

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

The Way of the Sword Demonstrated

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Community Presses Police Chief And Chairman for Answers

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'These Investments Will Pay Off in the Future'

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Lorton's Community Market took a choreographed step into the times of ancient Japanese martial arts last weekend, recognizing May's Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Christopher Durr faces off in one-on-one combat with Angel Lebron (out of picture) observed by instructors Josh Bodgley and David Drawdy.

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'We Want to Help our City Businesses Thrive'

Fairfax approves drive-through windows for McDonald's.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax City Council has given the go-ahead for the McDonald's at 3195 Old Lee Hwy. to get a whole new look. Near Old Pickett Road, the restaurant's iconic exterior will soon be changed, and drive-through windows will be added on the building's north side.

The applicant, Venable LLP, will renovate the existing, 3,309-square-foot restaurant (one story with a basement) and enlarge it into a contemporary-looking, 3,420-square-foot eating establishment. Council approved the proposal following a March 23 public hearing.

"The design is very pleasing," said Councilmember Janice Miller. "And I'm happy the applicant worked so well with the BAR [Board of Architectural Review] to improve the final project."

The structural elements of the old building will be retained, while the exterior will be both freshened



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

This existing McDonald's in Fairfax City was built in 1970.

and updated. The mansard roof will be removed and replaced with a flat roofline and cornice. A new storefront will be installed on the front and sides, and the brick will be painted gray.

The parking spaces and drive aisles will be reconfigured, and a 10-foot-wide sidewalk and 5-foot-wide landscape strip on both sides of the sidewalk will be added along Old Lee Highway. Furthermore, a 6-foot-wide sidewalk and 5-foot-wide landscape strip on both sides of the sidewalk will be

added along Old Pickett Road.

There'll be 4,250 square feet of tree canopy, as well as evergreen shrubs and flowers. Ten trees will be removed, but 17 will be added. In addition, the applicant will underground all onsite utilities.

PLANNER Supriya Chewle explained the project's details during the public hearing. She said McDonald's eventually anticipates 412 more daily trips to its restaurant than now. "Most of the traffic entering and exiting will do

so via Old Pickett Road," she said. "And that's how customers will access the drive-through windows. From Old Lee Highway, there's just one way in and one way out."

Chewle also noted there'll be a new crosswalk across the driveway entrance.

Councilmember Sang Yi asked what the morning and afternoon peak-traffic hours are in that area, and City traffic engineer Curt McCullough replied, "Between 7 and 8 or 9 a.m. in the morning and between 4-7 p.m. in the afternoon. We consider it the same as the peak hours of the nearby highway."

Representing the applicant, attorney Evan Pritchard said the site is just under an acre and the existing building was constructed in 1970. "This change will modernize the look and feel of the building and give it a nice, new appearance that fits in more with McDonald's branding," he said.

Councilmember Jon Stehle asked about the project's impact on the employees. "There'll be more automation and more

modern equipment so, possibly, a slight reduction in staff," answered Pritchard. "During the pandemic, drive-through and walk-up, take-away service has increased."

MAYOR David Meyer said he was glad to see the redevelopment and modernization of existing businesses in the Fairfax Circle vicinity. So, he said, "I see this as a positive and significant reinvestment in that area."

During the call-in portion of the meeting, resident Kevin Alexson said he was "excited about the aesthetic improvements to that property." But he wondered, "How will the growth of that whole area, including Scout on the Circle, affect the traffic there? I also want to know the pedestrian-safety impact for that area."

Douglas Stewart, of Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth, said, "We believe adding drive-throughs would hinder the City's economic development and encourage less walkability. But I'm not against this particular application."

The Council approved the project unanimously.

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Community Presses New Police Chief and Chairman for Answers

Citizens plead FXCO not be part of Davis' redemptive career journey.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On day four in his new position as Chief of Police Fairfax County, the ghosts of Kevin Davis' law enforcement past clung heavily in the County's public arena of the May 6 virtual Community Input Session hosted by Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-large), Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee District). The problem was the community's concerns were no longer confined to the Board's hiring process and appointment of Davis as chief of police. Also, while the non-disclosure of decades-old civil lawsuits with judgments entered against Davis from incidents as a young sworn law enforcement officer, including use-of-force and ruling of violation of constitutional rights was old news community concerns escalated with new findings and reactions the week of May 3.

County residents questioned a litany of recent incidents, 2016-2018, that came to light, this time with Davis employed not as a young cop in 1993 and 1999 but in high-ranking law enforcement leadership roles. These and other matters shook the trust and unhinged for many any possible faith in Davis's ability and transparency as Police Chief of Fairfax County.

Davis shared at the forum three words that held meaning for him—transformation, accountability, and transparency. "I'm all about accountability, both for police officers [and] myself; and people who commit crimes. There has to be a pathway back to success," he said. "My track record of nearly three decades is a journey," Davis said. As reported May 7 by FCPD: "I think 2021 is the perfect opportunity for me to return to what I love. — Chief Kevin Davis"

THE TWO-HOUR VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT on May 6 provided a platform for Davis to share his track record, lay out his vision for policing in Fairfax County, and community speakers to comment and question him and Chairman McKay with immediate response.

McKay said they were aware of Davis' incidents that caused community concern. "We believe in Fairfax County and community engagement, not one session, not one meeting, not one phone call, not one testimony," He added, "No one is perfect. No agency is perfect. We always strive to improve."

Chief Davis opened by saying that he learned the importance and value of community early in his police career, to hear the voices of those telling how they want to be protected.

Davis provided background information by listing his recent accomplishments as police chief in Prince George's and Anne
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MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
Kevin Davis, Chief of Police Fairfax County Police Department at his first News Conference held May 7, 2021.

Arundel counties, Police Commissioner Baltimore City, and recipient of a 2019 fellowship award. According to Davis, he was the fifth police chief in the country to implement Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion, "an immediate opportunity for police officers to offer those suffering from drug addictions to break the pipeline to prison."

Davis did not refer or allude to negative incidents, such as lawsuits where juries ruled against him in his role as a sworn police officer, incidents 1993 and 1996.

Davis omitted his six-day lockdown of Black Harlem Baltimore in 2017, resulting in an ACLU lawsuit after African American Baltimore police homicide Detective Sean Suiter was killed with his service revolver. Davis did not say the detective was to testify to a grand jury regarding police corruption.

There was no discussion by Davis about his termination as Baltimore Commissioner by Mayor Pugh, who cited rising crime.

Davis previewed his 100-day plan for Fairfax County. He focused on critical areas the community demanded improvement: use of force—particularly, time, distance, and de-escalation; tactical repositioning of police officers in critical situations; implicit [unconscious] bias training and use of CompStat [Computer Statistics] that gathers real-time information and intelligence. Davis said FCPD would realign with One Fairfax.

HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMENTS DURING THE COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION Q & A

Alicia Plerhoples of Dranesville testified regarding the County's process in hiring the



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-large) Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Rodney Lusk hosted the May 6 Community Input Session with Chief Davis.

chief. Addressing the Board of Supervisors, she said they must now do the difficult work to ensure racial justice in County policing. She said, "That begins with acknowledging your mistakes in hiring Chief Davis whose past misconduct was not disclosed to the public and possibly to the Board of Supervisors prior to his appointment." Plerhoples called on the Board "to remove Chief Davis from his position and conduct a transparent and thorough search for a new Chief of Police."

Jeremy Monat of Burke addressed the Supervisors, saying while they defended their selection of Davis since incidents [1993, 1999] occurred decades ago, "contrary to the thrust of your statement, those are not the end of Davis' abuses of power." Monat said that in 2016, Davis, as Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department, worked secretly with Persistent Surveillance Systems to fly a plane over the city of Baltimore. "[It] continuously transmitted real-time images to analysts on the ground...Even the mayor and the city council had not been told. Davis' response did not take responsibility." Monat said Davis should not be in another position of authority, this time over the people of Fairfax. Davis said, "I've certainly changed, and grown, and learned many lessons throughout the course of my career... I have served communities that not only need public safety, but good public safety, and I look forward to bringing those reform efforts."

Amanda Andere of Reston is the Ex. Director of Funders Together to End Homelessness. She served on Chairman McKay's Task Force on Equity and Opportunity, leading the Equitable Communities Committee. She believed then that the Board embraced the essence of the recommendations in decision-making during the task force, and the Board would use them going forward.

"And so, I felt like my time on the chairman's committee was in vain and disrespected," she said. "I 'hope you understand that how we feel about the process, the result, and your response to our concerns does not



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-large) Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and Supervisor Rodney Lusk hosted the May 6 Community Input Session with Chief Davis.

build trust in communities where government mistrust has been central to our experiences."

Vicki Fishman is the Director of Government and Community Relations for Northern Virginia, Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington. It is the public affairs arm of the organized Jewish community, representing over 100 synagogues, schools, and institutions throughout the region. Fishman expressed disappointment at the lack of transparency by the Board of Supervisors in the hiring process and the need for adequate stakeholder input.

Ron Kuley is the president of the local firefighters' union. He said McKay and Supervisor Lusk conducted countywide meetings to seek community input before the selection. He understood that Lusk put in considerable time meeting with community representatives and employee groups. "As a longtime employee and labor leader, I have faith in Chairman McKay, Supervisor Lusk, and the Board of Supervisors in their process and selection of Chief Davis," he said

Kuley asked, "How do you, Chief Davis, plan on overcoming the negative comments and feedback that we've been hearing this evening and in the last couple of days here in Fairfax?"

Davis responded: "By being the best, Chief of Police, you can possibly be. And that's what I intend to do, and I'm going to put in the work and demonstrate to the entire community that I am the right person to lead this great agency."

Terry Adams said that hundreds of police officers served in Prince George's County who never used excessive force during Davis' years of service. "It is difficult to sue a police officer for the performance of his or her duties... It's even harder because of qualified immunity to find a police officer liable. Mr. Davis was twice found liable for either excessive force or false imprisonment," Adams said.

Challenge for Supervisors AND a New Police Chief

BY JOHN LOVAAS
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND FOUNDER OF RESTON
FARMERS MARKET

Here we go again! We have another major Fairfax County Police controversy. I had thought our new, more progressive, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors would pay closer attention to police performance and to its role in oversight of the Police Department than its predecessors had. Not so, it seems.

The BOS unanimously approved hiring Kevin Davis as Police Chief after a supposedly thorough, nationwide search process. All of Davis's prior service was within 30 miles of us, a history with multiple incidents of flagrant abuse of black citizens—two resulting in civil litigation which Davis lost in Prince George's County, another resulting in an ACLU suit in Baltimore where as Chief he locked down an entire black neighborhood for 6 days in 2017 after a white detective died, possibly from suicide!

Incredibly, Board members claim to be unaware of these disturbing misdeeds, all occurring very close to home! It seems they were not told by either the candidate, the search contractor or Deputy County Executive David Rohrer who presumably managed the search. This is hardly the due diligence one would expect from Supervisors in considering this sensitive, high profile appointment.

In fact, obliviousness by the entire Board is reminiscent of a prior Board's failure to respond for six months to the 2013 police murder of unarmed John Geer, while FCPD stonewalled the

community, refusing to reveal the killer or to explain what had happened. It took the intervention of a US Senator and mounting public pressure to get the Supes to take action, belatedly forming the Ad Hoc Commission to Review Police Practices on which I served.

What or who is it that somehow prevents Fairfax County's top elected body from doing its job when it comes to supervising the 1,400-man force in blue? How is it that a supposedly nationwide search ends up picking a flawed candidate who'd served only in our back yard. Was he perhaps known to some in the FCPD?

There is a lot riding on this appointment. The troubled Police Department has major structural and policy problems. However, there are solutions within reach if obstacles to solving them are forthrightly addressed by a new Chief ...and if the BOS develops the political will to support him. Here are the critical issues:

First, this force neither resembles nor lives in the community it serves. According to the FCPD's own "Diversity Scorecard" of April 2021, Fairfax County's population is over 35 percent Asian (19 percent) and Latino (16 percent) while the force in blue is barely 13 percent (5 & 7 respectively). Blacks make up 9 percent of the residents, 8 percent of the force. But, if you go a bit deeper, looking at managerial levels, the mix is even worse. Whites make up 78 percent of the force, more at management ranks. And, most officers do not live in the County, although their pay would enable them to do so. A starting rookie makes over \$50K; many clear \$100K with overtime.

It is a huge challenge for police neither re-

sembling people they serve nor living near them, to develop mutual trust. There are no signs of improvement.

Turning to the framework for transformation of the force provided by a unanimous Ad Hoc Commission, we find key recommendations throughout the report either have been dropped, not been implemented, watered down or still delayed seven years after the report. (To see for yourself, go to the Ad Hoc Commission Report and the last implementation "progress report", April 2021). Pushback from the four police associations (would-be unions) and acquiescence of the former Police Chief have watered down crucial recommendations to improve transparency (see Communications section). Recommendations targeting accountability (see Use of Force and Independent [civilian] Oversight) have been crippled. And, the section dealing with civilian oversight by a new Civilian Review Panel has been reduced to a toothless farce. Look closely at the carefully targeted edits that assure no civilian is allowed behind the steel blue curtain. Police misbehavior will continue to be investigated only by fellow officers.

In sum, what's essential for the transformative reform intended by the Commission is a strong new Chief dedicated to known principles for reform and the backing of a Board of Supervisors with more effort and courage than we've seen to date. Prospects look pretty grim right now. While Fairfax civic groups and residents object and cite chapter and verse of Davis's flaws, Chairman McKay and his colleagues appear content with Davis and with the status quo. Stay tuned.

Respecting the Feelings of 'Other'

BY FARAH AHMAD

When I was in elementary school back in the '80s, I came to school after celebrating Eid and closed my sweaty hands into fists. I was trying to hide the henna designs on my hand.

But a girl noticed, scrunched up her nose in disgust, and asked me. "What is that orange stuff on your hand?" "Is that a disease or something?" I shook my head and muttered under my breath, "not unless a disease forms pretty flower and teardrop designs."

Back then, knowledge of Islam was minimal. Teachers were unaware of Ramadan or Eid. It got tiring explaining to kids why I was fasting and that, no, I could not even drink water.

Then September 11th happened.

Islam became the new headline. People swarmed bookstores looking for Qur'anic sources about terrorism or jihad. They pointed to the oppression of women in hijabs. They misquoted and misled. Anyone brown or "Middle-Eastern" looking became a suspicious person who might be carrying a bomb inside their jacket.

I bought into the negative hype myself, becoming defensive, and internalizing the responsibility of being the sole representative of my faith everywhere I went. As an American-born and raised girl, I was suddenly being treated like an "other."

I began learning my civil rights and advocating for myself. I trained FBI agents and po-

lice officers on Islam. I spoke up at schools, to educate teachers about the Islamic faith and make teachers and coaches aware of students who were fasting during classes, exams, track meets, and games. Some educators listened and others shook their heads meaning, "this is not my problem."

I hoped my children would have it better than I did. But as students at Fairfax County Public Schools, they still feel like they have to hide who they are or choose between spiritually significant days and tests and schoolwork. Standardized tests, like the SOEs are still scheduled during the month of Ramadan and the celebration of Eid. Children are still receiving the message that their religious needs are, "not my problem" by school leaders.

In an effort to advocate for my son and other Muslim kids, I joined the board-appointed Fairfax County Public School's religious task force committee. I hoped that FCPS administrators and board members would find just and equitable solutions for the many Muslims across our county.

But my experience trying to represent a minority community within the school system left me feeling appalled and heartbroken. I felt I was again the "other" in our public school community.

I was disheartened watching the FCPS board debate and decision against closing school on four days coinciding with major faith groups in our community. Seemingly educated people displayed a complete lack of understanding about the people of diverse faiths in our community.

Muslims shouldn't be measured by our absences during Ramadan or Eid. We should be recognized as people who give back in charity during this time and ask our children to do the same. On these days, we reflect, rejuvenate and model for our children the importance of gratitude, forgiveness, and a connection with something greater than ourselves—lessons that are as valuable as the ones they learn inside the classroom. We aren't statistics in a database: We are Muslim families, who like our Christian friends would like to spend time with our loved ones on our most holy days, especially after a tumultuous year of losses.

Honoring the holy days of diverse faith communities provides an opportunity to create awareness and cultural sensitivity. Maybe teachers or students who have never met a Muslim, or who don't know about Islam, will pause and ask, why are all these friends gone today? Perhaps students will learn to respect a classmate who is fasting, or not to pull off a hijab. Maybe it will teach someone that Islam is more than just a headline or a stereotype.

FCPS prides itself on being diverse, but diversity is more than a bullet point on letterhead. In Islam, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says that our words and actions should be the same. FCPS needs to heed these words and truly listen to the soul and the needs of their faith-based communities.

— Farah Ahmad is a Fairfax County parent and a member of leadership at the McLean Islamic Center.



Burke Historical Society Announces May Events

The Burke Historical Society will offer two virtual programs on Saturday, May 22. To attend, register at the links below at least two days before the program.

* 1:30-2:30 p.m.: The Quander Family

Rohulamin Quander, a retired judge, genealogist, historian, and author, speaks about the Quanders of Fairfax County and beyond, one of the oldest and most nota-

ble African-American families in the country.

<https://librarycalendar.fairfax-county.gov/event/7779521>

* 4-5 p.m.: Irish Emigration, The Potato Famine, And Castle Garden

Jon Vrana from the Burke Historical Society will discuss 19th-century Irish emigration to the New World, from the perspective of an Irishman on his journey to New York, the Midwest, and the Great Plains.

<https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/7568871>

OBITUARY

Stephen Arthur Richardson, 66, Dies

Stephen Arthur Richardson died peacefully at home on May 8, 2021. He was born Aug. 5, 1954 in Nashua, NH to Rita and Harold Richardson who both predeceased him. He was raised in Milford, NH and graduated from Milford Area Senior High School in 1972. Steve enlisted in the Navy and served 4 years on Active Duty, then many more years as a reservist, finally retiring as a Master Chief in 2002. He lived and worked in Springfield for many years, and was actively involved in supporting many organizations in the community – Cub Scouts pack 1140, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue as a canteen driver volunteer,



COURTESY PHOTO
Stephen Arthur Richardson

ECHO, Fairfax County CERT, and his local homeowner's association. Steve was an active member of St Paul's Episcopal Church. Steve's marriage to the former Mary Alexander ended in divorce. He is survived by his loving sons, William (Julie) and Samuel, granddaughter Aleigh, sister Janice (Gary) Boutillier, brother Tim (Barb), and several cherished nieces and nephews. In Lieu of flowers, the family would like donations to ECHO in Springfield or the St Paul's Memorial Fund.

Memorial Mass will be held Thursday, May 13, 2021, 2 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 S. Pitt Street Alexandria.

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NEWS

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Amazon employees Emily Hawkins, Amanda Dalagan, Abigail Bishop, Argelia Castro-Perez, and Doaa Ouzri become vaccine “celebrities” at the site’s photo op station.

Amazon Makes Jobs Easy

On-site vaccine appointments available for company employees.

run vaccination clinics. The company also incentivized employees

Amazon’s Springfield delivery station on Industrial Drive hosted on-site Covid-19 vaccinations for its front-line employees from 25 different employee locations across Northern Virginia from April 27 - May 2. Amazon employees who work at fulfillment center, web service data centers, and Whole Foods Market stores, came to receive vaccine jabs.

who got vaccinated off-site with up to \$80. The on-site vaccine event follows the on-site testing program which Amazon began to ensure its front-line employees had access to free, regular testing since early summer last year.

During the pandemic restrictions, the Northern Virginia community, and much of the nation, relied heavily on Amazon and other home delivery and food services, thrusting Amazon employees into essential roles. Their work helped customers stay safe at home and receive vital products and services.

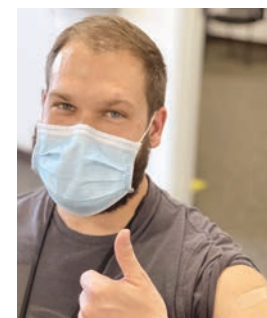
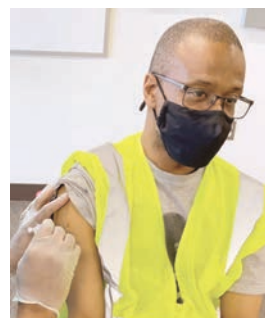
Amazon worked through a national drug store chain, supplied with vaccines, to provide the on-site option. In this way, employees could receive the vaccine to protect their health, and ease the burden on community

— SUSAN LAUME



Brenda Diaz, Amazon Learning Ambassador, Manassas Park, got her shot because, “it’s easy; convenient because I work here. I’ve seen how it works; everyone is so nice and it’s quick.”

Alfred Pino, Warehouse Associate, Springfield got his shots because, “I’ve got a Georgia trip coming up to see relatives. Better to be safe.”



Isaac Atkins, Data Center Manager, Ashburn, “It’s the safe thing to do, and with travel plans in the future...”

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



David Drawdy (center) leads group in sword moves to address enemies in front, behind, or on either side. Sword handlers (from left) - Christopher Durr, Patrick Bannister, Drawdy, David McConnell, Angel Lebron.



David McConnell demonstrates the sharpness and power of the sword on wet rolled Japanese floor mats.



Rosa Caffi, Accountant, Arlington, a Merfolk group member, creates waves at the Workhouse Community Market to support her friend's handmade jewelry and hair adornments inspired by the ocean "for the mermaid within."

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

The Way of the Sword Demonstrated

Workhouse Observes Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Lorton's Community Market took a choreographed step into the times of ancient Japanese martial arts last weekend, recognizing May's Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. The Kenkonkai dojo, Alexandria, demonstrated Ken-

do, a Japanese sword martial art.

Nine of the group's 20 members, dressed in traditional keikogi (training robes), hakama (pants) and obi (belts) were led in a group exercise by the dojo's senior trainer David Drawdy. The group is part of the Capital Area Budokai, a registered non-profit organization of several Japanese weapon arts organizations, including jodo, naginata-do, kyudo and kendo, dedicated to training in and preserving the spirit of Japanese budo, or martial arts.

Workhouse Community Market Offers Unique Shopping Experience

"Simmering Seas Studio's" ocean themed creations dazzle and attract a variety of customers, not just mermaids, at Lorton Workhouse's Community Market. The Market attracts a variety of vendors too; held Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. In the coming weeks, look for regular food trucks, live music, and ticketed art events, such as "Collect 2021 - Pick-nic" on the lawn on May 16, 3-6 p.m. For more information see www.workhousearts.org

— SUSAN LAUME

Legals

Legals

PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR TOWN OF CLIFTON

**APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT
PUBLIC HEARING OF TOWN OF CLIFTON PLANNING COMMISSION**

MAY 25, 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Clifton Planning Commission will hold an electronic Public Hearing on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 7:30 P.M. via Zoom as permitted by law to consider the application for a Special Use Permit for Clifton Café d/b/a Clifton Eatery, LLC located at 7144 Main Street, to increase the number of restaurant seats from 56 to 74, to increase total employees on-site from 8 to 10, to increase the parking allocation from 17 to 21 off-street parking spaces, and to expand hours of operation. The application for the Special Use Permit is available for review and downloading on the Town's website at www.cliftonva.gov and a hard copy may be examined at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton VA, 20124. All interested parties are invited to attend and express their views with respect to the application. To participate in the electronic Public Hearing, contact the Town Clerk at clerk@cliftonva.gov no later than Noon on May 25, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARING OF TOWN OF CLIFTON TOWN COUNCIL

JUNE 1, 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Clifton Town Council will hold an electronic Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 at 7:30 P.M. via Zoom as permitted by law to consider the application for a Special Use Permit for Clifton Café d/b/a Clifton Eatery, LLC located at 7144 Main Street, to increase the number of restaurant seats from 56 to 74, to increase total employees on-site from 8 to 10, to increase the parking allocation from 17 to 21 off-street parking spaces, and to expand hours of operation. The application for the Special Use Permit is available for review and downloading on the Town's website at www.cliftonva.gov and a hard copy may be examined at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton VA, 20124. All interested parties are invited to attend and express their views with respect to the application. To participate in the electronic Public Hearing, contact the Town Clerk at clerk@cliftonva.gov no later than Noon on June 1, 2021.

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Elevating the Bathroom

Ideas for budget and luxury bathrooms

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Sometimes regarded as a strictly functional space, bathrooms might bring to mind brushing and flossing rather than style and comfort. Whether you're working on a tight budget or creating the bathroom of your dreams, two local designers offer inspiration.

"Even if you're only able to spend a limited amount of money, creativity is a necessity," said Marcie Taylor of Marcie Taylor Designs in Alexandria.

Taylor recalls helping a couple who'd grown tired of the outdated master bathroom in their Springfield home, but couldn't afford a total overhaul.

"I told them that they needed to invest in one statement piece and then add some less expensive accessories," she said. "We salvaged a crystal chandelier and hung it over the bathtub to create a focal point. We replaced the grout

around the tub and sink which looked dingy against the existing white tile. We then added a matte black faucet and found a shower head in the same color."

When designers at InSite Builders & Remodeling transformed a cramped and outdated Jack and Jill bathroom in Bethesda into a master bath suite befitting a luxury spa, they had to expand the footprint of the bathroom by using square footage from an adjacent bedroom. The additional space was used to add a double sink, a new closet and a large zero-entry glass shower.

PHOTOS BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG



White countertop, dark wood cabinets, floating vanity, black fixtures create a spa-like atmosphere in this bathroom by InSite Builders & Remodeling.



The hinged glass shower door are consistent with the contemporary design of this bathroom by InSite Builders & Remodeling.



Full-size porcelain slabs make the shower a major focal point in this bathroom by InSite Builders & Remodeling.

Helping to create a sense of tranquility, the design team used materials such as a white countertop, dark wood cabinets, a floating vanity, black fixtures, and a hinged glass shower door. "The shower is a major focal point," said Stephen Gordon, InSite Builders & Remodeling. "It [has] full-size porcelain slabs which eliminate grout lines."

"Even if you're just doing a spruce-up, a bathroom project can seem like a major undertaking," said Taylor. "But I can't recall anyone who didn't think it was worth the effort."



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Pit stops like this one from years' past will not be as social this year.

Biking and Trail Use Continues to Grow

Pit Stop gathering is out, but Bike to Work Day is Still on for May 21.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION



It's been 20 years since Bike to Work Day began, and it grows each year showing that there is another side to commuting that uses no gas, has health benefits and is fun, even if it's only one day a year for many.

As with everything else in the covid year of 2021, it's going to be a little different this year but a good thing nonetheless. There will be tee shirts with the skyline logo, like years past, but at the pit stops, it will be a quick stop for the tee shirt, and onto points beyond - no convoys, no chit chat at the pit stop or a local mechanic checking the brakes as seen in previous years. Since many are working from home still, it will be grab the tee shirt and head back to the home office. The Bike to Work organizers are fine with that, it says on the website.

One change is the "pit stop," name, it's now called "tee shirt pickup point." At the stops, there will be a strict covid policy, which includes a mask requirement, no hanging out and socializing, any food is required to be pre-packaged and not consumed on the premises, and no live raffles. "The emphasis will be on bicycling for exercise and mental well-being," the Bike to Work website said. Cyclists will travel on a one-way path to pick up the tee shirt and each rider will be socially distanced.

Hitting the Trail

According to Colin Browne, Communications Director at the

Washington Area Bicyclist Association, Bike to Work Day is run by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Commuter Connections program. WABA is part of the steering committee and manages the registration process. Although it was cancelled last year to comply with CDC recommendations about gathering, participation has grown every year. In 2018, about 17,000 people signed up for the event and in 2019, just under 20,000 people signed up. This year is impacted by the pandemic with offices closed and many working from home, although people working from home can still ride up and get a tee shirt. "We're expecting 10,000 or so riders this year, as many people are still working from home, and pit stop activities have been scaled back," said Browne.

Trail Use and the Pandemic

The Capital Trails Coalition looked into trail use, and found that across the nation, trails are seeing more users than ever before. According to data provided by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, nearly every week in 2020 saw an increase in trail users compared to numbers of the same week in 2019. Several weeks in March and April even saw as many as 1.5 - 2 times the number of trail users as the year before. In Arlington at the W&OD Bon Air Park counter, there was a 37 percent increase in bike use, and a 23 percent increase in people running and walking.

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'These Investments Will Pay Off in the Future'

Fairfax City adopts its FY 22 budget.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City last week adopted its FY 22 budget. It did so without raising residents' real-estate tax rates by \$0.005, as was previously proposed. But because home assessments increased, residents will receive higher tax bills, anyway.

The real-estate tax rate will remain \$1.075 per \$100 of assessed value, with 3 cents of it dedicated to the City's Stormwater Fund. Yet due to a 3.7-percent average increase in 2021 residential assessments, average homeowners will see an annual, real-estate tax hike of \$210.

However, since commercial-property assessments dropped, real-estate tax bills for these owners will decrease by 5.3 percent. City Council approved the new budget, as well as Fairfax's FY 2022-26 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of \$263,773,219, during a special meeting, last Wednesday, May 5.

The total approved budget for all City funds (General, Wastewater, Stormwater, Transit, Old Town Service District, Cable Fund, Transportation and Capital Funds) is \$183.7 million. This amount – including nearly \$155 million for the General Fund – is aimed at returning the City to its pre-pandemic status, while helping provide for its future.

The FY22 budget reflects a \$19.3 million increase (14.2 percent) over the previous budget, maintains Fairfax's 12 percent undesignated fund balance, enables the City to fund an Economic Development Opportunity Reserve and maintains its AAA bond rating.

AT THE MEETING, City Manager Rob Stalzer and Chief Financial Officer Dave Hodgkins discussed the individual tax rates and overall budget with the Council members before they voted on each measure. First was the C&I (Commercial and Industrial) tax rate of \$0.125 per \$100 of assessed valuation.

"It would generate \$2.3 million and enable us to compete favorably for transportation dollars," said Stalzer.

"We need to maintain this tax at the maximum rate of 12.5 percent," added Hodgkins. "[If not], we'd have to find another funding source in order to allow us to receive the full, 30-percent amount of NVT [Northern Virginia Transportation Authority] funding."

Agreeing, Mayor David Meyer said, "We use this money for the up-front planning [of our transportation projects]. It enables us to have cost estimates that are fairly accurate." The Council then approved this tax rate unanimously.

It also unanimously endorsed increasing the City's wastewater-service rates by 6 percent. "It's so we can eventually fully fund the utility," said Hodgkins. The higher user



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City Council members discuss the FY 22 budget before adopting it.

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Fairfax City Historic District Boundaries Meeting

The second public-outreach meeting for the City of Fairfax Historic District Boundaries Review project is set for Thursday, May 13, from 7-8:30 p.m. Consultant, EHT Tracerics will present its findings on the City's National Register boundaries, and residents will be able to ask questions and learn more about the project. The meeting will be held via GoToWebinar; to register, go to <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5115710259495456524>.

Fairfax High Presents 'Little Women, the Musical'

Fairfax High's spring musical, "Little Women, the Musical," will be livestreamed Thursday-Friday, May 20-21, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, May 22, at 2 and 7 p.m. For tickets, go to fxplayers.org. Based on Louisa May Alcott's life, "Little Women" follows the adventures of sisters Jo, Meg, Beth and Amy March. Jo's trying to sell her stories for publication, but publishers aren't interested. After her professor friend advises her to write about her own experiences, she then weaves the story of herself, her sisters and their lives growing up in Civil War America.

Cathedral Brass Performing in Fairfax City

Cathedral Brass will perform a concert titled, "The Greatest Generation – An American Celebration in Brass," on Saturday, May 22, at 7 p.m. at the Veterans Amphitheater. It's outside and behind Fairfax City Hall, at 10455 Armstrong St., and the event is free.

fees are expected to increase Wastewater Utility revenues by \$424,000. The quarterly financial impact to the average residential customer will be \$7.16, and an estimated \$15.60 to commercial customers.

Fairfax raised these rates 10 percent, from FY2014 through FY2020, and 8 percent in FY2021. "Increased residential and commercial wastewater user rates are required to fund the City's increasing costs associated with its aging infrastructure within the City," explained Hodgkins. "They're also needed to cover the City's share of expenditures associated with the operation of and capital improvements to the Noman Cole Wastewater

Treatment Plant.

"We estimate that we'll need a 6-percent increase per year to keep us where we need to be and maintain our wastewater facility into the future," he continued. "We hope it'll decrease somewhat, in the next few years, but that remains to be seen. And it's beneficial to our economic growth in the City."

"I support this," said Councilmember Sang Yi. "But these things add up for our residential, as well as business, customers – and I want us to be cognizant of it."

Next came a combined vote for the overall FY 22 budget, plus the financial appropriations required for it and all of its sub-bud-

gets, the FY 22-26 CIP and all the tax rates. The vote also included approval of a 3.5-percent merit increase and 2.3-percent market-rate adjustment to City employee pay scales, effective Jan. 1, 2022,

In addition, this budget restored \$2.4 million in funding for City initiatives deferred due to the pandemic. And it subsidized the estimated \$2.1 million increase expected in the City's school tuition contract with Fairfax County. The vote for the budget and all its components passed, but not unanimously, with Yi being the lone dissenter.

"Each budget year, I introduce a motion for a lower, real-estate tax rate," said Yi. "But since I know there won't be support for it from the Council, I won't. But I won't support this tax rate because our homeowners' assessments have gone up an average of nearly 4 percent – and some, as much as 10 percent.

"And it doesn't mean people have the [extra] cash flow – and that's because of the pandemic, with [in some cases] one or two spouses [per home] losing their jobs. And there's an additional \$21 million-\$28 million coming from the federal government. Fairfax County cut its tax rate, and we should have, too." Also concerned about the merit-based pay increases, Yi noted that, "Only one-third of our employees have received written evaluations, in the past year."

But, replied Councilmember Janice Miller, "More than 50 percent of our budget is for contracts with Fairfax County. And we don't know the school contract [amount] until September – which is after we adopt the budget. And we have no idea of the amount of federal money we'll receive, or how we'll have to spend it."

So, she continued, "I think we should have another fiscal calendar so we could be more precise on how we make decisions. But I'll support this budget because of the financial uncertainties surrounding it."

COUNCILMEMBER Joe Harmon said, "Every, single one of our surrounding jurisdictions has a higher tax rate than we do. And I believe we receive a higher level of service from our City staff than they do. So I'll be supporting this budget."

"We spent a lot of time working with staff and going over this budget," added Councilmember Tom Ross. "And while there could be places [for] adjustments, I'd worry we'd be shortchanging the City. It's like owning a house – you constantly need to keep investing in it. And these investments will pay off for us in the future to leave a better City for future generations."

Meyer explained that any local government has 12-14 categories of services it must provide. "It determines which ones it can do best, by itself, and which are best done in collaboration with the county to be most effective and economical," he said.

"We have a superior, hybrid approach to our services – at least 55 percent of which are provided by the county. Our residents appreciate the services they receive and the responsiveness of our staff. And all these things improve our quality of life and make this an enviable place to be."



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The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc. has a position open for a volunteer for our non-profit thrift shop in downtown Herndon VA. A brief description of the job is as follows: The Volunteer Coordinator ensures that the interests of volunteers are served and that the volunteer force remains well staffed. The Volunteer Coordinator will work to actively recruit volunteers for The Closet Thrift Shop. The candidate must be skilled at using various marketing tools, including electronic databases, social media, e-mail, written communications of various types, and outreach events. The candidate must be detail-oriented and organized, requiring work on several projects at once. The Volunteer Coordinator must be outgoing and communicate effectively with a variety of people. The full job announcement is available on-line at our website: <http://theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/job-openings/> Interested applicants should email a resume and cover letter to: Mr. Gene Wiley, President The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc. gwiley106@gmail.com

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(From left) John T. Frey, the Fairfax County Circuit Court clerk swears in Kevin Davis as the Chief of Police Fairfax County Police Department on Monday, May 10, 2021.



PHOTO BY FCPD

Ceremonial Swearing-in of Police Chief Davis

BT MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, May 10, Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) tweeted, “This morning, Chief Davis was surrounded by family, senior staff, and members of the Board of Supervisors for his ceremonial swearing-in as Chief of Police.” Davis was sworn-in by John T. Frey, the clerk of the Fairfax County Circuit Court.

Davis became the police chief on May 3 following his appointment by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Fri-

day, April 23. As chief, Davis holds the top rank in the agency formed 80 years ago. Headquartered in Fairfax, FCPD employs 1,402 police officers and 368 civilians covering a jurisdiction of 407 square miles.

On May 4, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the following appropriations to the General Fund for the police department beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2022: Compensation-\$186,374,506; Operating Expenses- \$34,770,258; Work Performed for Others-(\$697,406); Capital Outlay-\$381,600- Total \$220,828,958 according to Fairfax County.

Petition: Recall Davis

FROM PAGE 3

“I am disappointed in the decision of the Board...So, when you are a 21-year-old, you get a badge. You get a gun; you swear to protect and defend the Constitution of your locality, as well as the United States, and you violate that not once but twice there can be personal redemption. Professional redemption cannot be part of that. Not today.”

In one of his final statements. Davis said he chooses not to get into public battles about 1993 and 1999 because “the six most important words in the English language are, “I admit; I made a mistake.”

“I have learned. I’ve grown, and I’ve matured. And I’ve served elsewhere with distinction,” he said.

Chief Davis called his first News Conference the next day, May 7. He retold his background story he shared the night before.

On Sunday, May 9, Diane Burkley Alejandro, ACLU People Power Fairfax reflected on the Public Input Session. “Virtually everyone who spoke voiced strong opposition to the process used to select Chief Davis and questioned his past misconduct, including the six-day lockdown of a Black Baltimore neighborhood in 2017, which resulted in an ACLU lawsuit. This wasn’t a conversation with the community; we were simply allowed to vent. Many specific questions were asked about



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters

what happened, but we received no answers at all from Chair McKay and nonresponsive ones from Chief Davis. He now says what’s past is past, it is time to move on. We will work with him on police reform and intend to hold him to his progressive words. But this process has shaken community trust in Fairfax, including the Board and the Chief. Unanswered questions and a trust deficit is not a good way to start,” she said.

Kelly Hebron Chair, Fairfax Democratic Black Caucus started a petition to Chair, Board of Supervisor Jeff McKay and Rodney Lusk Lee District Supervisor and Penny Gross Mason District Supervisor to recall Kevin Davis as Fairfax County Police Chief. Petition · Recall Kevin Davis as Fairfax County Police Chief · Change.org.

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A False Sense of Security



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As previously referred to in a recent column, even though I am hardly cancer-free; nonetheless, I am cancer interruptus for the next four weeks. That means I have no cancer-related activities: no lab work, no scans, no infusions, no injections, no appointments, no video visits, no interaction whatsoever. Other than taking my daily thyroid cancer pill (the side effects of which are marginal at worst), with which I ingest another 50-plus pills (supplements and so forth), I am, too quote my late father, “unencumbered” by my less-than-ideal circumstances. I wouldn’t say I’m actually on vacation, but I’m certainly willing to say, there’s a definite break in the action. It’s not exactly a “staycation,” nevertheless, it is a positive occasion, and one with which I can live.

Not that being diagnosed with “terminal” (originally) cancer and/or still undergoing active treatment is ever fun; tolerable is as grandiose a description as I’ll accept. However, four weeks without any involvement with my oncologist and endocrinologist or with any health care-related staff, puts a real bounce in my step; my neuropathy notwithstanding. Though I have difficulty walking and especially running, I am, for the next four weeks anyway, on easy street, figuratively speaking. The psychological wear and tear us cancer patients (especially the ones characterized as “terminal”) endure is ever present and any excuse/opportunity to let one’s mind wander to a place other than your presumptive demise, is a mental trip very much worth taking.

Oddly enough, a month of not having anything to do with my cancer team/healthcare facility is hardly the norm. Usually, there’s more than enough cancer-related activities to keep me preoccupied. In its own unique way, the nothingness is kind of challenging. I keep looking over my shoulder, almost literally, as the great Satchel Page once said (“to see if anybody’s gaining on me”), and flipping the pages on my appointment book to see if I’ve whiffed somehow on some of my usual and customary obligations. I mean: it is so rare to be so disconnected when you’ve been diagnosed with a “terminal” disease. As you might imagine, cancer treatment is very hands-on. Not much is left to chance. Moreover, cancer is very unpredictable and insidious. Often it is in control, despite the oncologist’s best effort. To be thrown into this cancer-centric world after mostly standing still, healthwise, for 54 and a half years, is a fate not worse than death, but one, depending on the type of cancer you have, which could very well lead to a premature death.

After decades of neglect, the last 15 or so years has seen a huge increase in funding for lung cancer research which in turn has led to more than a dozen new drugs - and an entire new class of drugs: immunotherapy, for the treatment of lung cancer. The result has been increased survivability and quality of life for those of us so diagnosed. And very directly, I have been the beneficiary of some of these drugs: avastin, alimta and tarceva having been my life extenders. Where despair once dominated the initial prognosis, now there is hope. It’s not so much a cure as it is a way to make cancer a chronic disease, one which requires a lifetime of monitoring, like diabetes, as an example; but it’s potentially for a lifetime, not for a life with very little time.

At this immediate juncture, I am being treated, but still living my life - outside, and rarely ever in a medical facility. Not having to endure the ongoing exposure and reminder that I have cancer and a shortened life expectancy to boot, enables me not only to breathe easier, but also allows me to take an occasional deep breath as well. A deep breath which doesn’t lead to a coughing fit, a fit which, for us lung cancer patients is never a good sign.

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

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\$319 /MO



MODEL# 5402. MSRP \$35,635. LEASE OFFER FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES. BASED ON 36 MONTHS, 10K MILES/YR & \$2999 DUE AT SIGNING. SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED. PLUS TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT AND \$789 PROCESSING FEE. FACTORY PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

SERVICE & PARTS HOURS: MON-FRI 6A-7P & SAT 7A-5P

<p>BATTERY SPECIAL FREE BATTERY CHECK-UP INCLUDES: CHECK COLD CRANKING AMPS AND VISUAL INSPECTION OF BATTERY CONDITION. INCLUDES BATTERY CONDITION PRINT OUT. <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 05/31/21.</small></p>	<p>LUBE, OIL & FILTER SPECIAL \$39.95 \$44.95 FOR SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE INCLUDES: CHANGE OIL (UP TO 5 QTS.), INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA OIL FILTER, INSPECT & ADJUST ALL FLUID LEVELS AND COMPLIMENTARY MULTI-POINT INSPECTION WITH PRINT OUT. <small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER ENDS 05/31/21.</small></p>	<p>ALIGNMENT SPECIAL \$89.95 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT INCLUDES: 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT, INSPECT SUSPENSION, BALL JOINTS, STRUTS & SHOCKS, TIRE CONDITION AND SET TIRE PRESSURE. <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 05/31/21.</small></p>	<p>BRAKE PAD SPECIAL \$99.95 BRAKE PAD REPLACEMENT INCLUDES: INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA FRONT BRAKE PADS, INSPECT FRONT & REAR ROTORS AND/OR DRUMS, CHECK TIRE CONDITION AND INSPECT ALL HARDWARE. TOMC PADS ONLY. MACHINE ROTORS AN ADDITIONAL \$199.95 <small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER ENDS 05/31/21.</small></p>	<p>TOYOTACARE PLUS \$329.00 SPECIAL MAINTAIN PEACE OF MIND BY EXTENDING YOUR TOYOTACARE COMPLEMENTARY MAINTENANCE PLAN TO 4 YEARS/45,000 MILES! <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 05/31/21.</small></p>	<p>SERVICE VARIABLE DISCOUNT THE MORE YOU SPEND, THE MORE YOU SAVE! \$10 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$50-\$99 \$15 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$100-\$199 \$20 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$200-\$499 \$50 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$500+ <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 05/31/21.</small></p>
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