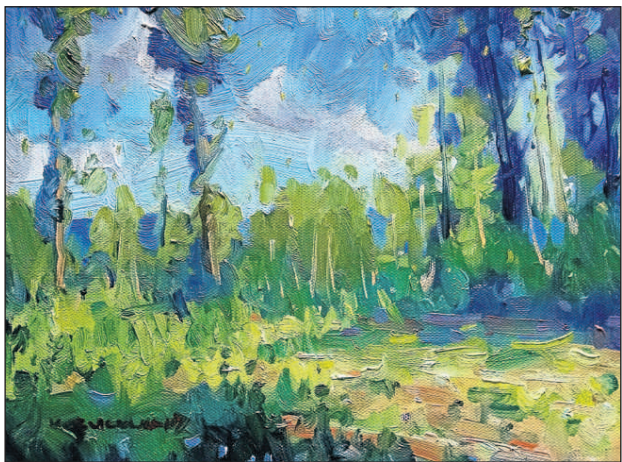
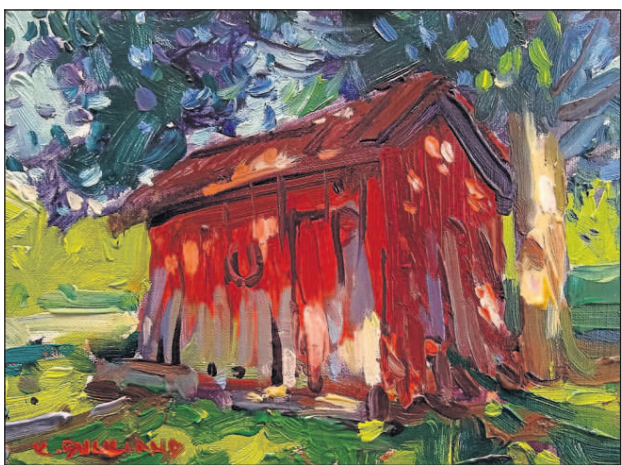




Kyle Buckland, an artist specializing in plein air (open air) paintings, will teach a painting class for beginners at the Glade Spring Town Square Center for the Arts beginning Feb. 7.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



Classes for youth ages 12 to 17 will be held from 6 to 7 p.m.

Although the classes are designed for beginners, Buckland encourages artists of all skill levels to join.

“I want to reach out to folks and provide them with the basic building blocks for creating a successful painting,” he said.

“The classes will run as long as students want to progress,” said Buckland, who will work with students on an individual basis while teaching skills in figure painting, still life and landscapes. Students will also have opportunities to enroll in his advanced workshops.

The Abingdon artist, whose style is deeply rooted in the philosophies of impressionism, has been featured numerous times on OutdoorPainter.com, the home of Plein Air magazine. He has won many awards, conducted paint-outs and taught local painting classes at every level.

In 2017, Buckland captured the Best in Week Platinum Award, sponsored by Plein Air magazine and the Floyd Center for the Arts, for his painting “A Quiet Night on the Town.” He competed with as many as 30 artists from around the country.

In addition, he took second place at the Bath

County, Virginia, Plein Air Festival and has been asked to exhibit at Warm Springs Gallery in Bath County, a high-end gallery that represents Virginia landscape artists.

Buckland has also conducted a series of online tutorials on YouTube called “The Artful Souls.”

“It’s neat to have a broad audience because I get emails from people on the other side of the world telling me they’ve gotten the courage to buy an easel and go outside to paint on location,” he said.

“But the thing you lose on a mass level is the direct interaction you get with a small class. I look forward to working with students in Glade Spring and the surrounding areas.”

At 35, Buckland has been painting for 20 years, always focusing on portraying the beauty of the natural world around him. “That never ceases to be my main inspiration.”

As an instructor, his goal is to teach students to value their own views and thoughts.

“Self-discovery is going to be an important part of my class. I want my students to have the correct tools in their toolboxes to convey what they want on canvas.

“What I don’t want to do

See **PAINTING**, Page B2

Building blocks of PAINTING

Kyle Buckland will lead beginner painting course

BY CAROLYN R. WILSON
FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

GLADE SPRING, Va. — A nationally acclaimed artist is coming to Glade Spring in

February to share with the public the same methods and techniques that have made him a successful artist.

Kyle Buckland, whose

paintings hang among hundreds of private, public and corporate collections around the world, will conduct ongoing painting classes beginning

Feb. 7 at the Town Square Center for the Arts.

Buckland will teach classes each Thursday from 7:15 to 8:45 p.m. for adults 18 and older.

Let the bidding begin: Council clears way for Summers Law Office auction

ABINGDON, Va. — So it’s official: The Summers Law Office is going up for auction.

The bidding will take place on Saturday, Jan. 19, at 10 a.m., 120 N. Court St., in downtown Abingdon.

And Abingdon’s town council has now reached a unanimous decision after a closed executive session meeting on Jan. 4, overriding the initial 3-2 vote in favor of selling the property the council made in December.

The new decision came after Abingdon Town Councilman Derek Webb made a motion to rescind the council’s earlier decision.

Reason?
Well, that’s where I come in.

You see, some folks who were closely following the sale of this property suggested that I look into the legality of trying to sell the office, which had been acquired from the Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia, in 2008.

Turns out governing bodies in Virginia cannot sell public buildings unless they vote and agree by a four-fifths majority. The 3-2 vote in December didn’t cut it.

Right after that split vote, I called a trio of council members, including Al Bradley, Vice Mayor Cindy Patterson and Mayor Wayne Craig.



JOE TENNIS/WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

The Summers Law Office, built in 1870, will be auctioned off by the town of Abingdon on Jan. 19. The auction follows months of debate over whether the town could cede the building back to the Summers family, who have expressed an interest in restoring it.

We discussed what had happened, and a newspaper story appeared in print in the Dec. 12, 2018, edition of the Washington County News.

Even so, with no more action by the council, that story may have left readers wondering: Was this vote legal?

Next, on Jan. 4, the council re-emerged from its closed-door executive session with Webb’s motion to rescind.

Councilman Al Bradley then made a new motion to sell the property. And that passed unanimously.

All this may seem odd, since Bradley was at first against selling the office, built in 1870 at the corner of Court Street and

Plumb Alley. Appraised value: \$203,536. Square footage: 650. Bradley said he preferred that the town make use of the building — especially since Abingdon has spent a considerable amount (\$36,000) on upkeep and repairs since 2015, according to Town Manager Tony Sullivan.

In December, both Bradley and Patterson voted against selling the building, giving the often-united council that rare 3-2 split.

So why the switch in the January vote?
“To be a team player,” Bradley told me.

Recasting the votes to dispose of the property came after considering whether the four-fifths majority rule had been met, Bradley said.

“I made a motion first explaining why,” Bradley said, “because we were all afraid ... the four-fifths majority was going to affect the sale of the building. And it needed to have that four-fifths majority, according to the Constitution of Virginia.”

That’s why Patterson and Bradley both agreed to change their votes, Bradley said.

“And,” Bradley added, “that takes a potential cloud off of the title by making sure that we comply with all the sales of public property.”

So why did the council go behind closed doors into executive session to discuss the law office?

“They wanted us to set a minimum on the price of the purchase,” Bradley told me. “The real reason for executive session was to set that minimum price.”



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ONLINE To view the Summers Law Office auction notice or for more information, visit this story on www.swvatoday.com/news/washington_county.

Bradley also made his motion stipulate that the proceeds of the sale go toward refurbishing other historical properties in Abingdon.

“And I would hope that the Fields-Penn House is at the top of the list,” Bradley said, referring to several historic properties that have seen renewed interest in recent months. “It could be used for Retirement [on the Abingdon Muster Grounds] or The Meadows house adjacent to the sports complex.”

LITTLE BITS BAKING CO. & PROVISIONS



CAROLYN R. WILSON/FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

Tonya Fuller (left) and Becca Sarvey, owners of Little Bits Baking Co. & Provisions, have reimagined the Damascus Mercantile store and Downtown D-Town Bakery, both former business ventures of theirs that have merged into their new bakery and retailer. Little Bits was the start-up business winner for this year's Washington County Business Challenge.

Over the next few weeks, the Washington County News will feature a series of stories on the winners of the 2019 Washington County Business Challenge. The fifth in the series is on Little Bits Baking Co. & Provisions, the winner of the Startup Business Award.

Menu Items

- » Coffee
- » Loose-leaf tea
- » Cinnamon rolls
- » Scones
- » Biscotti
- » Biscuits and gravy
- » Quiche
- » Chicken salad sandwiches
- » Soups
- » Salads
- » Wraps

If You Go

- » **What:** Little Bits Baking Co. & Provisions
- » **Where:** 124 E. Laurel Ave., Damascus, Va.
- » **When:** A ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place at 5 p.m. on May 2. Regular business hours will be announced after the ceremony. The shop's baked goods are usually ready by 7 a.m.
- » **Visit:** <https://little-bits-baking-co-provisions.business.site>

Bits & Bobs

Damascus bakery wins business challenge and turns itself into hot spot for locals and hikers

BY CAROLYN R. WILSON
FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

DAMASCUS, Va. — Two local women hope their small business will be a big hit in a trail town that welcomes hikers and tourists year around.

Tonya Fuller and Becca Sarvey have teamed up to open Little Bits Baking Co. & Provisions, the only business of its kind in Damascus.

Little Bits is a premier bakery, coffee-house and shop specializing in custom, one-of-a-kind pastries, in-house baked goods, a level of coffee brewing unsurpassed in Southwest Virginia and a retail location showcasing local artisans and curated experiences.

The owners recently received first place as a startup business in the 2019 Washington County Business Challenge, an ambitious business plan competition designed to attract entrepreneurs to start and expand business in the county.

The \$5,000 prize money will offset expenses the women have spent getting their new business ready to open last month.

They cooked up the idea to open the Main Street business when Fuller realized she'd outgrown the location for her former Downtown D-Town Bakery just down the street, and Sarvey was also feeling cramped in her Damascus Mercantile store.

When they discovered a newly renovated building was open for rent in town, the friends, both 34, decided to combine both of their businesses under one roof.

They settled on the name Little Bits Baking Co. & Provisions because they

have a little bit of everything, from baked goods to locally made soaps, leather-work, signs, jewelry and organic, sustainably sourced coffee, locally roasted at the Red Rooster Café in Floyd, Virginia.

"We have a little bit of coffee, a little bit of baked goods and a little bit of retail," Fuller said. "We sell blends of coffee, and we have 12 different kinds of loose-leaf teas."

Adding their own decorating touches to the building, the business partners created a vintage decor using refinished furniture, antique doors, an old sink and even a retro record player.

They plan to expand their business next door, allowing them to add the remaining merchandise from the mercantile store, host live acoustic music and events and utilize more space for comfortable seating.

"We have a few extra things we want to add, such as an espresso machine," Fuller said.

Soft opening

During their soft opening, the owners are rolling out a variety of baked goods and healthy breakfast options. Their homemade cinnamon rolls are already famous in town, said Fuller and Sarvey, who report to work as early as 5 a.m. to start baking.

"All baked goods are on display by 7 a.m.," said Fuller.

Their white chocolate cranberry and bacon cheddar jalapeno scones are hard to pass up.

Then, there are biscotti — Italian almond biscuits — along with traditional

chocolate chip and peanut butter cookies.

For traditional breakfast customers, they serve steel-cut oats with fresh fruit and yogurt with granola.

In the coming weeks, the women plan to offer more breakfast items, including biscuits and gravy, quiche and egg bakes. Lunch specials will be chicken salad sandwiches, soups and salads and wraps.

A passion for business

"I think what sets us apart from other local businesses is we're the only in-house bakery. All items are made from scratch, in-house, with fresh ingredients," said Fuller.

She is passionate about using fresh ingredients from an organic garden at her Damascus home. She also plans to sell beef and eggs from her farm.

"I feel like we're going to be a powerhouse with this business. We're going to kill it," said Fuller with a laugh.

The women are looking forward to what they hope will be a busy season, with hikers and bikers in town and upcoming special events like Trail Days on May 18 and 19.

During the winter months, when business becomes more relaxed, they want to offer tea parties and cake-decorating classes for the public.

In addition to managing the new storefront, Little Bits also makes specialty cakes for birthdays and weddings.

"The business challenge was a great opportunity to network with other business people," said Sarvey. "We met

people who challenged us to do great things with our businesses."

A heart for service

Probably the best part of operating a business is meeting the people, they said.

"Our first customer stepped inside Little Bits at 6:30 a.m. on opening day. He was a thru-hiker who was hiking for a purpose after suffering the loss of a friend.

"Now, we follow him on Facebook and Instagram as his journey on the Appalachian Trail continues," said Fuller.

"I think that's what we want more than anything. We want to be a comfortable, inviting atmosphere where you're never too busy to serve someone," Sarvey added.

"We're both from health care careers. Our hearts are for service. That's what we're passionate about here."

The public is invited to attend their ribbon-cutting ceremony sponsored by the Washington County Chamber of Commerce at 5 p.m. on May 2. Little Bits Baking Co. & Provisions is located at 124 E. Laurel Ave.

The owners said they are still growing their business, and regular hours of operation will be announced after the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Follow the business on Facebook and Instagram for updated information, or visit their website at www.little-bits-baking-co-provisions.business.site.

Carolyn R. Wilson is a freelance writer in Glade Spring, Virginia. Contact her at news@washconews.com.

Council signals change for Main Street sign

WANDERING AROUND WASHINGTON

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the town's director of outdoor recreation. "Let's open that up as a view spot," Worley said at the April 25 work session of the Abingdon Town Council.

"We can do some things there. There's all kinds of good opportunities to create that as a photo spot, as a tourist draw, as a selfie spot — whatever you want to call it. We have the opportunity to make that a pretty visible spot."

The existing sign has stood for decades, Worley said. "Most people who drive through there don't even look at it."

Worley grinned. "How many times have you drove through there, and do you really look at all the civic signs that are up there?" Worley asked. "Can you name them?"

Worley figures anyone who wants to know what civic clubs exist in Abingdon will not come searching for that sign. In-

stead, he said, they'll be searching the internet.

And anyway, for safety's sake, the sign needs to come down, Worley said.

"It's a safety thing. The posts that are rotten are in the ground."

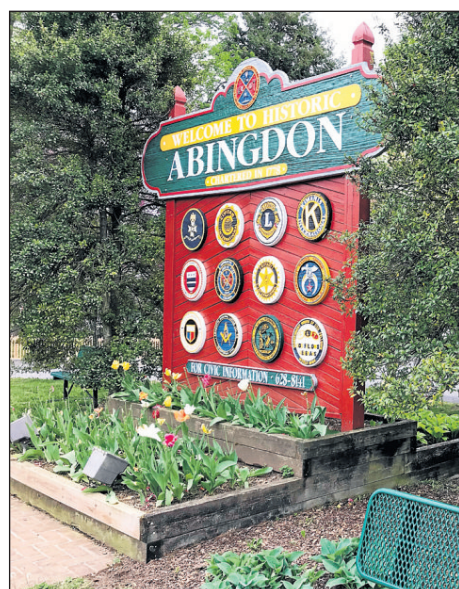
Worley's staff suggested taking down the sign, though it could possibly be used elsewhere, he said.

"People will know it's gone, they'll see — right now, especially right now — the beautiful white dogwoods that are behind it," Worley said. "You can't see but two of them. But you'll see all seven of them once you take it down."

Vice Mayor Cindy Patterson suggested putting a "Welcome to Abingdon, Virginia" sign at the spot.

Worley said anything is a possibility.

"What we're trying to do is start entertaining some ideas of what we can put there," Worley said. "Again, it's a blank canvas. We have an opportunity to do something and not have to be tied to one thing."



JOE TENNIS/WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

The Abingdon Town Council this week discussed removing a Main Street sign listing the town's civic clubs in favor of something more open and tourist-friendly.

Sarah Jean's EATERY

New restaurant in Glade Spring opens this week with farm-driven menu



CAROLYN R. WILSON/FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

Sarah Jean's Eatery opens on Friday in the former Central Store building that operated in the Glade Spring town square a generation ago. To honor the history of the building, Griffin will make his own version of a Cherry Smash carbonated drink that was a favorite among the locals.

BY CAROLYN R. WILSON
FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

GLADE SPRING, Va. — Chef Bradley Griffin firmly believes the quote, “If you cook it, they will come.”

The local chef who's known for his farm-driven style of cooking at Harvest Table Restaurant in Meadowview and Milton's in St. Paul, Virginia, is bringing a new food experience to town with high hopes the community will embrace his culinary venture.

In a town that's lost several restaurants in the past few years, Griffin is so confident the business will thrive that he — along with his wife, Kady Griffin, and his parents, Dean and Janet Griffin — actually bought the town square building that recently housed Clean Eats, which closed last month.

After two days of soft openings this week, Sarah Jean's Eatery will formally open on Friday, July 12, serving a casual cuisine from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. The eatery will be open

Wednesday through Saturday, adding Tuesday to the schedule in a few months.

Griffin, who has added several of his family keepsakes to the decor of the restaurant, said the business is named after both of his grandmothers. “My mom's mother was Sarah, and my dad's mom is Jean,” said the chef.

“We're here for the long haul,” said Griffin. “We feel like Glade Spring actually chose us. We got

See **EATERY**, Page B2



PHOTOS: CAROLYN R. WILSON/FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS | GRAPHIC: METROCREATIVE

Chef Bradley Griffin prepares a sign that announces his new eatery in the Glade Spring town square. The restaurant will also be a store front for Bradley's Wallowing Whistlepig Sauce Co., Griffin's handcrafted product that will be sold at the restaurant, online and at the Glade Spring Farmers Market.

Customers can see container gardens at the entrance to the restaurant where the chef grows a variety of mints, such as chocolate, ginger and lemon, and herbs including dill, cilantro, parsley, basil and oregano.



Barter's 'Frenchie Fry' show gets crowd on its feet



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ABINGDON, Va. — David Winship likened the most recent town council meeting in Abingdon to “a show with a pre-determined script.”

Winship ranked among several speakers at the meeting on July 1 and said it was appropriate that the gathering was held “in a theater.”

My apologies to Richard Rose, the producing artistic director of the Barter Theatre, but I must say that the town's one-time, hourlong staging of what I'll call “Fate of the Frenchie Fry” at the Barter Theatre was every bit as riveting, dramatic and comical as any production I have ever seen at the playhouse.

Of course, it helped to have a great cast, like the grinning-yet-grumbling



Joe Tennis



DAVID CRIGGER/WASHINGTON COUNTY NEWS

Members of the Abingdon Town Council listen during the public comment section of last week's meeting. Due to the large crowd, the meeting was held at the Barter Theatre.

mayor, portrayed in real life by Wayne Craig.

For most of what Winship called “a show,” Craig tried in vain to keep the 200-person crowd from clapping and cheering whenever somebody took a pot-shot at the citizens group called Friends of Abingdon Inc., which had challenged the Abingdon Planning Commission's decision to grant approval for Pal's Sudden Service to build its trademark restaurant building at The Meadows.

That fast-food chain, by the way, is known for its Frenchie Fries.

At the town council meeting, held at the Barter Theatre because it has a much larger capacity than town hall, the audience heard a few good zingers from speakers like Becky Caldwell, saying, “We live in Abingdon, not Snob-bington.”

There was also the booming voice of

Steve Smith, CEO of the town's largest employer, K-VA-T Food Stores Inc., the parent company of Food City, which is building a new grocery store at The Meadows.

Smith came to the microphone and denounced the Friends of Abingdon, saying, “These folks will tell you that they're not against Pal's, but I can tell you that they are because it's part of The Meadows development and everything that it stands for. This group has cost the town hundreds of thousands of dollars — if not more.”

And what about the big plot twist?

The Friends of Abingdon did not show up to the show!

But, why, they were the ones who had started all of this by filing an appeal against granting approval for Pal's Sudden Service to build a teal-colored building topped with a hot dog, a ham-

burger, Frenchie Fries and a Big Tea.

On this night, though, the audience did hear from Richard Macbeth, Roman Blevins, Rolfe Hillman and Stephen Spangler — all great names that sound like they could have been characters in a play or actors on a playbill.

There was even a cameo from Cathy Lowe, the former Abingdon mayor and mother of rock 'n' roll singer Jerry Castle. Lowe got the crowd on their feet — just like her son might have at a concert. She asked for all who supported Pal's to stand up. And, at that moment, nearly everyone did!

Pal's CEO Thom Crosby was also in a scene, delivering a sometimes-funny speech that was met with more loud cheers.

Then, in building up to the climax, under the spotlight of the stage, the audience hushed as we all entered the legal brains of Cameron Bell, the town attorney, who spoke in big words and long phrases, saying he could not find any reason for the town council to justify the Friends of Abingdon's appeal of the planning commission's decision.

Ultimately, in yet another dramatic moment, at the point of a play where you gasp for air, the dashing, young Councilman Derek Webb made a motion that sounded so lengthy that you would have thought it could have taken up two pages in a script.

It just went on and on and on.

Yet it garnered passage: Pal's Sudden Service was approved.

The restaurant would come to town.

And “Fate of the Frenchie Fry” faded with a 10-second-long round of applause.