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HOMELIFESTYLE

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Matthew Moss returns to surface with assistance from Project Supt Steve Feigles (rear) and Tom Thompson while inspecting wastewater pipes in the Pohick Stream Valley area.



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'Your Budget Is Now Out the Window'

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Spring Outlook 2020

MAY

5/6/2020.....Mother's Day Celebrations,
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5/6/2020.....Wellbeing

5/13/2020.....HomeLifeStyle

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GOVERNOR ORDERS STAY-AT-HOME ORDER

Governor Ralph Northam issued a statewide Stay-at-Home Order to protect the health and safety of Virginians and mitigate the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. The executive order will remain in place until June 10, 2020, unless amended or rescinded by a further executive order. The order directs all Virginians to stay home except in extremely limited circumstances. Individuals may leave their residence for allowable travel, including to seek medical attention, work, care for family or household members, obtain goods and services like groceries, prescriptions, and others as outlined in Executive Order 53, and engage in outdoor activity with strict social distancing requirements. The executive order also directs all Virginia institutions of higher education to stop in-person classes and instruction. Private campgrounds must close for short-term stays, and beaches will be closed statewide except for fishing and exercise.

TUESDAY/APRIL 14

Red Cross Blood Drive. 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. At American Legion Post 176, 6520 Amherst Ave., Springfield. Even though the Post is closed, the ballroom and restrooms will be open for the blood drive but only for donors to give blood, Red Cross staff and drive volunteers. The Post and the Red Cross are taking extra precautions to address the coronavirus19 issues. Sign up online by going to www.redcross-blood.org and search by sponsor code: AMERICANLEGION176VA or call 1-800-RED-CROSS. Theron Patrick is the Post 176 contact and can be reached at tpatrick@theronpatrick.com

CHANGES TO THE COURTS

The Fairfax County courts are making new changes to their schedules and procedures in response to the coronavirus, including further postponing dockets. While the Fairfax County Courthouse remains open to the public, the Circuit Court, General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court have changed their bond and arraignment schedule until further notice:

General District Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

Circuit Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.


Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court: Bonds and Arraignments — 2:30 p.m.

The Circuit Court introduced a temporary process to waive oral argument for motions in an effort to encourage social distancing. To be eligible, the waiver must meet certain conditions, including that all parties agree and evidence is not required. The Circuit Court continues to postpone non-essential, non-emergency proceedings through Monday, April 27.

The General District Courts have now postponed most dockets through Thursday, April 30, except for bonds, arraignments, emergency motions, protective orders and attorney court.

Regular court hearings for incarcerated individuals are expected to begin Monday, April 13, as technology permits.


SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



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Coalition to County: Reduce Number of Inmates

County responds to NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition initiative.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Exactly when and how coronavirus first entered the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center remains unknown. According to a March 30, 2020 statement on the Sheriff's Office website, an inmate in his 20s at the Center tested positive for COVID-19. "While we are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of illness, it is possible that additional cases will occur since individuals already could have been exposed," the statement said. Incarcerated since Jan. 29, 2020, the man is quarantined at the Adult Detention Center.

"Jail and prison populations across the Commonwealth and the country are extremely vulnerable to contracting the coronavirus ... [and] challenged to consistently preserve the recommended hygiene practices. ... Inmates at the ADC [Adult Detention Center in Fairfax] were sentenced to be detained, not sentenced to death," said Kofi Annan, CEO of The Activated People LLC.

On March 31, in a statement from Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano's office, Descano said, "In the pursuit of justice, we always take the health and wellbeing of our community into account when making prosecutorial decisions — that includes the wellbeing of incarcerated individuals." Descano detailed measures taken ahead of the first confirmed case at the detention center. "I proactively sought and received a list from our Sheriff of inmates scheduled for release in the next 60 days. ... Wherever possible, we've begun recommending the release of individuals who have adequately paid their debt to society and do not pose a threat to community safety," Descano said.

KOFI ANNAN of Herndon is CEO of The Activated People LLC, one of 18 organizations comprising the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition. On March 31, he emailed Fairfax County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Jeffrey McKay, all Supervisors, Sheriff's Office, Chief Edwin Roessler Jr., Fairfax County Police, and Peter Flynn. "The purpose of this communication is to urge the County to take more deliberate short-term measures to reduce the number of inmates housed at the Center until COVID-19 abates. This is even more pressing in light of the revelation that an inmate tested positive."

A March 31 letter emailed by Annan on behalf of NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff's Office and Police Department said in part: "While the [Sheriff's] Department is taking meaningful measures to protect inmates, it is not clear that Fairfax County as a whole is taking holistic, aggressive measures necessary to reduce the number of inmates housed in the county detention facility. ... To reduce the risk of exposure ... all must work together



Kofi Annan of Herndon is CEO of The Activated People LLC, one of 18 organizations in the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition.



Dr. Vernon C. Walton is Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church in Vienna, one of the 18 organizations in the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition.



PHOTO COURTESY FAIRFAX COUNTY

Sheriff Stacey A. Kincaid, Fairfax County

to both reduce the current jail population and the in-flow of new inmates. We urge Fairfax County to ... reduce pre-trial detention. Only make arrests for violent offenses and issue other citations for non-violent offenses. Release older inmates and those currently being held for non-violent offenses. Limit the number of check-ins (for) people on parole and probation have to make or implement virtual check-ins. Eliminate medical co-pays in jail."

The Coalition raised an important issue involving those who are incarcerated and those who operate the facility, said Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville). "I know the Sheriff and Commonwealth's Attorney. I'm sure they share this concern ... [and] will do everything they can to protect the inmates as well as the employees who work in the jail," he said. Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said that any effort to reduce



PHOTO VIA FACEBOOK.COM

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

the time convicted criminals spend in the jails "should take into account the impact on the victims, public safety and the severity of the crime." He added the County needed to ensure its Sheriff's deputies had the protections to stay safe "and do what we can to keep the inmates that remain in jail safe during the pandemic."

"Fairfax County follows procedures set forth by the Code of Virginia and Department's General Orders," said Lieutenant Stephen R. Wallace, Commander for Media Relations Bureau Fairfax County Police Department.

As for steps and measures taking place as well as information and best practices during the pandemic, Sheriff Stacey A. Kincaid said, "We have worked tirelessly with the medical professionals in the Health Department to stay informed and to implement the best protocols to help fight the spread of this in-

visible threat. ... Transfers of inmates to the Virginia Department of Corrections has been suspended. ... We are also working with the courts to limit the transfer of individuals between jurisdictions for court hearings. ... We have also proactively arranged through the courts for video hearings to be held to limit traffic within our facilities."

Dr. Vernon C. Walton is Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church in Vienna, one of the organizations in the NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition. "Crowded, confined spaces leave those incarcerated particularly vulnerable to the spread of the COVID-19 virus," Walton said.

Annan echoed Walton's words and added they were pleased that the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney's office was taking steps to reduce the inmate population at the Adult Detention Center. "However, these unprecedented circumstances demand bold, innovative solutions that are singularly focused on saving as many lives as possible," Annan said. "While the release of 36 inmates is a very good start, we continue to urge the County to take the additional steps we highlighted in our original [March 31] letter."

A JOINT RESPONSE from Sheriff Kincaid and Chairman McKay regarding the March 31 letter Annan emailed on behalf of NOVA Equity Agenda Coalition said: "The recommendations of your group merit consideration as we are all working toward a common purpose — preventing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping our community healthy and safe. ... The Police Department is making fewer arrests. On April 1, the ADC population was 589 compared with March 1, when it was 731. ... Only the courts, through magistrates and judges, have decision-making authority regarding who goes to jail and the length of their sentence. If a court issues orders to release certain inmates, the Sheriff's Office will comply with those orders. The terms of probation also fall under the courts. Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano indicated he has reviewed case files and will petition the courts to release selected non-violent inmates with limited time remaining on their respective sentences."

Regarding medical care and co-pays in the Adult Detention Center, Kincaid and McKay said: "There is no co-pay for the care they provide nor for over-the-counter medication. We have on contract, a medical doctor, dentist and optometrist. Co-pays apply only with these contracted providers and not in every case. ... Please know that together we are taking every possible measure to ensure the wellbeing of those entrusted to our care and the community at large."

Valerie Slater, Esq. is the executive director of RISE for Youth, another organization in the Coalition. She works with incarcerated youth. Slater said, "We must strive now more than ever to support community youth in trouble who pose no threat to others. After reviewing the cases of all youth held at the NOVA Juvenile Detention Center, two youth were successfully released to community care, according to Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, Commonwealth Attorney of Arlington... We must not forget about the children."

OPINION

State Legislature Must Make Tough Decisions

All new spending in the state's new two-year budget is on hold.

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE SENATOR (D-36)



Instead of reporting on the accomplishments of the General Assembly's 2020 session, in recent weeks I have chosen to provide information about the COVID-19 crisis and its impacts. The worldwide coronavirus pandemic is likely to change much of what state legislators passed earlier this year. Many measures are in limbo, especially the state's budget. The legislature will reconvene on April 22 to consider budget changes and vetoes that Gov. Ralph Northam may propose.

This week, Governor Northam announced that he is putting all new spending in the state's new two-year budget on hold. Therefore, it appears that when we reconvene, we will consider proposed amendments to implement his proposals, pending economic analyses, projections and decisions on how the state can use the \$3 billion in federal stimulus dollars.

While Virginia has the largest cash reserve in the state's history -- \$2 billion -- it is increasingly apparent that what lies ahead is the country's greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression. Unlike the federal government, the state legislature is required by the state constitution to pass a balanced budget. If revenues

decline, we must raise taxes or make cuts.

While the details are not yet public, when we reconvene, we will likely be faced with cancelling raises for teachers, state employees, the Virginia State Police and local law enforcement. Increases in K-12 funding will probably be significantly reduced. Our historic investments in early childhood education and the second year of college tuition freezes will likely be eliminated.

The budget we passed in March increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for the first time in a long time -- they are probably gone.

It is unclear if the modest gas tax increase will be reversed, but it could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new transportation and transit investments.

There is no question that with everyone at home, regardless of what the gas tax rate is, revenues from gas and vehicle sales taxes will plummet for much of this year and inhibit transportation infrastructure investments.

Several local initiatives that I promoted are at risk: \$25 million to fund the infrastructure to end Alexandria's raw sewage discharges, the largest clean water investments in state history; a \$4 million grant for the new U.S. Army Museum at Fort Belvoir; and new funds to restore staffing cuts at Mason Neck State Park. The opening of the Prince William County Public Defender's Office could be put on hold. Unprecedented investments in the Affordable Housing Trust Fund are threatened.

On Sunday, April 12, the Governor is scheduled to announce his amendments and vetoes. He has signed many bills, but he has not acted on hundreds. In addition, because the budget trumps legislation, some bills that the Governor has already signed could be delayed or defunded by the budget. This is a truly unprecedented situation.

I am hopeful that the minimum wage increase bill will not be weakened. The new \$9.50 minimum wage is not scheduled to take effect until January 1, 2021, and is truly a modest increase. We also passed legislation to give counties the same taxing authority as cities. I had mixed views on the bill given that we did not give counties other new responsibilities or equalize other responsibilities such as sovereign immunity and I ultimately voted in favor of it, but I would not be surprised if that legislation is placed on hold.

Finally, as the COVID-19 crisis persists, I am increasingly concerned that many employees in the 36th District may be at increased risk as they do not hold jobs in which they can telecommute and are not given personal protective equipment (PPE). Fairfax County Health Department and Virginia Health Department data are not differentiated so we cannot determine exactly what groups of people, zip codes, or age brackets are being hit the hardest with infections and death. I have asked the Governor's office for more refined data so we can more finely tune our policy responses.

Please check my Twitter and Facebook feeds for more information or sign up for my emails. If you have any feedback, please send me a note at scott@scottsuovell.org.

Japanese Experience: Distancing Ingrained in Culture

BY LUCY CHEN

You have seen the statistics. More than twenty-thousand dead worldwide as of today. You have seen China, you have seen Italy. I weep for them.

People are dying in their homes and no one is coming to help them. Doctors and nurses are exhausted from treating the sick. The impact is devastating.

Now it's in America. The US now has the most number of cases in the world. Hospitals are running out of much-needed masks, ventilators, and hospital beds. Healthcare professionals are now re-using protective gear. Is it too late, or can we still stop Covid-19 from spreading?

I was looking through the statistics to try to find an answer. One thing caught my eye. It's Japan. Japan used to have the 3rd most number of Covid-19 cases, but it has since dropped to number 31. How? After all, Japan was one of the first countries to get the virus. It has an aging population and high population density. It hasn't put in any strict regulations until



Lucy Chen, 17, is a junior at Langley High School. She is interested in current events, public health, and technology. She is also an avid debater and enjoys having cultivated discussions.

recently. Shouldn't Japan be the epicenter of this virus? Yet, only 1866 people got the virus, and only 54 have died.

Perhaps the Japanese government hasn't carried out enough tests. But if Japan was just under-reporting, then its hospitals would have been overrun with sick patients weeks ago, regardless of the

number of cases confirmed. This means that the Japanese people are doing something against the coronavirus that is working. So what is it?

I decided to call my uncle in Japan, and I asked him, what is Japan doing that other countries are not? He didn't know. He told me that the coronavirus hadn't changed much in Japan. But people also continue to go to work on a daily basis and they still commute on crowded trains. Shouldn't the virus spread faster with crowded public transportation? I was confused.

After scrupulously comparing my life to my uncle's, I found a couple of important differences between the strategy of the US and Japanese to combat the virus. Here are the two key takeaways:

1. Social Distancing

We hear this phrase all the time. Maintain a 6-foot distance away from everyone.

That's because it's important.

The social distancing already ingrained in Japanese culture has allowed the Japanese to naturally mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. They do not hug, shake

hands, or kiss in greeting. Instead, they bow to each other. They also refrain from touching each other and even family members socially. It's working.

It's hard to stay cooped up in your own home. But it's just something you have to do temporarily. Stay at home. Avoid contact with others. It's not easy, but everyone needs to do it together. Don't be selfish. Don't endanger the lives of other people.

Unfortunately, there's one problem with social distancing. It's not fool-proof. For social distancing to work, you also need to practice good hygiene.

2. Good Hygiene

The Japanese practice a "combination of wearing masks when sick, regular doctor's visits, and a willingness to follow the advice of health officials, among others," says Dr. Matthieu Felt, a professor of Japanese culture at the University of Florida. Good hygiene has been very effective for Japan in combating the coronavirus. We should learn from them.

SEE CHEN, PAGE 10

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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Cranes and mechanical claws rip through the old building on Loisdale Court to make room for a new Kaiser-Permanente facility.

Kaiser Permanente is Expanding in Springfield

Nearby transportation options make the town center location accessible.

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

On Loisdale Court, across from Springfield Town Center, one of the high-rise office buildings is coming down to make room for a new Kaiser-Permanente building that will expand the Kaiser health coverage capabilities and modernize their footprint in the Springfield area.

The new facility will be right next to their existing Kaiser-Permanente office that currently houses doctor's offices, a lab and pharmacy for Kaiser members. The current office is often crowded, and the limited parking is not adequate for the clientele.

Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) has spoken with Kaiser about the plans, and noted the current building is "pretty much obsolete," he said. In the medical field, the providers are keeping up with advances in technology to provide the latest and greatest for their patients, and this move by Kaiser is a must for the growing Springfield area.

The new Springfield Medical Center will provide primary care, limited specialties, pharmacy, lab-

oratory, and imaging services, said Marisa Lavine, Senior Director of Public Relations at Kaiser Permanente. "Once the new building is open, we will demolish the current building and use the space for surface parking," she added.

The Metro station is nearby, and the links to the Fairfax County Parkway and I-95 make this location ideal for a growing health provider. By moving to a building right next door, it will be a seamless transition. "Easier for their members," Lusk said.

The new Kaiser facility will be modeled after the Tyson's Kaiser office that opened recently.

The new building is scheduled to open in late 2022 or early 2023, and even with the COVID-19 restrictions in place in early April, cranes were still in action, tearing the present office building down. Building destruction work is scheduled to be completed in early summer.

Kaiser Permanente was founded in 1945 and currently has headquarters in Oakland, California. They have 39 hospitals, 706 medical offices and 218,297 employees. The offices in Virginia are part of their Mid Atlantic facilities.

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Wastewater Lines Get High Tech Inspection

Contracted crews use robotic equipment to inspect Fairfax County's 3,000 miles of pipes that make up its waste water management system.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Trail walkers and other users in the Pohick Stream Valley in recent weeks may have seen crews engaged in high tech inspection of county sewage lines. Emergency repairs like sinkholes, collapses, and floods caused by clogged lines, are safety threats to maintenance crews and the public. Periodic line inspection reduces the incidence of emergency repair needs.

Contracted crews use robotic equipment with closed circuit television cameras to inspect Fairfax County's 3,000 miles of pipes that make up its waste water management system. This newer process, called "inspect to clean," replaces the more costly "clean and inspect" approach. The camera inspection allows crews to more easily identify portions of pipe which need attention, before problems become an emergency, without clearing out pipes that do not require maintenance.

The work requires crews to open each sewage cover, test first for noxious gases, then lower the camera-equipped robot attached to a cable into the 23 inch pipe line. A crew member must enter the opening to place the equipment. The robot then proceeds along the pipeline to the next entry, recording video of the pipe. Taped video is reviewed to determine the pipe's condition when the robot is re-



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Matthew Moss, of Pannsylvania, and Tom Thompson, of Ohio, lower robot into wastewater pipeline in the Pohick Stream Valley area.

trieved. Issues identified are noted for repair.

Three-man contractor crews with support personnel, like the crew seen at work in Springfield, work on systems all over the county, and country, putting in 14 day weeks with 4 day rest breaks. In FY-2018, The County inspected 201 miles and cleaned 502 miles of sewer lines to ensure unobstructed, maximum flow. Fairfax County budgeted \$78.9 million for wastewater operations and

maintenance for FY 2020. Costs of the system are primarily funded by customers for the system that covers 234 square miles of Fairfax County's 407 square mile area. The County's FY-2020 budget includes a 4.8 percent increase in sewer service charges; about 28 cents additional per 1,000 gallons.

A reminder to citizens not to place baby/disinfectant wipes, oil, or medicines into the wastewater or storm drain systems.



Robot equipped with camera ready to video pipe conditions.



Matthew Moss lowers equipment into system

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'Your Budget Is Now Out the Window'

Fairfax City advertising \$1.1075 real-estate tax rate.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

With the COVID-19 pandemic wreaking havoc on the economy, Fairfax City is among jurisdictions everywhere rethinking their FY 21 budget and real-estate tax rate. In February, City Manager Rob Stalzer presented his proposed budget that included a 3.25-cent real-estate tax hike, raising the current rate of \$1.075 per \$100 assessed valuation to \$1.1075.

At the March 24 City Council meeting, he said Fairfax could reduce it later, at budget adoption. But for now, he recommended keeping it as the advertised rate. "The budget will be adjusted in the next month, and we're looking at what we can do differently, what we can defer and what we won't do, at all," said Stalzer. "This rate potentially could be used for items [such as] revenue stabilization and assistance to businesses."

However, said Councilman Jon Stehle, "I think the budget you presented is now out the window, and there'll be a new one to look at."

COUNCILMAN Michael DeMarco wanted to make sure, "Given the current situation and uncertainty right now, that this gives [us] enough levers in [our] financial toolkit to manage fluctuations in our revenue." Stalzer said the City's concerned about FY 20, too, so both fiscal years are being reconsidered.

"The reality is, I can't predict when we're going to hit bottom – I don't know what bottom looks like, yet," he said. "So this is going to be a week-by-week discussion with the City Council and mayor. I have confidence that, eventually, when we come out the other end, we're going to recover really well. But we've got a lot of work to do before we can get there."

Councilman Sang Yi was strongly against raising taxes during this crisis. "That \$1.10 tax rate was realistic, a few weeks ago, but that's not the kind of reality we're living in today," he said. "So to ease the financial and economic pain our residents are going to face, we should set the rate at the equalization rate and have



Rob Stalzer



Jon Stehle

staff make a budget [accordingly]."

That rate, \$1.0533, would enable residents to pay the same amount of taxes as last year. To make it work, said Yi, "We'd have to slim the budget by about \$3.5 million; and, perhaps, our reserve fund can also help alleviate people's tax burdens."

But Councilwoman Jennifer Passey said they need more facts before making such a decision, so she recommended moving forward with the \$1.10 rate.

COUNCILWOMAN So Lim asked if they could defer their decision to April 14 to see whatever federal assistance is available to the residents.

But Stalzer said they wouldn't gain anything by delaying. "Candidly, we might not be able to hit \$1.0533 with our revenue," he added. "I don't know; we just don't have the data. We're hip-deep in response, and we haven't been able to pull people off to get into the analysis."

Stehle then made a motion to advertise the \$1.1075 tax rate and DeMarco seconded. Yi also wanted the decision deferred, but a vote on it failed, 4-2. His motion for an advertised tax rate of \$1.0533 also failed, 4-2.

Ultimately, Stehle's motion passed, by the same margin. Mayor David Meyer then reassured the residents watching the meeting on TV that "The core activities of the City will continue. In the long term, the City will prevail and continue to thrive."

Fairfax City Extends Meals Tax Payments

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Fairfax City Council last week extended the payment deadline for meals and transient-occupancy (motels) taxes for 90 days. "The fiscal impact will be negligible," said Commissioner of the Revenue Page Johnson. "We'll be waiving penalties and interest for the duration of this crisis."

"The filing deadline is the same, but they can take up to 90 days to pay," added City Treasurer Tom Scibilia, during the Council's online, March 31, meeting. "And they can still collect their 3-percent commission."

Since restaurants can currently offer just takeout and deliveries, said Mayor David Meyer, "For April, the amount of income and [therefore] meals tax

they'll pay will be very small, for many of them."

Councilwoman Jennifer Passey asked, "What happens if this goes on too long and a business has to close and just can't pay?"

Scibilia explained that the company's owner or management would still be responsible. "This is not a forgivable tax," he said. "Even if you declare bankruptcy in your business, the tax is to you, personally."

Since last week's Council meeting was an emergency one – just to vote on this issue – the members will have to hold a public hearing on it during their regular, April 14 meeting and then vote on it again.

— BONNIE HOBBS



Law Firm Offers 'Drive-Through' Service in Fairfax

On April 3, attorneys and staff at Cucinelli Geiger, PC, provided a COVID-19 "Drive-Through" service for their estate planning clients in the parking lot of their office building in Fairfax. Lawyers and staff of the elder law firm, wearing gloves and masks, greeted their clients at their car, documents and packaged pens in hand. They plan to continue to offer this service and are meeting with clients via phone, Facetime, and Skype. For more information, call them at 703-481-6464 or go to their Facebook page. www.facebook.com/cucinelligeiger

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Fairfax City Hall Closed to Public

As of this Monday, April 6, the Fairfax City Hall Complex closed to the public, until further notice. The City took this action out of concern for the health and safety of the community and because of recommended health practices related to the COVID-19 pandemic. City Hall operations and services will continue during this time – just physical access to the building is restricted.

Donate PPEs to City Workers

Fairfax City is accepting donations of PPEs – masks, gowns, gloves – for use by essential City employees. Place these items in the container in the City Hall Atrium lobby vestibule, east side (facing George Mason Boulevard). Donations are accepted weekdays, from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. To coordinate large donations, or for more information, call 703-385-7800.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

For people who aren't in jail, any civil, criminal and traffic court cases that were previously scheduled for this month will be continued. Look up the specific status of your case using the Online Case Information System.

FIRE STATIONS CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC

In order to protect the health of firefighters and medics, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue is closing all fire stations to the public, effective

March 27. These closures are in coordination with Fairfax County government's decision to close county government buildings to the public. Notices will be posted to the front door of each station directing visitors to call the station for any inquiries. Exceptions will be made for any emergency that would require members of the public to enter the station for treatment.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

Home Office Design

Creating a professional backdrop for video conferencing.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

In the age of coronavirus, working from home and connecting with colleagues using video conferencing platforms like Zoom has become the new normal. From staff meetings to happy hours, virtual connectedness is keeping offices linked in a world of social distancing. For some, however, this means scrambling to give their home office a sense of professionalism moments before a meeting. Now that mad dash can become a thing of the past.

Create a dedicated work zone away from other distractions, suggests Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder Design/Build. "You will feel more at ease if your space is set up to work for you," she said. "It will also in turn make you feel more calm and prepared to be productive."

Organization is the first step in creating that space. "Start by cleaning up clutter," said St. Claire. "But before you start purging, set goals. What would you like to accomplish?"

A part of this thought process should include envisioning the look and feel of the space. "What type of spaces make you feel the most calm?" asks St. Claire. "A zen-inspired minimalistic retreat? A library-like space to display your favorite collectibles, art work and precious things? A lush, soft room? Each of these goals will require different items in different quantities."

In fact, incorporating decorative objects from other parts of one's home can add an air of professionalism to a workspace. "Nothing puts the 'home' into home office better than antiques," said Annie Elliott, Annie Elliott Design. "An antique desk or table topped with beautifully framed drawings and photographs adds such character to a space."

"When your home office is a desk out in the open, it's critical that you tuck your work out of sight at the end of the day," continued Elliott. "Every desk should have drawers not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks, and ideally your laptop."

An aesthetically appealing workspace can offer a sense of serenity that can be enjoyed even when not on a video conference. "Working at home with the kids and pets can be overwhelming right now," said Pamela Harvey of Pamela Harvey Interiors. "Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers."

In fact, lighting is key when creating office-worthy backdrops for a video conference. "Lighting is everything," says St. Claire. "Natural light is the best, especially northern light. 'Open up and let the light shine in. If natural light is scarce, decide on the right artificial lighting. Is cozy warm lighting or brighter whiter lighting better for your daily work? Dimmers are great as they help to control the amount of light you may need throughout the day as the natural light changes.'"

Desk lamp lighting shouldn't be overlooked, added Tracy Morris, of Tracy Morris Design. "Leave behind the harsh fluorescents of a traditional office and add



Create a clean and uncluttered home office environment, says interior designer Tracy Morris.

PHOTO BY GREG POWERS



Every desk should have drawers, not only for pens and pencils, but also for your papers, notebooks and ideally your laptop, advises interior designer Annie Elliott.

PHOTOS BY JENN VERRIER



Create an inviting work area by adding good task lighting and fresh flowers, advises Pamela Harvey.

in warm light from a lamp," he said. "This will also better illuminate your desk than overhead light and help prevent eye strain."

"Just because you're doing real work doesn't mean your desk can't be attractive," said Elliott.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Courthouse

Updated Fairfax County Court Information

Most dockets for Fairfax City and Fairfax County General District Courts now postponed.

On Friday, April 3, Fairfax County announced updated Court Information: While the Fairfax County Courthouse remains open to the public, the Circuit Court, General District Court, and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court have changed their bond and arraignment schedule until further notice as follows:

- ❖ General District Court: Bonds and Arraignments: 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.

- ❖ Circuit Court: Bonds and Arraignments: 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

- ❖ Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court: Bonds and Arraignments: 2:30 p.m.

General District Court-The Fairfax City and Fairfax County General District Courts have now postponed most dockets through Thursday, April 30, except for bonds, arraignments, emergency motions, protective orders, and attorney court. Regular court hearings for incarcerated individuals are expected to begin Monday, April 13, as technology permits.

For individuals who are not in jail, civil, criminal, and traffic court cases that were previously scheduled for this month will be continued. Look up the specific status of your case us-

ing the Online Case Information System. Counter windows in the Civil, Traffic, and Criminal divisions are closed to the public. However, filings will be accepted through a locked drop box at the courthouse, by mail, or by email.

Circuit Court-The court introduced a temporary process to waive oral argument for motions in an effort to encourage social distancing. To be eligible, the waiver must meet certain conditions, including that all parties agree, and evidence is not required. The Circuit Court continues to postpone non-essential, non-emergency proceedings at least through Monday, April 27.

Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court-While this court continues to operate on a limited docket, it is extending its COVID-19 procedures and policies through at least Wednesday, June 10. These include requiring attorney-filed papers to be dropped through the document slot in Room 303, suspending driver's license ceremonies, school court tours, intern and volunteer programs and all other non-case related events and ceremonies

- ❖ Visit <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/covid19/>.

Covid-19 Wisdom from a Child

These chalk drawings and messages on a residential street in Fair Oaks give good advice in scary times.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

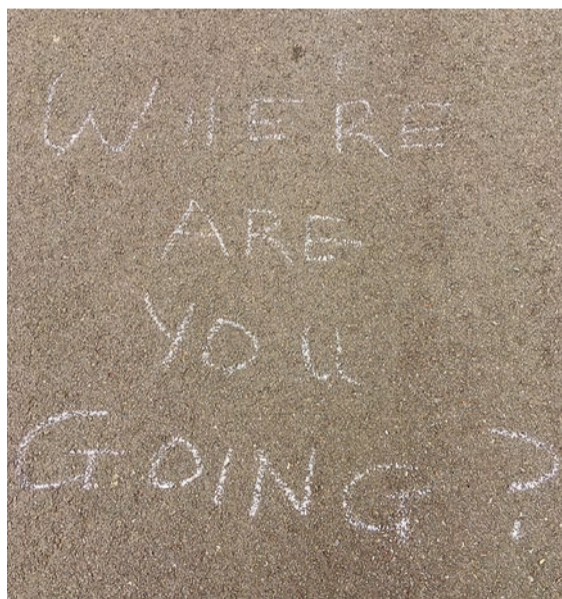


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The Spear family of the Town of Herndon, Jay, 5, mom Christin, dad Mike, Zach, 2, and Lily, 5, stay behind the new driveway fence Mike installed. On the other side, a 6-foot social distancing chalk line keeps others a safe COVID-distance away from the family.

Going on a Bear Hunt During COVID-19

But, there's barely any bears!

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Locked behind the new fence, no friends and no extended family visiting, the three young Spear children of the Town of Herndon, Lily, 7, Jay, 5, and even Zach, 2, know the word COVID-19. Zach fills in the word “nineteen” when mom, Christin, says grandpa and grandma can’t visit because of COVID. “I guess I’m saying it too much,” she says. Lily and Jay remember not to cross the chalk line 6 feet from the end of the driveway. “COVID-19,” they say.

The children understand there is only one way out—when dad, mom or the new nanny opens the gate, and it’s time for another walk. “We go on a bear hunt; that’s what we do,” says Lily. According to Lily, they sing the song, ‘Going on a Bear Hunt.’ Asked if they had seen any bears, Lily shakes her head and says, “No... And I want to see infinity bears.” “Sixty hundred,” says Jay.

“We’re Going On A Bear Hunt” is the animated story cartoon version of the classic Bear Hunt children’s storybook by Michael Rosen, illustrated

by Helen Oxenbury. Created by King Rollo Films, according to Cartoons for Kids, the song caught the hearts of children and parents across the globe before COVID-19. People in Australia, England and Richmond, Va., put teddy bears in their windows, on lamp posts and up in trees to make walks around the neighborhood fun for little tykes during the pandemic. “We’re going on a bear hunt; we’re going to catch a big one — what a beautiful day, we’re not scared,” sing the children modeling the words the characters sing.

The Spear children sing the words walk, after walk, after fruitless walk, but no bears. Christin says she and the children are looking really hard. “We were just hoping someone would see our bear and put one in their window. We’re at the tail end of things to do here... I saw this (The Going on the Bear Hunt) viral post down in Richmond, and then someone posted something here on the Herndon Facebook page. I was like; I will be totally into that. So we put out our bear, but nothing... We’re still hoping,” she says. “That’s why it’s a bear hunt,” says Christin’s husband, Mike.

Community Helping the Hungry

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



COMMENTARY

At a critical time in our history when our federal administration is displaying a level of ineptness that is head-shakingly unbelievable, the importance of community becomes more evident to us. Whether that community is at the state level as we live-stream on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 2 p.m. the quiet bed-side manner of our physician now Governor Ralph Northam as he tells us the steps we need to get through the COVID-19 crisis as best as humanly possible or whether it is the neighbors on the street who emerge to the stoops of their homes at noon one day to sing happy birthday to a young person who is celebrating a mile-marking 18th birthday, we as members of multiple communities are facing a history-changing crisis. The way we emerge on the other side is likely to be dependent more on our community support system than on government action.

The federal Congress has already passed legislation of historic proportions that at any other time in our history would have been called socialism. There seems to be wide-spread agreement that it is not enough and that further federal assistance will be required both for individuals and families as well as the economy. To ensure that you are aware of the various programs of assistance that might be available to you and your family, visit my website at www.kenplum.com for a description of programs.

The General Assembly is required by the state Con-

stitution to meet in a reconvened session after the Governor has reviewed and signed, vetoed or proposed amendments to bills passed in the recent regular session. The reconvened session is scheduled for April 22 this year, but there are serious questions as to whether it is a good idea to have 100 delegates and staff meeting in one room while 40 senators and staff meet in another room. However the issue is resolved we will be ploughing new legal ground. Whenever the General Assembly meets

it will not bring good news; the sharp decline in revenue will wreck what was an historically good budget. The reductions will be many, and they will be deep.

What can we as a community do while we are hunkered down? As people are demonstrating in communities throughout the country, there are many life-saving and useful things we can do. First, we can, and we must respond to the needs of people who are hungry. On my website, www.kenplum.com, is a directory of food banks and pantries that are responding to the needs of the hungry. Congratulations and thank you to all who have put together these wonderful efforts. All of the rest of us can help them. Without leaving your home you can donate online to the food banks that can use your contribution to buy food. You can buy groceries online and have them shipped to the local food bank. Or if you choose you can buy extra when you are doing your own shopping and contribute it to a food pantry. We are community, and we can help our neighbors who are hungry.

Continued Commitment: Taking Action for Today, Tomorrow, and Beyond

Like many of you, some of us on the Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) Team just completed our third week of working remotely, while many of our staff continue to work directly with families in need of shelter, food and legal services.

We shifted schedules, became at-home teachers, introduced our children and pets on Zoom, and worked to find a new balance. Focusing on what we can do as individuals and as an agency has helped uplift us during these uncertain times.

As COVID-19 continues to upend every aspect of our lives, NVFS continues to serve our community in every way possible. Some updates from this past week:

In response to the governor's stay at home order, we received a waiver to continue providing critical services, including food and supply distribution, emergency shelter operations, foster care, legal consults, mental health counseling, and virtual support for parents with infants and children.

Our legal team once again opened their doors (virtually) for new cases and a portion of our family reunification services resumed. For many in our community, COVID-19 is not the only crisis they are facing, and we are committed to helping them however we can.

Rent and mortgage payments were due for the first time since work slowed down or was eliminated for many in our community. Just before the first of the month, we received nearly 300 applications for emergency assistance for rent, co-pays, and medications.

Thank you to those who have generously donated in the past few weeks—it has made a big difference. We see the long road ahead and we are committed to being here for our community and for our neighbors

today, tomorrow, and for as long as it takes to recover from this crisis. If you haven't given yet and are able to, please consider donating now to our COVID-19 Crisis Response Fund. As more and more of our neighbors slip into an emergency situation, every gift of any size is critical.

There are also ways to support local families if you cannot donate funds. This week, ABC 7 visited our Hunger Resource Center to spotlight the escalating situation in Northern Virginia and how NVFS is responding. Visit our COVID-19 Resource Page for the latest updates and ways you can help from home as we battle this pandemic together.

As each week passes and the impact on our lives and community increases, we are reminded of how connected we truly are. You are an important part of our community and we are grateful for everything you do to support and uplift local families and children. Please stay safe and healthy.

We stand ready to assist through our COVID-19 Emergency Assistance resource lines and email. If you know of someone who has been directly impacted by COVID-19 and is in need of food or emergency financial assistance, please have them complete an online application (English) (Spanish) for assistance or call our emergency resource line at 571-748-2552.

Food Assistance

Right now, we are seeing a critical need for shelf-stable food.

You can drop off at our SERVE campus in Manassas, or send grocery gift cards to NVFS Headquarters, 10455 White Granite Drive #100, Oakton, VA 22124.

STEPHANIE BERKOWITZ
NORTHERN VIRGINIA FAMILY SERVICE

Fire Chief Addresses Coronavirus Concerns

From Fire Chief John S. Butler:

Fairfax County's firefighters and paramedics continue to fully staff all fire stations and apparatus and are responding to every call and doing everything they can to ensure you and our personnel stay safe and healthy, according to Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department,



Fire Chief John S. Butler

Normal work continues — even though it might look a little different. The county's fire stations are closed to the public, and while we miss interacting with residents at our fire stations, this is a necessary step to ensure our personnel stay healthy and able to serve the residents of Fairfax County.

In this video, Fire Chief John S. Butler addresses the coronavirus situation and how the county's fire and rescue personnel are addressing it — and what you can do to help. <https://youtu.be/OlcVIEU4ff8>

"We may look a little different as we respond to certain 9-1-1 calls. Firefighters and paramedics are wearing an increased level of personal protective equipment (PPE) as we care for potential COVID-19 patients. This includes gowns, masks, eye protection, gloves and face shields. Do not be alarmed. This added protection ensures that members of your county fire and rescue department are able to continue providing emergency medical care to those in need.

If you have cold or flu-like symptoms, call your healthcare provider. Please do not visit the emergency room, fire station or call 9-1-1 unless it is an emergency, for example, you are having difficulty breathing.

If you do need to call 9-1-1,

the dispatcher and our responding paramedics will ask you a series of questions about your symptoms and medical history. It is important that you answer these questions accurately and completely, with as many details as possible, as it allows us to provide you with the care you need and to take the necessary precautions to protect our personnel.

We treat all who need our help regardless of symptoms or medical conditions. We ask that you answer our questions to the best of your ability so that we can keep our providers healthy and able to serve our community.

Be assured that we are preparing now so that we can provide consistency in our operations and service delivery should we begin to see increased calls for service. We hope we won't have to use these contingency plans but they are ready to go if needed.

So, keep washing your hands, don't touch your face and keep on social distancing yourself.

You are not alone. Let's do this together."

Chen

FROM PAGE 4

If you are sick, or frequently come in contact with someone who is sick, wear a mask. It is very disrespectful in Japanese culture to disregard good hygiene habits because doing so could endanger other people.

"Wash your hands with soap and water." We hear this from doctors all the time, but we don't take it seriously. At least, not as serious as people in Japan do. My uncle washes his hands before he goes to bed, after he wakes up, before and after he eats, after he goes to the store or to the bank, after using the restroom, after he touches money, or a doorknob...you get the point. Now he does it even more. It's just the cultural norm in Japan.

You absolutely can not ignore this. Hand washing is the last barrier between you and the virus. Even if you self-quarantine, you will still get in contact with the outside world; whether it be through shopping at the store or online. Because of the coronavirus, we must treat every surface as unsanitary.

These actions will dramatically decrease the spread of the coronavirus and reduce the pressure on our healthcare system. We are now at a critical moment, and everyone needs to do their part. So please. I don't care if you're young or old, sick or not, but I ask you to do yourself, your family, your friends, and your country a favor. Practice social distancing. Wash your hands with soap regularly. Remember, that the killer is in your hands, and it is in your hands to stop it.

DMVS ARE CLOSED

Until at least April 23, all 75 DMV customer service centers are closed and all DMV 2 Go and DMV Connect services postponed in response to the continued spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). DMV weigh stations have also suspended operations for the same duration. Driver's licenses and identification cards set to expire between March 15 and May 15 are extended 60 days from the original date of expiration. This includes credentials for individuals aged 75 and older who are typically required to make an in-person visit to renew. Vehicle registrations that expire in March and April are extended for 60 days.

SALVATION ARMY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The Salvation Army of Fairfax continues to provide food and emergency assistance to working families living in the region that are struggling as a result of the coronavirus crisis. They will distribute fresh and non-perishable food boxes to feed local families. The Salvation Army, located at 4915 Ox Road, Fairfax, is practicing no-touch, safe distancing to ensure the safety of families and staff. Interested families must call at 703-385-8700, Ext. 10, to arrange a food pick-up.

PARK AUTHORITY CLOSES ALL PARKS

Effective Tuesday, March 24, all Fairfax County Park Authority parks and amenities will be closed to the public until further notice. This change is in response to Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's order to close public access to recreational facilities.

Park Authority closures include parking lots, athletic fields, sport courts, restrooms, nature centers, visitor centers, golf courses, historic sites, picnic areas, playgrounds, amusements, boat launches, skate parks, off-leash dog areas, outdoor fitness equipment and any areas for open recreation. While all parks and amenities are closed, trails will remain open for individual use, but not group use.

METRO REDUCES SERVICE HOURS

As part of its ongoing efforts to limit frontline transit workers' exposure to the public during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency, Metro's Pandemic Task Force will further reduce rail and bus hours, starting Monday, April 6, 2020. Metrorail will close at 9 p.m. every day: Mon.-Fri.: Open 5 a.m.; Close 9 p.m.; Sat.-Sun.: Open 8 a.m.; Close 9 p.m. Metrobus service also will end earlier each day, with the last trips departing at or before 11 p.m. Buses that enter service at or before 11 p.m. will continue to the end of the route before going out of service.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS CLOSED

To help limit the spread of the coronavirus, Fairfax County will close all government buildings and facilities to the public starting March 27, until further notice. However, the county government remains open for business online and by phone and mail. Closing government buildings will help protect the health and safety of residents and employees, and the move is intended to promote social distancing, a key action to help limit the spread of the coronavirus. Some specific public services may continue to be provided in-person as determined necessary by county agencies and employees will continue to be able to access these facilities.

NVTRP LAUNCHES FACEBOOK LIVE

Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program (NVTRP) announced a new Facebook Live series, "Teddy Time" on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at 2 p.m. Hosted by NVTRP's miniature horse, Teddy, viewers will get a glimpse into the everyday happenings at O'Shaughnessy Farm in Clifton. Segments will include everything from meeting the herd of NVTRP horses and learning how to care for the animals to farm fun and educational crafts and stories. Visit the website: <https://www.facebook.com/NVTRP/>

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Manual Labor



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Having recently received in the mail the three-ring binder/manual on the dos, don'ts and what-fors concerning the upcoming treatment for my stage II papillary thyroid cancer; and information as well (including a cookbook) about the low iodine diet I am instructed to start two weeks before my actual treatment begins, my takeaway is that it is going to be long and hard six weeks from start to post-quarantine finish.

The reason for my apprehension is twofold. First and foremost is that I am an extremely picky/limited eater. There's only a handful of foods that I will eat on my best day ('best day' meaning completely normal circumstances where cancer is not involved), let alone on my worst day ('worst day' meaning in the midst of cancer treatment where what I eat is restricted). As a direct anticipated result, I fear there may be some heavy lifting - metaphorically speaking, ahead, specifically between April 27 and June 4.

The second reason which compounds the problem referred to in the previous paragraph is that we happen to be in the midst of a pandemic. Accordingly, the pandemic and the associated stay-at-home directives will minimize casual visits to the supermarket, restrictions intended to prevent the spread of the virus. Moreover, due to panic buying and the likely employee/staffing shortages at the supermarkets as the virus continues to take its toll, there may be more and more food shortages which will further eliminate what few food choices I had in the first place, before I even start this specialized diet.

This second reason is made even problematic because I am very much in an at-risk category: over 60, underlying medical condition with a compromised immune system, which prevents me or rather empowers my wife to prevent me from doing what I have done (the shopping) primarily, for the entirety of our marriage. That process never suited my wife, but it has always suited me. Consequently, I have become dependent on my wife to perform many of the tasks I have spent a lifetime perfecting: what to buy where, and when, and how to save some money doing it. Let's just say I am, as Sy Sims and his daughter Marci used to say, "an educated consumer." In our marriage, I have always described my role as the one taking care of the "business side," whereas my wife has always been the one taking care of the "social side." However, as we all try to navigate this pandemic, she is fulfilling both roles.

Now, as I roll the dice, so to speak, and plan/purchase for the present and the low iodine diet in the very near future, I am, to a certain degree, at her mercy. Given that the shopping process is hardly the adventure for her that it has always been for me, I have to rely, a little bit, on her benevolence and hope she keeps an open mind while in-store on the various indulgences that I require. Indulgences which, unfortunately, are very different from hers. As but one example, she loves a tuna fish sandwich whereas all I ever need is a cheese sandwich (and let's not even discuss the chocolate issue which is likewise not her priority as it is mine); and to quote my father: "the twain will never meet on the twack."

What many of us in this country have long taken for granted: 100 percent availability of food, medicine, health and miscellaneous household products is presently not so true anymore. Not purchasing some of these products until they go on sale is a pattern I likely won't be able to follow. If I do, their purchase may be too little, too late. The last thing my future diet/medical treatment can tolerate is 'too little, too late.' And I would imagine that unless I stay on track, the "twain" will be the least of my problems.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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INCLUDES: Inspect suspension, ball joints, struts & shocks, tire condition and set tire pressure.

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER EXPIRES 4/30/20.

OIL & FILTER CHANGE

\$24⁹⁵

NON-SYNTHETIC

\$34⁹⁵

SYNTHETIC

Includes: Genuine Toyota oil filter, up to 5 qts of conventional oil*, inspect windshield wipers, check tire condition, check battery (with print-out), inspect and adjust all fluid levels, inspect air & cabin air filters.

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SIGHT LINE WIPER BLADES

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE

Sight Line only.

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA PARTS CENTER ONLY. GOOD THRU 4/30/20.

FREE BATTERY CHECK-UP

Check cold cranking amps and visual inspection of battery condition. Includes battery condition print out.

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BRAKE SPECIAL

\$79⁹⁵

Includes: Install Genuine Toyota front brake pads, inspect front & rear rotors & drums, check tire condition and inspect all hardware. Pads only.

MACHINE ROTORS ADDITIONAL

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BG VITAL FLUID SERVICE

10% OFF YOUR FIRST SERVICE

15% OFF YOUR SECOND SERVICE

Power Steering • Automatic Transmission • Brake System

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TRUESTART™ BATTERIES

SPECIAL OFFER
\$129⁹⁵

INCLUDES BATTERY INSTALLATION

Includes: 84 month warranty, 24 month free replacement, 24 month free roadside assistance. Does not apply to hybrid batteries.

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NEW HOURS SPECIAL!
DROP OFF YOUR VEHICLE BETWEEN **6AM & 7AM**
WITH A SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT & RECEIVE
12% OFF ANY ONE REPAIR.

MAXIMUM DISCOUNT, \$150

NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF PURCHASE. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA PARTS CENTER ONLY. GOOD THRU 4/30/20.



ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

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CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT **703-684-0710** OR SCHEDULE ONLINE AT **ALEXANDRIATOYOTA.COM**