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August 2024

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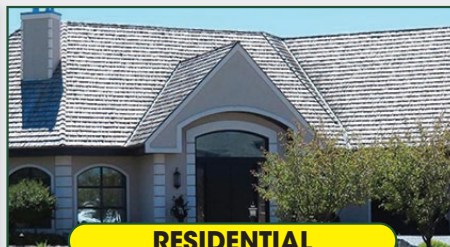


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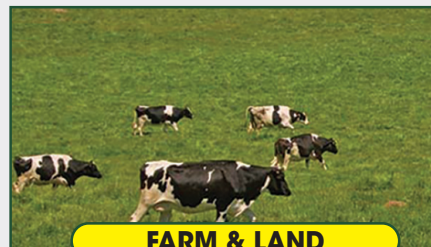
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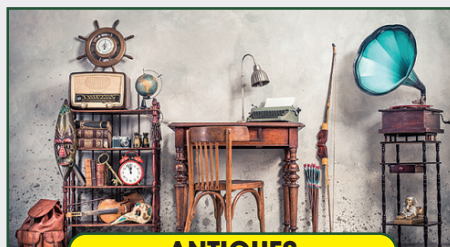
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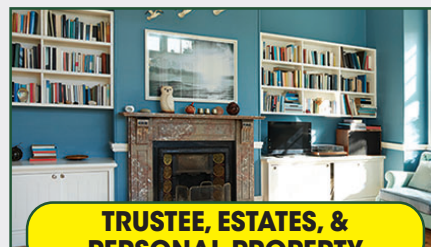
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TriCities Living

BURGER BAR

MOVES CUSTOMERS TO A DIFFERENT ERA

by Kevin Mays



OPENED IN 1943, THE ICONIC BURGER BAR IS LOCATED ON PIEDMONT AVENUE IN BRISTOL, VIRGINIA.



BURGER BAR EMPLOYEE CHRISTOPHER GAUVREAU SEASONS A BASKET OF HOT FRENCH FRIES DURING THE LUNCH RUSH.

Take one step into the Burger Bar and you're carried away to a different time.

The ambience and character of the iconic burger joint transports you to the 1950's from the time you walk through the door.

From the booths and tables, to the stools at the dining bar, to the grill behind the bar, hangings and decorations on the walls — including a rotary dial payphone and a studio microphone — everything is genuine from long ago and that's the way

owners Joe and Kayla Deel want it.

The Deels, who both have culinary degrees, took over ownership of the Burger Bar 11 years ago after spending some time working at a fine-dining restaurant.

Joe Deel said he never really thought about running a burger restaurant until one fateful night.

"The Mumford and Sons concert happened here in downtown Bristol," Deel said, referring to the 2012 outdoor concert event that attracted thousands to downtown. "The Burger Bar got slammed."

Deel was working at another restaurant under the same ownership to help out during the concert. But he was asked to go help out at the packed Burger Bar and he agreed.

"So I came over here to work, to help out that night, and I absolutely loved it," Deel said. "It just really hit me."

It was not long after the concert, the couple purchased the restaurant and have now been operating it for over a decade.

When Deel bought the Burger Bar, it was in its original form with the same 25 seats since opening in 1943.

Deel added onto the restaurant by buying the building next door and adding another room with more booths and tables. But he kept the atmosphere the same.

"I wanted to keep it original," Deel said. "When the locals came in, I said, 'What was it like when you were a kid?'"

He wants the food to taste that way too.

"The chili we make here today is from the Bunting's Pharmacy



chili recipe. We've tried to keep it original," Deel said.

It all adds up to a back-in-time experience.

"When someone brings their grandkids in here, I want them to show their grandkids what it was like when they were a kid," he emphasized. "So what we've done is we've tried to keep this original. In 1943 was when it first started. I consider it a very '50s restaurant. So we keep it that way. From the way we serve it, to the hospitality."

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Deel said the Burger Bar's location has not always been ideal, but the business growth of State Street and downtown Bristol over the last decade has made the location nearly perfect.

The Burger Bar is located on Piedmont Avenue, adjacent to State Street and Deel said it's benefitted from the growth of downtown.

Eleven years ago, Deel said that was not the case.

"I got in on it on the down floor and it seemed like downtown just blew up and I was lucky to be part of

"We're within miles of the casino, so they'll look for downtown and they want to come downtown and walk around. So, yeah we get people. I talk to people from all over the United States who have come to that casino."



it. Life's all about timing," he said.

As downtown has grown, festivals and events have brought more people into town.

With auto racing, various car shows and musical events — including the nationally-recognized Bristol Rhythm & Roots Reunion music festival — thousands of tourists from all over find their way into downtown Bristol.

Deel said the popularity of the Bristol Casino and soon to be Hard Rock Hotel & Casino also brings in plenty of customers.

"The out-of-town folks come to the casino and then they want to venture out," Deel said. "We're within miles of the casino, so they'll look for downtown and they want to come downtown and walk around. So, yeah we get people. I talk to people from all over the United States who have come to that casino."

BURGERS OF ALL TYPES

With its name, visitors to the Burger Bar are correct in assuming that burgers top the menu. The choices are plentiful and they carry their own unique names.

From the "I Can't Help It Burger", a burger with bacon and cheese, to the "Fire God Burger", with habanero, ghost, scorpion and jalapeno peppers, along with Tabasco sauce, onion straws and pepperjack cheese, the Burger Bar's menu offers burgers for every taste.

The restaurant also offers a turkey burger and a veggie burger.

Not interested in a burger? The Burger Bar offers a variety of other sandwiches, including a grilled cheese, a triple grilled cheese, the Reuben, a BLT and a chicken



CUSTOMERS DINE IN AT THE BURGER BAR DURING A LUNCHTIME.



sandwich or chicken wrap.

Hot dogs are also on the menu, including a chili-cheese dog.

And there's a full kids menu.

In the mood for a salad? The Burger Bar has a variety of those too.

There's more than just regular fries and onion rings as side items. The menu includes parmesan fries, sweet potato fries along with tater tots and parmesan tots.

The Burger Bar also caters, with menus to fit any taste for businesses and weddings, schools, nonprofits and churches.

WHAT ABOUT HANK?

The Burger Bar is forever linked to country music.

Even if the iconic diner wasn't surrounded by the music of downtown Bristol, it is tied with the folklore of the final night of life of Hank Williams Sr.

Deel said there are many different versions of the tale but many include the Burger Bar.

The legend goes that a driver for Williams stopped in Bristol on New Year's Eve, went into the Burger Bar to get a burger for himself and possibly for his famous passenger.

The car then left and headed to West Virginia. It was there the driver took Williams to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead the following morning.

Deel said there's another celebrity



JOE KEEN, CO-OWNER OF BURGER BAR, PREPARES BURGERS ON THE GRILL FOR CUSTOMERS OF LIKE HE DOES EVERYDAY DURING THE LUNCH SHIFT.



A SHOT FROM INSIDE THE BURGER BAR LOCATED ON PIEDMONT AVE IN BRISTOL, VIRGINIA.



that he likes to promote as having a connection to the Burger Bar.

Country music star Tennessee Ernie Ford grew up in Bristol and Deel said he must have visited the Burger Bar.

"More than likely he ate here tons

there off of Windsor Avenue."

Ford is the only individual who had the number one song on the music charts and the top-rated television show at the same time.

"Tennessee Ernie Ford was a great

times," Deel said of Ford. "This was a downtown restaurant and he grew up just over

man and he was a religious man," Deel said. "If he would have gone mainstream and pop when he went big, he would have been the next Elvis. But he didn't. He stuck to the grassroots gospel and country."

It's the stories, the decor and the environment that often brings in customers from the local area and from all across the country to the Burger Bar. But, it's the food that keeps bringing them back. It's a winning combination for a landmark that has stood for over 80 years. ♦





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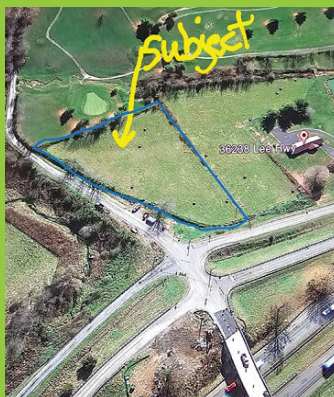


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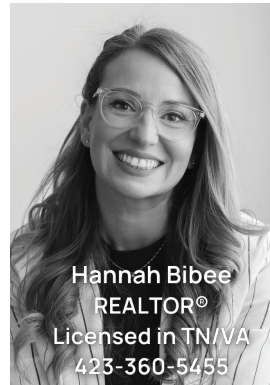
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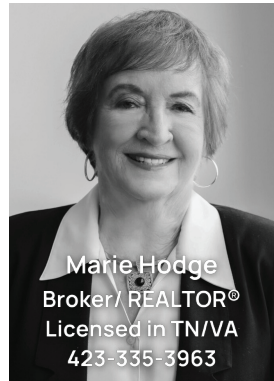
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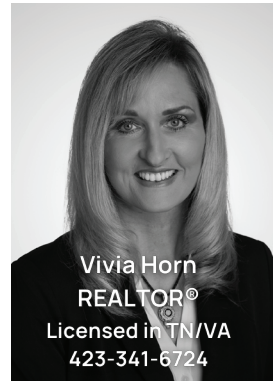
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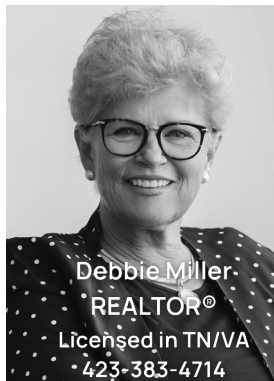
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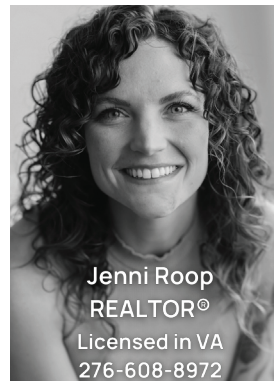
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72 Fairway Drive | Bristol, TN

6 Bed | 4 Full 1 Half Bath | 5,232 SqFt

This beautifully renovated home is located on the 6th green of Tennessee's oldest golf club. It has been updated to reflect today's living yet retains some of the original design elements such as the wood ceilings, stone fireplaces and skylights. The first floor is an open contemporary space with two large living rooms, a dining area and a large eat in kitchen. This kitchen is the center of this home with a complete renovation that includes custom Omega Alder cabinets, two wall ovens, five burner gas range, two sinks and large island. The adjacent butler's pantry/laundry area includes a second dishwasher, ice maker and sink. Two bedroom suites are on the main level. The Primary suite is a large room with a stone gas fireplace and a completely remodeled bathroom and two custom closets. The second main level bedroom suite is a combination sitting, bedroom and fully remodeled bathroom and custom closet. This suite is a convenient spot for an in-law suite, visitors with small children or older children returning home. The second floor has two bedrooms and a completely remodeled bath with double sinks. The lower level has walk out capability to the golf course and patio area. This level includes a bathroom, two bedrooms (one currently used as a study), a recreation space and a wet bar. A large storage area contains a second laundry area with a sink, built in shelving and a workshop space. An over-sized basement level garage with potential for a variety of uses adjoins the lower level patio.

Offered at: \$1,560,000

Listing Agent: Alison McCabe (276)356-4471 | amccabe@bhhsjones.com



846 Glenview Drive | Abingdon, VA

7 Bed | 8 Bath | 8,241 SqFt | .83 Acres

This residence, situated in Fox Pointe along the Glenrochie Golf Course in historic Abingdon, Virginia, boasts unmatched quality and will continually impress with its numerous upgrades and features. The heart of the home is a custom kitchen equipped with a gas range, double ovens, Advantium microwave/oven, expansive walk-in pantry, Meile built in and plumbed coffee system, substantial center island, and built-in refrigerator. The main level also includes a spacious great room and dining area, both benefiting from a vaulted ceiling that offers a stunning view of the outdoors. The primary bedroom features an extraordinary closet that provides access to both the en-suite bathroom and laundry. Additionally, two sizable bedrooms and an office are located on the main level. Main level porch provides a spectacular view of the golf course. The second floor offers a private guest suite ideal for in-law quarters, two more bedrooms, and ample floored storage with potential for finishing.

Offered at: \$2,350,000

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*Photo rendering included is based on building design plans and is not a photo representation of the lot/home under construction.



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UNDER CONTRACT



\$249,500

266 CHURCH ST, ABINGDON - Two bedroom, one bath cottage that is all on one level. Within walking distance to downtown Abingdon. Has a 24 x 36 detached garage/shop with bathroom and office. Call today for a showing MLS #94298

UNDER CONTRACT



\$135,500

120 TRIGG ST, ABINGDON - Nice single family home in downtown Abingdon; located on Trigg St, in the heart of town. This property combines location, size and price, making it a perfect place to call home. Two bedrooms, one bath, kitchen, dining, living room and a full basement. Approximately 986 square feet. Plenty of windows and hardwood floors in main rooms. Basement with 2 entrances and partly finished with a bath. Good starter home or as an investment. MLS #94390

UNDER CONTRACT



\$200,000

20851 A DEER RUN RD, ABINGDON - Located in the popular Deer Run Estates. This updated townhouse in Abingdon, is close to all town amenities, without the town taxes. Two bedrooms and one and a half baths are featured in this one level living. New floors, new paint, updated kitchen with large eat in area, updated master and master bathroom are just some of the lovely features this town house offers. Make an appointment today! MLS #93864

SOLD



\$259,000

12155 ARBOR STREET, MEADOWVIEW - A very well maintained brick ranch in the village of Emory. Many possibilities for this property: a large family with space for children and pets; an in-law area in the lower level; convert the lower level into a rental unit; or just lots of space for one or two people. Beautiful hardwood floors, cozy kitchen with appliances; double lot with mature trees and flowers; advantages of the near-by Emory & Henry College; one mile to I 81; short drive to Abingdon or Glade Spring; located on a dead-end street. MLS #93313

REDUCED



\$1,195,000

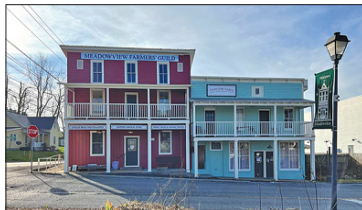
TBA FOLEY GAP RD - BRISTOL VA - Exceptional property located near the village of Mendota and the newly opened Mendota Trail. This beautiful tract has over 9100 feet of river frontage on the North Fork Holston River; perfect for fun activities such as kayaking, fishing or tubing. There is a total of approximately 165 acres with 55 acres being open tillable land and the remaining is woodland. Multiple building and/or camping site possibilities or use as your new vacation property. Great for hunting. Old barn, with electrical service, currently on the property. MLS #89145

REDUCED



\$449,500

117 W VALLEY ST - ABINGDON VA - This could be a once in a lifetime opportunity to own a historic home on tree lined Valley St. One of Abingdon's fine old Craftsman style homes located right in the middle of the Old & Historic District and within walking distance to the Barter Theatre, Martha Washington Inn and the Virginia Creeper Trail. Enjoy all the fine restaurants and shopping venues in downtown Abingdon and you are just steps away from the Public Library. This 2000+ sf home offers 4 bedrooms, 1-1/2 baths, hardwood floors and two porches (one being an upstairs balcony porch). Included is a detached office building with approximately 1600 square feet fronting on Mason Place. MLS #89400



\$395,000

13180 MEADOWVIEW SQUARE, MEADOWVIEW - Formerly the Harvest Table Restaurant and Gift Shop situated in the heart of Meadowview with approximately 6227 square feet total. Property was completely renovated in 2007 and is in good condition inside and out. All restaurant fixtures remain, including kitchen equipment, dining tables and chairs, etc as do some office type furniture. There are many unique decorating and construction features in this charming 100+ year old building. MLS #85060

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Crossroads Farm Supply & Deli

honoring tradition

By: Carolyn Wilson

The first time Trampus Mitchell set foot in the old country store just down the road from his home, he was just a toddler growing up on a dairy farm in the Bethel community of Washington County.

Nearly thirty years later, Trampus and his wife Kayla are breathing new life into the little store on Old Jeb Stewart Highway between Abingdon and Damascus, giving it a fresh new name while honoring its rich history in the community.

Just a few weeks ago, the farm couple opened Crossroads Farm Supply & Deli after months of refurbishing the vintage building that most locals remember as Osceola Service Station, a landmark, of sorts, where everyone stopped for fuel, food, and a heap of good conversation.

The couple's store will offer the same nostalgic, laid-back atmosphere, but this time around Trampus and Kayla are building the business as a one-stop shop for the construction and farming community.

And, of course, every country store has to have a deli, he said. The business will serve breakfast and lunch starting at 7 a.m.

Trampus said by opening the store he's keeping the memory alive of his good friend, Rodney Sweet, who died last July. The couple's business partner is Leisa Sweet of Abingdon,

the wife of Rodney Sweet, who had dreamed of starting a business with his friends.

"The store will be one of those places you can find everything you need," said Trampus, who raises beef cattle, hay, and silage in addition to operating Mitchell Construction Company with his wife and father, Bob Mitchell.

"Most of our work and farming is done on this side of the county. The hardest thing we've run into each day is finding the tools we need to do our jobs," he said. "That's everything from plumbing and hardware parts, drainpipes, erosion control fabrics, to

fencing supplies, watering troughs and animal health supplies," said the store owner.

Customers can find a plentitude of feed for dogs, cats, pigs, goats, chickens, and cattle at the business.

Charity Rouse of Damascus said the new store is a godsend for her and her husband, Robbie.

They used to have to drive to Bristol to buy feed for their sheep.

"That's so inconvenient for us. This new store is just two minutes from our



From left, Kayla Mitchell, her husband Trampus Mitchell and their family friend Liesa Sweet own and operate the new Crossroads Farm Supply & Deli



Kayla Mitchell, left, and Kayleigh Heath work the front counter at the store.



house. It's amazing," Rouse said. "We have baby sheep right now. We're here today to buy straw."

Tyler Miller, a local farmer who works at the store, said the store will be a huge convenience for people in the area who farm.

The store is on its way to becoming a one-stop destination for many needs in the community.

"Sometimes I have to travel to three or four different places to finally get what I need," Trampus said. "I would like to eventually offer enough here that none of us have to travel to town for any work supplies.

"And, we need a place to eat breakfast and lunch," he laughed.

The store will offer a deli, offering breakfast and lunch Monday through Saturday. Breakfast starts at 7 a.m., serving a variety of biscuits, biscuits and gravy, and coffee.

Lunch will feature hamburgers, hotdogs, BLT sandwiches, and, for the sake of memorabilia, a few of the specialty menu items that were once served when Osceola Service was owned and operated by Dorothy "Dot" Wampler and her late husband Alfred Wampler.

"We set the woods on fire with our Mule Burger," laughed Dot Wampler. "I remember we served old timey bologna sandwiches and red hot dogs that people would flock to get and the Malcolm's chili that dad used."

Every Tuesday and Thursdays, the deli will offer specials like brown beans and cornbread, chili beans, or chicken salad sandwiches. "Once each month we will offer discounts on food orders for first responders," said Kayla.

A new look inside

The store may look the same on the outside, but the interior has had a facelift. To recreate a better flow in the store, the new owners reconfigured the entrance. In the corner are chips and old-fashioned candy surrounded by a shelf arranged with framed pictures of the past.

While cleaning the building, the couple found all kinds of antiques and relics like metal signs, old wooden Coca Cola and Royal Crown Cola crates and crates that were used for glass milk bottles. Among the old photographs found in the store was

one of the Rambo brothers posing with Alfred Wampler. Kayla had the old photograph restored and framed to display in the store.

Years ago, a hot fire in a wood stove warmed a crowd of farmers who retreated to the store to eat a bite and catch up on the news. "There was a room with six to eight old recliners where the farmers would loaf during the day," Trampus recalled.

The wood stove has been replaced with a more efficient wood burning furnace.

A little store, a little history

The original store, opening in the 1950s, was called Rambo's, owned by brothers Olen and Lindy Rambo. The brothers initially sold local molasses where sugar cane was milled, but later switched to selling groceries.

When one of the Rambo brothers fell ill, Alfred Wampler and his wife Dorothy "Dot" Wampler purchased the business where he had previously worked for the brothers.

In the 1980s, Alfred Wampler turned the business into a service station and small grocery store, catering to the local farmers with his old-fashioned lunches.

With the help of her granddaughter-in-law Nichole Sweet, Dorothy Wampler, 85, managed to operate the store nearly two years after her husband died in 2020.

"The store offered us many years of enjoyment. It was very much fun and very good for my husband who used the income from the store to help run our farm. All of our neighbors rallied around him and supported him," said Dot Wampler.

"Selling the store to Trampus was a delight because it made me feel like we were carrying on Alfred's memory."

Crossroads Farm Supply & Deli is located at 19852 Old Jeb Stuart Highway in Abingdon. Follow them on Facebook. ♦



Trampus Mitchell prepares a bolt bin at the store to hold hundreds of different sizes of bolts.



Trampus Mitchell points to an old photograph of previous store owner Alfred Wampler, along with the Rambo brothers who owned the store in the 1950s.





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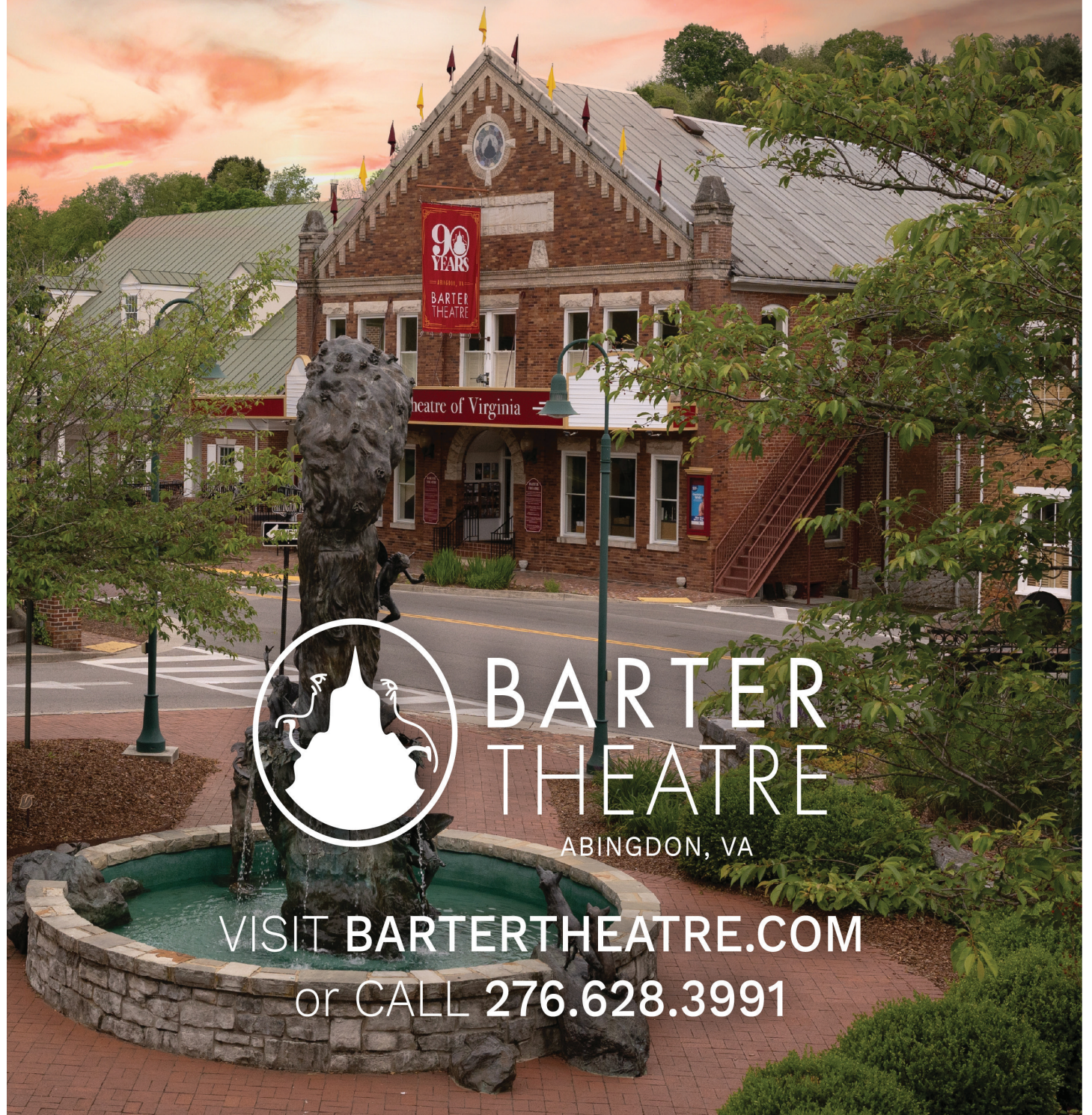
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