

Courier

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Look for the employee awards in the next issue of Courier, Dec. 8.

When viewing Courier online, use the links marked in red to get directly to stories, e-mail addresses and Web pages.

Neighborhood College Graduates Leaders

The students rush into the classroom clutching books and bags, bundled up against the cool autumn weather. They sit down eager to spend the morning listening, taking notes and exchanging

ideas. For the next two-and-a-half hours, they will be getting a lesson on Fairfax County's public safety services from Capt. **Jay Iacone**, Fire and Rescue, and Officer **Brendan Murphy**, Police.



Officer Brendan Murphy, Police and Telly Whitfield, regional community developer, at a recent Neighborhood College in Falls Church.

The classroom is the Region 2 office for Department of Systems Management for Human Services (DSMHS) on Leesburg Pike in Falls Church. These students are participants in the county's free Neighborhood College series, a program designed to inform and empower residents to become community leaders and build stronger communities by working with local government, community organizations and neighbors. The program has "graduated" more than 300 participants through 16 Neighborhood Colleges.

"We want to provide participants from
Neighborhood, Page 2

Language Access Survey on Dec. 1

"No person will be denied equal access to county services based on his/her inability, or limited ability, to communicate in the English language." - Fairfax County Policy

Federal census data illustrates the increasing diversity of the people living and working in Fairfax County. In order to meet the needs of residents who may not be proficient in English, the county developed the policy noted above. In 2002, the Office of the County Executive also surveyed employees to find out

what tools and resources were needed to ensure services to these residents.

A new survey to identify the changing
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Language Access Coordinator Angie Carrera

Neighborhood, from page 1

all of our communities with the tools to become community leaders and engage in the community," said **Telly Whitfield**, a DSMHS regional community developer. "The county promotes partnering with our residents and this is one way that we do that."

Sponsored by DSMHS in collaboration with other agencies, as well as Fairfax County Public Schools, there are two to three Neighborhood College programs held annually in each of the four DSMHS regional offices. Each Neighborhood College has two to six sessions, on average, held in evenings or during the day with free child care to participants. County employees are also invited to participate in the program.

Currently, DSMHS is partnering with the Department of Community and Recreation Services on a Neighborhood College for residents who are close to retirement. The program is highlighting options and providing information to the participants on ways they can get involved in their communities as they transition to retirement.

According to Whitfield, the recent Neighborhood College in Falls Church took about three months to plan and coordinate the curriculum and speakers. The six-week program was a mix of presentations, interactive discussions and yes, homework. Similar to other Neighborhood Colleges, the students learned about many levels and functions of the county government and how to access county services and resources. After completing the requirements for Neighborhood College, graduates receive certificates from the county and often come back to talk to new students about their experiences and work in their communities.

The next Neighborhood College, co-sponsored by the Park Authority, is being implemented by the DSMHS Region 4 office at the Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The two-day program is Saturday, Dec. 2 and Saturday, Jan. 6. For more information, contact *paulette.whiteside@fairfaxcounty.gov* or 703-324-5285, TTY 711.

If your agency is interested in partnering with DSMHS on a Neighborhood College program or other civic education opportunities, call 703-324-5285, TTY 711. ■

The County's High-Tech Courtroom

Fairfax Circuit Court's Courtroom 5E, the prototype high-tech courtroom located in the Jennings Judicial Center, was officially introduced on Oct. 10 by U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf, Chancellor Professor and Director of Courtroom 21 Project Fred Lederer, College of William and Mary Law School, and Clerk of the Fairfax Circuit Court **John Frey**.

This prototype will guide the technology needs for the courthouse expansion and renovations currently underway and provide flexibility and adaptability to incorporate future changes in technology and court proceedings.

Courtroom 5E's new technologies include a universal interface for laptop computers, document cameras and multiple flat-screen monitors that allow the judge, witness, jury and gallery to view the digital presentation of evidence at the same time; an enhanced system for simultaneous assisted listening and language interpretation; the capability

for remote testimony, video arraignment and secured-witness testimony utilizing videoconferencing technology; touch panels controlled by judges, clerks and attorneys to facilitate courtroom proceedings via multiple technologies; and electronic docket displays.

Several trials have been conducted utilizing the high-tech courtroom's facilities. For the first time in Virginia, the court was able to present digitized 3-D medical graphics and animation to the jury. Through the videoconferencing technology, a young "protected witness" in a child-abuse case testified from a remote area of the courthouse instead of being in the same room as the defendant. A plaintiff in a chancery case was able to provide testimony from her native residence in Turkey. These cases highlight the success of the prototype project and represent a major breakthrough for the adjudication process in Fairfax County and throughout the world.

Language, from page 1

needs of our community, called "Language Challenges to Customer Service" will be distributed by e-mail from the county executive on Dec. 1. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete. The deadline for submission is Dec. 15 and all responses are anonymous.

"The information from this survey will help us fill in the gaps for language access," explained **Angie Carrera**, language access coordinator. "It really gives us a sense of the challenges being faced by county staff who are interacting daily with residents whose first language is not English.

"I was really impressed with the thousands of responses we received from the 2002 survey and how generous employees were with sharing their thoughts and experiences on language access. I encourage everyone to do the same this year!" added Carrera.

The Language Access Survey Report published in 2003 and based on the survey results, identified key challenges encountered by employees and enabled the county to develop and put in place language access tools includ-

ing bilingual skills assessment, document translations, face-to-face interpretation, interpretation on the telephone and translation verification. The survey also gave a benchmark for the number of county employees who are bilingual or multilingual. In 2002, 34 percent of the 2,023 respondents indicated that they spoke at least one other language besides English, including:

Spanish – 16.23 percent

Other languages (Chinese, etc.) – 14 percent

Vietnamese – 2.68 percent

Korean – 2.59 percent

Arabic – 2.24 percent

Urdu – 1.75 percent

Farsi – 1.62 percent

Information about language services available to Fairfax County employees can be found at <http://infoweb/cex/language>.

If you have a question on the language access survey or any aspect of the county's language access resources, contact **Angie Carrera** at 703-324-2531, TTY 711, or angie.carrera@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

Other courts in the commonwealth, the United States, including the U.S. Army's military courts, and Canada have approached the county to research and emulate this project

The high-tech courtroom is a joint effort between the county's three courts - Circuit Court, General District Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court -- and the Center for Legal and Court Technology, formerly known as the Courtroom 21 project supported by the College of William and Mary's Marshall-Wythe School of Law. In addition, the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, Department of Information Technology, Department of Management and Budget, Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection, Department of Public Works and Environ-

mental Services, Department of Purchasing and Supply Management and the Facilities Management Department all played integral roles in the development and implementation of the high-tech courtroom. ■



Wielding "gold" wire cutters for the Courtroom 5E cable-cutting on Oct. 10 are (left to right): Celine Robinson and Afsaneh Tibbs, General District Court; State Delegate Dave Albo; Clerk of Court Jennifer Flanagan, George Spack, Chief Judge Teena Grodner, JDRDC; Clerk of Court Nancy Lake, General District Court; David Bartee, DIT; Clerk of the Fairfax Circuit Court John Frey; Drew Kassick, Circuit Court; Paul Maltagliati, Sheriff's Office; Fairfax County Attorney David Bobzien; Judge Jane Roush, Circuit Court; U.S. Rep. Frank Wolf; Judge Dennis Smith, Circuit Court; City of Fairfax City Attorney Brian Lubkeman. (Photo by Kimberly Morris)

Compensation Task Force

Months of Work Nears End

The results of the compensation study and recommendations from the Compensation Task Force and the consultant will be available in the next few weeks. Information will be provided to employees via e-mail from County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin** as well as on the Infoweb and in an upcoming issue of Courier.

Through the last five months, task force members have met twice a month to discuss and provide feedback on various topics related to the study. The group was charged with gathering employee input and relevant information as part of a final report to the county executive who will provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for the FY 2008 budget, effective July 1, 2007.

Detailed information on the work completed by the task force, as well as links to Courier articles can be found at <http://infoweb/cex/comptaskforce>. The planning process for the study began in May and the task force began its work in July.

The task force is made up of general county employees representing agencies from throughout the county, as well as representatives from the Employee Advisory Council (EAC) and the local American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The group's scope of responsibilities included:

- Serving as a communication liaison with employees throughout the process.
- Providing information and support in developing and implementing focus groups and other means of gathering employee input such as the online survey.
- Working on specific issues with the consultant.
- Responding to consultant requests for information.
- Commenting on the consultant's work and providing input to the county executive.

The Compensation Task Force members are: **Anita Baker**, EAC chair/Department of Administration for Human Services (DAHS);

Karla Bruce, Community and Recreation Services; **Lisa Connors**, Office of Public Affairs; **Bill Davis**, Department of Vehicle Services; **Rosalyn Foroobar**, Health Department; **Victor Garcia**, Department of Finance; **Toni Garcia**, Fire and Rescue Department; **Ken Garnes**, DAHS; **Norm Graves**, Department of Tax Administration; **Susan Holsneck**, co-chair/Department of Human Resources; **Todd Johnson**, Park Authority; **Kim McCarthy**, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court; **Joe Mondoro**, co-chair/Department of Management and Budget; **Stella Norman**, EAC representative/Community Services Board; **Daria Parnes**, Fairfax County Public Libraries; **George Robertson**, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES); **Simin Royanian**, DPWES/AFSCME representative; **Sara Simmons**, co-chair/Civil Service Commission; **Cathy Spage**, Department of Information Technology; **Bill Spencer**, Equity Programs; **Kathy Stanley**, Department of Purchasing and Supply Management; **Ginger Stanton**, DPWES; **Patti Stevens**, Department of Systems for Human Services and **Clarence Swider**, DPWES.

As noted in previous Courier articles, there was an emphasis on getting as much employee input as possible during the study. The task force conducted 16 focus groups to get employee feedback on a variety of compensation-related issues (e.g., what is working, what needs improvement, etc.). The task force relied on a large group of volunteer employee facilitators for these smaller focus groups. According to the task force co-chairs, this process would not have been possible without the time and effort of the following people: **Pat Baerwald**, **Mike Barbier**, **Susan Bartlett**, **Bill Belcher**, **Valda Brown**, **Kristi Dooley**, **Charlene Fuhrman-Schulz**, **Jeff Gordon**, **Laura Harris**, **George Hohmann**, **Vee Johnson**, **Ursula Koerner**, **Jaya Kori**, **Allison Lowry**, **Betty Marshall**, **Fran Millhouser**, **Kris Miracle**, **Allison**

Mulligan, Michele Oliver, Janet Prasher, Kristin Resta, Nan Butler Roberts, Carmen Sanchez, Ellicia Seard, Ramona Simmons, Kathy Smith, Cathy Spage, John Spichtig, Grace Starbird, Evelyn Swieter, Afsaneh Tibbs and Mel Wells.

There also were many employees working behind-the-scenes to ensure that information was available in a timely manner. Employees providing support for the focus group coordination included: **Annette Soriano, Addie Armstrong, Trish Walker, Tiffany Morris, Debbie Purks and Sharen Downer.** Work on the search for the compensation study consultant was conducted by **Mary McMahan, Sandy Jones, Anita Baker, Joe Mondoro, Susan Holsneck and Sara Simmons.**

The following employees helped with the information and technology needs: **Evelyn Grieve, Joyce Ferritto, James Moon, Gary Smith, Jamie Sims, Cathy Spage and Dave Demeny.**

The task force extends a thank you to all employees who took the time to provide their feedback by participating in a focus group and/or completing the survey. In addition, a number of employees sent their thoughts, concerns and ideas to the task force via e-mail.

"The input from employees was phenomenal and instrumental in focusing recommendations on particular issues and concerns raised by employees," noted co-chairs **Joe Mondoro, Susan Holsneck and Sara Simmons.** ■

Counting County's Absentee Ballots

Close to 50 volunteers signed up to help count absentee ballots from the Nov. 7 mid-term election. The volunteers were sworn in as election officers to count more than 14,000 paper absentee ballots received from voters registered in Fairfax County.

Volunteers in the county's Central Absentee Precinct included students, retirees, county employees and other citizens.

"It was a long day but very worthwhile," said **Peggy Miles**, a recently retired county employee who previously worked in the Office for Partnerships.

All absentee ballots from Fairfax County, which included overseas and military voters registered in the county, were counted at the Central Absentee Precinct in the Government Center. The remainder of the absentee ballots were cast in person using the county's voting machines. In-person absentee voting was available at seven satellite-voting locations and at the Office of Elections

According to **Sonia Skipper**, Office of Elections, there were several county employees among the volunteers who took advantage of the county policy of offering one-day administrative leave for election work.

"The Office of Elections truly appreciates the support of the Board of Supervisors in con-

tinuing to offer this incentive to help meet the critical need for volunteers during an election," said Skipper, who pointed out that a mid-term election such as this often needs more than 2,500 volunteers to also work in the county precincts and polling places.

Election volunteers receive a stipend for their work. County employees and citizens can volunteer for future elections by completing forms found on the Office of Elections Web page at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/eb>. ■

*By John Nash
Former Courier Editor*



Peggy Miles, retiree; Larry Ichter, DPWES; Ana Cesar, Robinson High School senior and Nicholas Andres, James Madison High School senior, verify absentee ballots. (Photo by John Nash)

Focus on Benefits



Deferred Compensation Limit Increases for 2007

Employees participating in the county's 457 deferred compensation program may wish to take advantage of higher plan limits for 2007. The normal deferred compensation limit will increase to \$15,500 (up from \$15,000) or 100 percent of includible compensation, whichever is less.

Playing catch-up

If you are age 50 or older and you have not been able to put aside as much money in your deferred compensation plan as you would like, it's not too late to play catch-up. There's still time to take advantage of the tax laws and prepare financially for your retirement.

2007 participants who are age 50 and older may contribute an additional \$5,000. This means that participants age 50 or older will be able to defer up to \$20,500 (normal limit of \$15,500 + age 50 limit of \$5,000) in 2007.

In addition, employees who have reached

or are within four years of their normal retirement date may defer up to \$31,000 in 2007 (up from \$30,000) by using the catch-up provision. The amount you can defer under

catch-up is determined by your salary and your history of unused deferrals. DHR has a record of your deferral history and can provide you with the amount of your unused deferrals upon request. If you are within four years of retirement, you can contact the Financial Benefits Help Desk for more information at 703-324-4995, TTY 703-222-7314.

Make election changes in December

Employees who wish to change their deferral amount for the first pay date in January (Jan. 5, 2007) are encouraged to submit their change forms to DHR by Dec. 18. Biweekly deduction amounts are noted below for employees who choose to reach their 2007 plan contribution limit over 26 pay periods.

Employees may submit deferred compensation enrollment or change forms anytime throughout the year. Enrollment and change forms received in DHR in any given month will become effective the first available pay date of the next month. Forms are available on the Infoweb or by calling the Financial Benefits Help Desk. Completed forms may be faxed to 703-802-8795 or mailed to Employee Benefits, Department of Human Resources, Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway (Suite 270), Fairfax, Virginia, VA 22035. ■

2007 Deferred Compensation Contribution Limits

2007 Plan Limits	Deduction Amount Per Pay Period <i>(Limit over 26 pay periods)</i>
Normal Limit - \$15,500.....	\$597
Age 50 Limit - \$20,500.....	\$789
Catch-up Limit - \$31,000.....	\$1,193

Nomination deadline is Monday, Nov. 27. Ballot deadline is Monday, Dec. 18.

Active Police to Elect New Trustee

The Fairfax County Police Officers Retirement System will have a vacancy on its Board of Trustees effective Jan. 1. The position is a four-year term. The position will be filled by election from the active membership at large. The nominations deadline is Monday, Nov. 27, at 4 p.m. and only active county police officers are eligible to vote.

Members may nominate themselves. Questions regarding the nomination process or the duties of the office may be directed to **Laurnz**

A. Swartz, executive director to the retirement boards, or **Philip R. Langham**, deputy director, at 703-279-8228, TTY 711.

Pre-printed postage-paid ballots will be mailed to the home address of all active members of the Police Officers Retirement System at the close of the nomination process. Ballots must be received at the Retirement Agency by close of business Dec. 18. The winner will be notified Dec. 20 and the new trustee will take office Jan. 1. ■

Briefs

Employee Flu Shots

Flu shots will be available to employees on Thursday, Nov. 30, from 8 to 11:30 a.m. in Conference Rooms 2/3 at the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The cost for the vaccination is \$25 and only cash or checks will be accepted. To schedule an appointment to get your shot call the Department of Human Resources (DHR) at 703-324-4167, TTY 711.

Congratulations SACC!

The Fairfax County School Age Child Care (SACC) program took home the first place award for "Best Float without Music" in the Oct. 25 Vienna Halloween parade. SACC employees constructed a replica of the Godspeed, the ship that brought Virginia's first European settlers to Jamestown, for their float. Children from various SACC centers also participated in the parade. The Vienna mayor and council presented the award to SACC representatives during a ceremony at the Vienna Town Hall on Nov. 6.



SACC representatives accepting the Vienna parade award included (left to right) Heather Dyer, Kings Park; Sam Freeman, Westbriar; Andrew Ames, Halley; Vienna Town Council Member Edythe Kellerher; Kali Pellegrino, Kings Glen; Anita McElhiney, SACC regional supervisor; George Wollam, Columbia; Tara Barningham, Oakview and Pam Wentworth, Westbriar. (Photo provided by SACC)

County Cold Case on TV

On Saturday, Nov. 18, at 9 p.m., the cable network A&E featured a highly publicized county police investigation on its hit show "Cold

Case." The show featured the cold case murder of 25-year-old Mona Lisa Abney who was brutally murdered in her Tysons Corner hotel room in 1978. In 2004, the county was able to arrest her husband using DNA evidence. The popular television show caught wind of the story after it was reported by the Associated Press. Fairfax County Detectives **Steve Milefsky** and **Bob Murphy**, Police, the lead detectives on the case were featured on the show, as well as **Scotty Boatright**, now with Fire and Rescue, who had been the criminal scene investigator for the case.

Correct Tax Withholding?

Employees are reminded to file an updated Federal Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate (and applicable state income tax withholding form, if necessary) if their filing status (married or single) and/or number of allowances/exemptions (zero or more) has changed.

Your current filing status (married or single) and number of allowances/exemptions (zero or more) is represented on your biweekly pay advice in the top right corner and displayed in online time under personnel and pay information, transaction 005-tax and address change and 009-tax status and pay type.

You can update your filing status and/or number of exemptions by submitting a new W-4 (and applicable state income tax withholding form, if necessary) to the Payroll Division, Department

of Human Resources, or by updating your PRISM online time record utilizing transaction 005-tax and address change. Forms are available from your agency payroll contact, Department of Human Resources Suite 270 or at <http://infoweb/hr> (click on forms). If you need PRISM online time assistance, please contact the PRISM hotline at 703-324-3400, TTY 711.

Don Smith Award Nominations

Nominations are now being accepted by the Employees Advisory Council for the Don Smith Award. The award provides recognition to individual employees who contribute outside of their normal job duties to the well-being of their fellow workers. Nominations for the award are being accepted until Wednesday Dec. 6. Any county merit employee that has completed the 12-month probationary period may nominate or be nominated for the award.

Award recipients will receive an engraved plaque and a cash award of \$1,000 at the Jan. 22 Board of Supervisors meeting. Nomination forms are available at the EAC Web page at www.fceac.org or from EAC representatives, payroll contacts, or the Department of Human Resources. Contact **Bob Fitzpatrick** at 703-324-3306, tty 711 or robert.fitzpatrick@fairfaxcounty.gov for information. ■

Courier News

There is only one more issue of Courier in 2006! Look for the next issue on Dec. 8. The first issue of 2007 will be distributed on Jan. 5. Call **Lisa Connors**, Courier editor, if you have any questions, at 703-324-3197, TTY 711.

Signature Blocks in a Word Document

If you need to create signature blocks in a word document, follow these steps:

Option 1: One signature block

- ◆ Start with a blank page.
- ◆ Type your signature block.
- ◆ Highlight your signature block.
- ◆ Click onto Tools\AutoCorrect

Option.

◆ In the AutoCorrect window select the AutoText tab and press the Add button.

◆ To test your signature, type some text and press Enter. Now start to type your signature and a little window pops up displaying the beginning of your signature (Press Enter to insert). Press Enter and the entire signature will be inserted.

Option 2: Multiple signature blocks

- ◆ Start with a blank page.
- ◆ Type the signature block.
- ◆ Highlight your signature block.
- ◆ Click Tools/AutoCorrect Options.
- ◆ On the AutoCorrect window select the AutoCorrect tab.

◆ In the Replace box, enter an abbreviated title such as "sig1."

◆ Click Add button and OK.

◆ To test your signature, type some text and press Enter. Now type the abbreviated title entered in the Replace box, such as "sig1," and press the space bar or return. Your selected signature will display.

◆ If you have more than one signature block to enter, repeat the steps

Tech Tip # 107

Department of Information Technology
Technology Infrastructure Division
Technical Support Center
Fairfax County Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Tel: 703-222-3535, option 1
Fax: 703-222-3396
TTY: 711

listed in Option 2.

To delete signature block:

◆ Tools\AutoCorrect Options\Auto Correct tab.

◆ In the Replace box, type the signature name (e.g., sig1) or scroll to signature name.

◆ Once the signature name is highlighted, click the Delete button then OK. ■

Holiday Season Happenings

The Hispanic/Latino Ambassador Group is sponsoring its third annual cultural training event, "Celebrate the Holidays Around the World," on Friday, Dec. 1, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will be held on the second floor of the Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. The goal of the training by the Department of Family Services (DFS) is to share, learn and enjoy the cultural and ethnic customs of the vast countries represented by our diverse staff. A few of the countries that will be represented are: Bolivia, India, Mexico, Puerto Rico, as well as the Jewish culture, Kwanzaa and more.

The Hispanic/Latino Ambassador Group was formed to encourage understanding and to educate each other about the similarities and the differences within and between cultures within DFS. For more information, call **Magda Alarcon**, 703-324-7727, TTY 711. ■

The 14th annual holiday food drive, sponsored by the Department of Human Resources, runs from Nov. 27 to Dec. 14. Celebrate the holiday season by donating non-perishable food and personal hygiene items.

Please consider helping out those who are served by the FACETS food closet. FACETS is a nonprofit organization that assists homeless and low-income people living in Fairfax.

Government Center collection box locations are the located in the cafeteria and HR Central (suite 270).

If these collection sites are not convenient for you, please consider setting up a collection site in your agency and delivering all donated food to the Department of Human Resources, Suite 270 by the morning of Dec. 14. Unfortunately, DHR staff is unable to pick up donations from other locations. ■

Courier is published most payday Fridays. The deadline for articles and information is two weeks before publication.



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