ice Park. It had long been a money loser, and some feared that ice skating in Charlottesville was doomed, and that the expansive building that anchors the west end of the Downtown Mall would end up vacant for years. Brown had a different vision for a multi-use venue that could do more than serve as a place for hockey teams to practice and families to cool down. With the addition of a floating floor, he’s turned what’s now known as The Main Street Arena into a profitable venue that hosts events throughout the year and still manages to be an ice rink part of the time.

Apparently, that wasn’t keeping Brown busy enough, because two years later, he set his sights on another struggling business, Yellow Cab of Charlottesville, and promptly improved the business by adding a fleet of hybrid cars equipped with in-cab credit card swipes. What’s next for Brown? We’ll have to stay tuned.



JEN FARELLO



BRIANNA LAROCCO

THE BUILDERS

Frank Ballif, 36 Charlie Armstrong, 36

Southern Development

These young guns of Southern Development are changing the residential real estate landscape faster than just about any other construction firm operating in Central Virginia. Frank Ballif (left) showed his development acumen early on when he was a UVA engineering student interning for Dr. Charles Hurt at Virginia Land Co. According to fellow developer Richard Spurzem, Ballif brought several projects that had been previously shelved back to life, battling through difficult rezonings and approvals from the County and City, while simultaneously launching Southern.

"For years, I called him the wunderkind developer/builder in Charlottesville," said Spurzem. "Now, he is a well-established player in the development community and might be the largest locally owned builder in the area." At Southern, Ballif has surrounded himself with other hard drivers including Vice President of Development Charlie Armstrong, who has helped lead the way to construction in numerous developments including Old Trail Village, Belvedere, and Burnet Commons. Armstrong was 2013 president of the Blue Ridge Home Builders Association and, with Ballif, oversaw the opening of a full service design center on Cherry Avenue, where buyers of Southern Development Homes work with a full time design consultant to personalize their new home.

THE FARMERS

Joel Slezak, 30 Erica Hellen, 28

Free Union Grass Farm

He may have gone to school to study politics, but Joel Slezak is now at the forefront of the local food movement with his fiancée, Erica Hellen. The owners of Free Union Grass Farm—located 15 miles northwest of Charlottesville in Free Union—the young couple have been dedicated to raising free-range chicken, ducks, and cows in an environmentally friendly way since 2010.

A homeschooled kid before attending Tandem Friends School, Slezak spent a good chunk of his childhood running around outside and helping out with the cows on his family's 13-acre homestead. He attended Guilford College, but it turns out farming is in his blood, and he said he'd known from a young age that "conventional jobs" weren't for him.

"I've always been skeptical of the urban lifestyle and how fragile it is," said Slezak. "It's nice to know that I can create a lifestyle that can sustain itself if the world falls apart."

Hellen, an Oklahoma native, arrived in Charlottesville as an intern at Polyface Farms, an organic, pasture-based local market farm that's been around since the 1960s.

"I knew that any female who works at a farm is definitely going to be a badass," said Slezak. They'd both been toying with the idea of starting a farm, and shortly after meeting and beginning to date, Slezak and Hellen schlepped out to the countryside and started trying their hands at raising poultry.

Four years later, Slezak said there's no way they'd be successful now if it weren't for farms like Polyface and local chefs who are so passionate about local food.

"When we first started, we raised a bunch of chickens and just started taking them to chefs," he said with a laugh. "We didn't even have business cards. We didn't know what we were doing, but we learned from our mistakes really quickly."

Young farmers are in, it seems, and once they started getting their footing as farmers and business owners, he said it wasn't too hard to make a name for themselves among their customers. The challenge, he said, is getting in with the veterans in the industry.

"I think the old school, conventional farms are often skeptical of what we're doing, and they don't always take us seriously," Slezak said. "So it's been fun to kind of learn to respect your neighbors, and seeing them coming around finally as we grow our business."

JEYON FALSINI

owner of the band-booking firm Magnus Music LLC

Falsini made the C-VILLE power list in the past, but this year his advanced age—42—knocked him out of the running for our special "under 40" feature. Fortunately, that allowed him to nominate fellow local music industry titan **Rob Richmond**, a 36-year-old sound engineer who's the owner of Bay 1 Studios, a recording studio on East Market Street which Falsini described as the "go-to spot" for bands looking to lay down some tracks. "That man is busy from the minute he gets up to the minute he goes to bed," said Falsini. "I don't go two or three days without thinking about him."



ANDREW SCHEUREN

THE INNOVATOR

Zach Buckner, 36

Founder, Relay Foods

More than 20 years before launching the online grocery hub and delivery service Relay Foods, Zach Buckner started his first business when he was 7 years old, selling flowers he clipped from his neighbors' yards.

"The hardest part was making sure my merchandise wasn't sold to its original owner," Buckner said.

The UVA graduate and father of four earned a degree in electrical engineering, has five patents, and founded two online consulting companies before Relay Foods. Buckner dreamt up the idea of Relay Foods, a startup business that allows shoppers to buy groceries online from dozens of local vendors, when he was 29.

Buckner's business grew quickly, and the Charlottesville-based startup has expanded across the region, with pickup locations as far north as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and as far south as Raleigh, North Carolina.

It's a grocery delivery service with a twist. The concept is simple: Cut out the last mile of delivery, and let the customers come to them. Employees make regular trips to local vendors and stores, sort thousands of groceries into rows of Rubbermaid totes at the distribution center on Carlton Avenue, and load them up onto trucks. Shoppers can then pick up their groceries at one of more than 20 drop locations, which are scattered across the city and surrounding counties as far as Afton and Lake Monticello.

Despite the fact that he got his start at such a young age, Buckner said he hasn't struggled to be taken seriously in the business world.

"Actually, I found the opposite to be true," he said. "People seem to work dou-

bly hard to support the underdog, and as long as ambition oustrips actual capability, it's easy to remain an underdog."

For anyone with business ambition like his own, Buckner has simple advice.

"Start small and build up," he said.



JOHN ROBINSON

THE POWER ISSUE



THE CONNECTOR

**Brennan
Gould, 31****Charlottesville Community
Foundation**

When it comes to jobs, Brennan Gould's sounds pretty great: find willing donors, identify worthy local causes, and then give away lots of money. The 31-year-old, seen as a rising star in local philanthropy circles, is director of grants and strategic initiatives at the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation (CACF). In that role, Gould oversees the Community Endowment, the Foundation's large unrestricted grant pool that every year provides

**KRISTIN
SZAKOS**

Charlottesville City Councilor

Szakos, who is serving her second term on City Council, said she's keeping her eye on **Wes Bellamy**, a young teacher who narrowly lost in last year's Democratic primary. "He came within six votes of securing a Democratic nomination," she said. "He's a real go-getter. He's played critical roles in the formation of after school recreation programs for kids, the Young Black Professional Network, the local chapter of the Alliance of Black School Educators, and the Alliance for Black Male Achievement. He teaches school and mentors several young men, is active in his church, and is always looking for ways to help under-represented folks have a voice in city affairs. Wes is determined to make a difference in the world, and he's already begun to make a difference in this community.

ELLI WILLIAMS



BRIANNA LAROCCO

THE POWER ISSUE

funding to some of this area's most worthy organizations in the arts, education, community enrichment, health, environment and human services. In 2013, the most recent year for which figures are available, recipients included dozens of nonprofits ranging from the Boys & Girls Club of Central Virginia to the Virginia Consort choral group to

the public schools in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle, Fluvanna and Greene counties.

The success of the Community Endowment and component funds is dependent on the donors who last year enabled \$8.1 million to be distributed through 1,379 grants, and Gould is deeply engaged in the non-profit world outside her job as

well, serving on the boards of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Blue Ridge and of Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville. Encouraging giving and finding new sources of funds is one of the many ways Gould shines, says Habitat's Executive Director Dan Rosensweig. "She's calm, patient, and innovative," he said.

THE POWER ISSUE



BRIANNA LARROCCO

THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES MUSIC MAVEN

Collean Laney, 24

Red Light Management

Collean Laney has likely been the orchestrator of some of your best nights out in Charlottesville. As the general manager for

the Jefferson Theater and The Southern, she's in charge of making sure the show goes on, whether that means overseeing the care and feeding of celebrity musicians or any number of the less glamorous tasks involved with ensuring the doors open and the lights go up at two of Charlottesville's most popular music venues.

Laney rose quickly through the ranks of the local entertainment industry: After an internship at a New York Times event series, she joined LiveNation, and was based first in Boston, then Houston.

"Lots of corporate ladder climbing, lots of cubicles, lots of artificial relationships," she said. Then she came home to her native Virginia to work for Red Light. "As cliché as it sounds, I got here because I needed more from my life than just a paycheck," she said. "As opposed to a large city like New York, Charlottesville allows you get to know people really well and become invested in them on a much more human level, which is what pushes me to work harder at this job. I want people to love coming to these venues as much as I do."

DAN ROSENSWEIG

Director, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Charlottesville

Dan Rosensweig knows the area building community better than most, thanks to his job at the head of the area's Habitat for Humanity organization and his role as the chair of the Charlottesville Planning Commission, and he named a young standout doing impressive work: **Mike Ball**. "For almost a decade, Mike has been well-known and respected in the relatively small circle of the local building and trade world," said Rosensweig.

"However, in the past few years, as a result of a bold move he made, he's really started knocking it out of the park and has thus become a hot commodity among local residents looking to build or renovate. He left Artisan Construction, where he was a project manager, and hung a shingle, determined to build a business focused on quality craftsmanship and personalized customer service. He went from not really knowing if he'd be able to make it for six months to two years in being widely known for doing some of the best work around. People are really happy with his hands-on approach. On top of that, he is a genuinely nice, caring person."



JOHN ROBINSON



ANDREA HUBBELL

THE CHEF

Dean Maupin, 37

C&O Restaurant

Last summer, Dean Maupin was handed a legacy that was almost as old as he was, and he's now the owner of one of the most beloved spots in town. Last year, the former executive chef at Keswick took over C&O Restaurant, a long-standing Charlottesville classic that had been in the hands of the late Dave Simpson for 32 years.

Taking ownership of the restaurant brought the chef's career full circle, as Maupin showed up at C&O as a 19-year-old chef in the 1990s. After 20 years in the food industry, Maupin noted that "not much comes easy in the restaurant biz," and it's all about immersing yourself among the right people if you want to get ahead.

"You don't have to attend culinary school to make it big," Maupin said. "Try and apprentice under a great chef, learn how to bake and make pastries if you can, study wine and spirits, understand that restaurants are a team effort so surround yourself with thoughtful and caring people. It's invaluable to have that skillset."