



Courier

Volume 41, No. 7

March 27, 2009

Budget Rumor Busters – Answers to Your Questions

Budget Rumor Busters features several questions and answers that have come up frequently at the employee Q&A meetings with the county executive on the proposed FY 2010 Budget. Should changes occur as part of the Board of Supervisors' approval process, updated information will be provided to employees.

Q: Were the reductions to each agency budget the across-the-board 15 percent reductions as presented in the Lines of Business presentations last fall?

A: No. Some agencies have less than 15 percent reductions and some have more. Because of the magnitude of the deficit facing the county, all areas of the county's budget are going to be impacted including schools, public safety and human

services. These budget expenditures comprise approximately 75 percent of the budget. It would not be possible to balance the budget without adjustments to these areas while maintaining an acceptable and sustainable level of services. But, cuts were not made in a simple across-the-board manner, as the county executive sought to propose targeted cuts to meet the required level of reductions, while protecting the county's core services and programs.

Q: Will the expected Reduction In Force (RIF) continue into FY 2011?

A: RIF is not a rolling process – it applies only to those positions that are no longer funded in a specific fiscal

year. Unfortunately, the revenue decline will probably continue in FY 2011; an additional 3 percent reduction is predicted and the county expects to have restrained resources for four to five years. If necessary to address a budget shortfall in FY 2011, the county executive would declare a RIF to address the specific positions to be abolished for that fiscal year's budget.

Q: I've heard that the RIF process has changed since the RIF that took place in the early 1990s.

A: The process has not changed – it is exactly the same.

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John C. Cook Elected Braddock District Supervisor

John C. Cook was elected Braddock District supervisor in a special election on March 10 and was sworn in during a ceremony held at the Government



Supervisor Cook at the ceremony on March 17. Photo by Donnie Biggs.

Center on Tuesday, March 17.

Cook is a founding partner of the Fairfax law firm Cook & Kitts, PLLC. He received his B.A. degree, magna cum laude, from Gettysburg College, where he was selected as a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He received his J.D. degree from The George Washington University.

He is a former chair of the Employment Law Section of the Fairfax County Bar Association and a member of the

New York State and the Virginia bar associations, the Virginia State Bar and the District of Columbia Bar. He is a mediator for the District of Columbia Superior Court and a conciliator for the Fairfax Circuit Court.

► An updated Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Reference Guide may be found on page 3. ■

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Courier is available online at <http://infoweb/courier>

Q: When will positions/programs being cut in the FY 2010 Budget be reinstated?

A: Not in the short term. The economy is still going down. The question isn't when will positions and programs be reinstated, but how much more they will be reduced.

Q: What impact will the federal stimulus package have on the proposed FY 2010 Budget?

A: The county executive has asked the Board of Supervisors to pass a budget without consideration of the stimulus package, since the county will not know what funds may be available to the county until after the budget, which by law, must be passed by the end of April. If the county can identify funding, adjustments can be made as part of the FY 2009 Carryover Review, the first opportunity that the board has to amend the FY 2010 Adopted Budget (which the board will receive in August 2009 and vote on in September 2009).

Several employees are members of a task force to identify possible funding from the stimulus package, including Deputy County Executive **Ed Long; David Ellis**, Office of the County Executive;

Marcia Wilds and **Katie Horstman**, Department of Management and Budget; and **Sue Mittereder** and **Claudia Arko**, Legislative Affairs.

Q: Since there is no compensation increase in the proposed budget, will Fairfax County fall behind and become less competitive in attracting high quality job applicants?

A: Inflation right now is zero – with inflation so low, it is possible that the county will not lose ground with compensation. Other local jurisdictions are also in the same position and are not receiving pay increases. This is not just a Fairfax County problem, it is a national and even global problem. The national unemployment rate is more than 8 percent and expected to increase.

Q: Is the county considering offering employees close to retirement an early retirement or buyout package?

A: No. The only way the county saves money through an early retirement or buyout package, is if the person retires and the position is abolished and it is never recreated.

Q: Is the Board of Supervisors considering eliminating the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP)?

A: No. DROP provides the ability for an employee to retire for purposes of the pension plan, while continuing to work and receive a salary for a period of three years. DROP is a very low cost, real benefit to employees. The county benefits by holding on to people with experience and important institutional knowledge.

Q: How are public safety positions being affected?

A: There are approximately 200 public safety positions recommended to be abolished in the proposed FY 2010 Budget. It costs the county about \$100,000 to train a police officer/ firefighter, which means it is not cost effective to lose public safety personnel. It is expected that the number of public safety personnel who leave the county workforce through the RIF process will be minimal because the county will terminate positions through attrition (such as retirement) to protect its investment in training and by not offering new academies for trainees. ■

For Employees: Budget Resources

FY 2010 Budget and Lines of Business:

<http://infoweb/opa/budget>

County Executive E-Mails

<http://infoweb/CEX/messages>

Reduction in Force

RIF Reference Guide <http://infoweb/RIF>, or go to <http://infoweb/hr/chapter9.pdf> or <http://infoweb/hr/rifsummary.pdf>. E-mail questions to HRExpress@fairfaxcounty.gov

FY 2009 Budget:

<http://infoweb/opa/budget/fy09.htm>

Budget Rumor Buster Column Archive
<http://infoweb/opa/budget>

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
www.inovaeap.com

The EAP provides assistance with stress, legal, financial and family concerns. To access, log in with user name: FAIRFAX and password: County1

NOTE: Now through Aug. 31, this service also is available to exempt limited-term and exempt part-time employees because a number of them will be impacted by the budget reductions.

Calendar for Advertised Budget Plan
March 30 - April 2: Public hearings will be held in the Government Center Board Auditorium. Times and other information may be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget. To be placed on the list of speakers, contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors at 703-324-3151. The public hearings will be televised live on Fairfax County Government Channel 16.

April 20: The Board of Supervisors marks up the budget, 10 a.m.
April 27: The Board of Supervisors formally adopts the budget. ■

2009 Board of Supervisors Reference Guide

(A pullout-and-save guide – place in the folder in the back of your employee handbook for handy reference.)

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► For more information about the Board of Supervisors, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/board. ■

Channeling Stress and Frustration Through Humor

“The Stress Doc” Mark Gorkin is providing interactive presentations and small group exercises for county employees through the Live Well program during the month of April.

Workshops will focus on channeling stress and frustration into safe sharing, cooperative/creative action and team building through humor.

The 90-minute workshops are offered as a partnership between the Live Well program and the Organizational Development and Training Division.

- ▶ April 1, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Government Center, Conference Rooms 4/5.
- ▶ April 1, 2 to 3:30 p.m., Pennino Building, Rooms 206 A and B.
- ▶ April 3, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., South County Center, Room 221C.



- ▶ April 13, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Herrity Building, Rooms 106 and 107.
 - ▶ April 13, 2 to 3:30 p.m., Government Center, Conference Rooms 2 and 3.
 - ▶ April 17, 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., Judicial Center, Jury Assembly Room.
 - ▶ April 23, 10:30 a.m. to noon, Falls Church Center, Rooms C and D.
 - ▶ April 23, 1 to 2:30 p.m., Falls Church Center, Rooms C and D.
- Self-register online at <http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/employeeu>. Select “Ready to Register?”

If you have not experienced a Live Well workshop, here is what other employees are saying about the program’s benefits.

“The benefits have already started to pay off - I feel better, sleep better and have more energy. What a wonderful service! I hope a lot of county employees are utilizing this wonderful benefit.” (Department of Family Services, South County Center employee.)

“I’m thrilled that this program is available. Perhaps I should work out twice as hard as I am paying half the amount [for the annual employee RECenter pass].” (Library employee.)

- ▶ For more information on Live Well, visit <http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/livewell>. ■

Animal Shelter’s Rescue Partner Program Saves More Lives

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter saved more lives in 2008 than in previous years through its Rescue Partner Program.

The shelter experienced a 48 percent increase in the number of animals transferred to area animal rescue organizations in 2008 compared to 2007. In total, 443 dogs, cats, small mammals, livestock and reptiles were sent to rescue groups in 2008. The Rescue Partner Program was created to expand the shelter’s capabilities beyond its walls by leveraging community resources.

Privately funded animal rescue organizations are able to help the shelter with some of its most difficult cases – those animals that need extensive medical care beyond what the shelter can afford; those that are older; and those who would benefit from more training or socialization.

More than 70 organizations now participate in the shelter’s Rescue Partner Program. These groups were recognized for their contributions to Fairfax County at a special gathering on Tuesday, March 10,

and more than 80 attendees were thanked for their support of the shelter. The shelter has been hosting its annual Rescue Recognition Reception since 2005.

“Ultimately, rescue groups are helping us save more animal lives each year,” said Animal

Shelter Director **Karen Diviney**. “We cannot thank them enough for what they do that benefits the animals, the shelter and the entire community.”

The Animal Shelter is located at 4500 West Ox Road, Fairfax. The phone number is 703-830-1100. The hours are Tuesday - Friday: noon to 7 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fees for adoptions from the Animal Shelter are:

- Dogs – \$40.
- Cats – \$30.
- Rabbits/ferrets – \$15.
- Reptiles/small birds – \$10.
- Hamsters,gerbils – \$5.
- Equine/bovine – \$200.
- Livestock – \$20.
- Large birds – \$100.

For more information, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/animal/adoption.htm. ■



Department of Transportation Distributes SmarTrip Cards

By Ellen Kamilakis,
Department of Transportation

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) has been actively distributing free SmarTrip cards to county residents in an effort to encourage use of the card instead of cash when riding Fairfax Connector buses.

FCDOT employees have been distributing the SmarTrip cards, which normally cost \$5 at senior centers, government centers, shopping malls and many other locations. SmarTrip cards are permanent, rechargeable farecards that can be used to ride Fairfax Connector, Metrorail, Metrobus, DASH and CUE, as well as most other regional transit systems.

The SmarTrip card makes boarding the bus faster and easier because riders only need to swipe the card over the fare box on the bus. The fare box automatically deducts the appropriate fare; so there's no need to feed cash into a slot or count



FCDOT employees at a recent outreach event at the South County Center include (left to right) Denis Paddeu, Nohemy Miranda and Charisse Padilla. Photo by Crystal Numan.

out change.

As an incentive for passengers to use the card, SmarTrip riders receive a discount and pay \$1.25 for a regular ride while cash-paying customers pay \$1.35.

Fairfax Connector and other regional transit providers encourage use of the SmarTrip card because it makes reconciliation of bus fares easier and

more accurate, and it helps keep the bus on schedule because boardings are faster.

FCDOT also is reaching out to older adults to provide them with the new yellow senior SmarTrip cards. Older adults must complete a quick application and provide proof of age to receive the card. Senior SmarTrip cards enable users to receive substantially discounted fares.

FCDOT is encouraging all transit passengers to acquire a SmarTrip card. Those who rely on transit but have not purchased a card because they can't afford it or do not understand its purpose may be able to get a free card while supplies last.

► Call for an appointment at 703-877-5600. FCDOT is located at 4050 Legato Rd., Suite 400, Fairfax. ■

EAC Elections – Ballot Deadline Is April 24

The Employee Advisory Council (EAC) has open representative seats for Groups 2, 5, 9 and 10.

Groups 2 and 10 each have only one nominee, therefore no election is necessary. Those representatives are Group 2 - **Dean W. Cox** and Group 10 - **Stella Norman**.

There will be elections for:

► **Group 5 - Anita Baker or Jon Miskell** to represent the following agencies: Planning and Zoning, Planning Commission, Housing and Community Development, Transportation, Cable Communications and Consumer Protection, Human

Rights and Equity Programs, Civil Service Commission, Office for Women, Administration for Human Services and Systems Management for Human Services.

► **Group 9 - Victoria Collado or Kristeena Eckard** to represent the following agencies: Sheriff's Office, Circuit Court and Records, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court, Commonwealth Attorney's Office and 19th General District Court.

► Campaign statements for the candidates are available by contacting your agency payroll contact or **Valarie Johnson**, Department of Human

Resources (DHR) at 703-324-3854, TTY 703-222-7314 or via e-mail at Valarie.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Election ballots will be mailed to Groups 5 and 9 merit employees' home addresses on Friday, April 10. Ballots must be returned to DHR before close of business on Friday, April 24.

Employees should return ballots by using the self-addressed envelop that is provided. Ballots can be returned by regular mail or interoffice mail. ■

Focus on Benefits

Weddings, births, adoptions – these are all exciting events for employees. However, with all of the planning, employees may forget that these life events also might require changes to their county benefits.

Other life events that also may require changes include: divorce; a spouse or dependent gaining or losing eligibility for coverage due to a change in employment or an open enrollment period; a child over age 19 who stops being a full-time student; changes to Medicare or Medicaid, Children’s Health Insurance Plan or COBRA status; commencement or return from unpaid family or military leave or changes in day care cost.

If you experience a life event, review the following information to determine whether the event may require a change to your benefit elections. Remember, you must make the change within 60 days of the event. Most changes take effect on the first of the month after the change is received in the Benefits Division of the Department of Human Resources (DHR).

Exceptions are:

- ▶ Birth and adoption changes are effective on the date of birth and adoption.
- ▶ When a dependent becomes

ineligible for coverage (e.g. divorce or loss of student status), changes are made retroactive to the end of the month in which the dependent became ineligible.

- ▶ Beneficiary changes take effect upon receipt of the form to DHR.

Possible Benefit Changes:

- ▶ Add or drop your spouse and/or child(ren) as dependents for your county health and dental benefits.
- ▶ Change your health plan election.
- ▶ Change your beneficiary(ies) for your county life insurance coverage, deferred compensation plan and/or retirement plan.
- ▶ Enroll in or drop dependent life insurance coverage.
- ▶ Enroll in, drop or change the deductions to your health or dependent care flexible spending accounts.
- ▶ Enroll in, drop or change your contributions to deferred compensation.
- ▶ Apply for or drop long-term disability insurance.

If you are adding or dropping dependent(s) to your health or dental coverage, you may see an increase or decrease in your monthly premiums.

To review monthly health and dental premiums, go to <http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/hr/benefits> or the

Benefits Summary Handbook. To make changes to your retirement plan beneficiary, contact the Retirement Agency at 703-279-8200, or go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/retirement.

All of the forms you need to change your benefits are available at <http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/hr/benefits>, click on “Forms” on the left-hand side, or by calling HR Central at

HR Central

- HR Central has benefit information.
- ▶ Call 703-324-3311
TTY 703-222-7314
 - ▶ Visit <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>

703-324-3311. See the chart below for the documentation that must be submitted.

Reminder to Enroll Newborn Children/Newly Eligible Spouses

Newborn children and newly eligible spouses are not automatically enrolled in health coverage. You must take the following steps within 60 days of the child’s birth or the spouse’s date of eligibility:

- ▶ Complete a Health, Dental and Flexible Spending Account Enrollment/Change Form, indicating that you are adding a new dependent.
- ▶ Send or bring the completed form, along with a birth certificate, a copy of the proof of birth letter from the hospital or a marriage certificate to the Employee Benefits Division, DHR, Suite 270, Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

▶ For newborns, coverage will be effective retroactive to the date of birth. For spouses, coverage will be effective the first day of the month following receipt of the properly completed form.

- ▶ Benefits are not provided for newborns unless they have been added to the employee’s coverage.

If you do not enroll the child/spouse within 60 days, you cannot enroll him/her until the next open enrollment period, unless you experience a qualifying event that permits earlier enrollment. ■

Change	Required Documents
Add spouse or dependents to health/ dental or to make other benefit changes due to marriage, newly eligible dependent or change in employment status or court order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment and/or beneficiary change form(s) • Marriage certificate • Birth certificates (proof-of-birth letter for newborn) showing parents’ names or court document for permanent custody/guardianship/adoption • Letter from spouse’s former employer or appropriate government agency detailing the type of coverage lost, the effective date and reason for the loss of eligibility (for Medicare/Medicaid/CHIP/COBRA or employment-related change only) • Student certification form for children over age 19 (required annually until age 23) • Court order (if applicable)
Drop spouse or dependents from health/ dental or to make other benefit changes due to divorce, loss of child’s eligibility due to age or student status, death or dependent(s) becoming eligible for benefits due to change in Medicare/Medicaid/CHIP or employment status or court order.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment and/or beneficiary form(s) and, if applicable: • First and last page of divorce decree • Death certificate • Court order
Change in dependent care flexible spending account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation showing the new provider and change in costs

Briefs

April 27 – Public Hearing on Proposed Revision to Personnel Regulations

A public hearing is scheduled for Monday, April 27, on proposed changes to Chapters 4, 10 and 17 of the county's Personnel Regulations. The hearing will be held at 7 p.m. in Conference Rooms 2/3, Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

More information is available at <http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/csc>. Questions can be directed to the Employee Relations Division, Department of Human Resources, at 703-324-3495. For reasonable ADA accommodations, contact **Traci Vaughan**, 703-324-3317 (TTY 703-222-7314).

Among the proposed revisions:

▶ Proposed change to Chapter 4 is the minimum service requirement to move from the master officer level and receive the associated proficiency pay from seven to five years for police officer II, deputy sheriff II and fire technician.

▶ Language is being added to Chapter 10 to include the new leave entitlements for military families: qualifying exigency leave and military caregiver leave as amended to the federal regulation on Jan. 20, 2009.

▶ Addendum 1 in Chapter 17 is being revised to modify the process on how panels will be assigned to hearings.

Lunch and Learn

The Organizational Development and Training Division (OD&T) is partnering with the Library's Employee Lending Library for Video Instructional Services (ELLVIS) program to offer monthly Lunch and Learn opportunities.

Employees are encouraged to bring their lunches to these one-hour sessions to view and discuss videos relating to countywide competencies.

The first session is Friday, March 27,

noon to 1 p.m. in Conference Room 4/5 at the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Employees are encouraged to be on time as the first video will begin promptly at 12:05 p.m. The topic for March is customer service, a critical competency, and the featured videos are "What's Your Pickle?" and, if time allows, "Johnny the Bagger." There will be a brief discussion following each video.

Upcoming topics include: April 29 - Problem Solving /How to Solve Tough Workplace Problems and May 12 - Customer Service.

Employees can self-register at <http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/employeeu>. Select "Ready to Register?" and sign up for Lunch and Learn (LNL101).

For questions or to request reasonable ADA accommodations, contact **Lynne Sawyer**, OD&T, at lynne.sawyer@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-3452.

Library Receives Grant

Fairfax County is one of nine local governments nationwide to win a Public Library Innovation Grant from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The grants, made possible through ICMA's partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, support projects developed by local government that utilize their public libraries in addressing local needs and providing new services with lasting benefits to their communities.

The grant of \$34,450 will allow the Library to continue offering its award-winning "Changing Lives Through Literature" program in partnership with the Virginia Department of Corrections and the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Services.

HVAC Retrofit Underway at the Herry Building

The Facilities Management Department (FMD) has started a replacement project in the Herry Building. The project began on the 10th floor and each floor follows in progression for the next 10 weeks until the work is completed.

The project encompasses removing old equipment from above the ceiling and installing new equipment. If you have any questions or need reasonable ADA accommodations, call the FMD Work Control Center at 703-324-2055, press 1.

Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees Seeks Member

Nominations are being accepted for a general county employee representative to the Employees Retirement System Board of Trustees. Currently, the position is held by **Randy Creller**, whose term expires on June 30. Members of the Board of Trustees have fiduciary responsibility for management of the system, including the investment of system assets.

Eligible employees include all those who are members of the Employees Retirement System. Nomination petitions are available from department payroll contacts or from the Department of Human Resources (DHR). Petitions must be returned by 4:30 p.m. on April 15. If two or more candidates are nominated, the election will be held approximately May 11-May 27. The winner of the election will serve a four-year term beginning July 1. Ballots and other information will be made available at a later date.

For questions, contact **Valarie Johnson**, DHR, at 703-324-3854.

Managing Your Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 Contact List

The Department of Information Technology (DIT) is updating employee workstations with Microsoft Office Communicator 2007. Here are several tips on how to manage your Office Communicator contact list.

Add a contact or distribution group to your contact list:

1. In the Office Communicator window, in the Search box, type the name of a person or Outlook distribution group. By default, Communicator lists all matching users and groups from the Global Address Book.

2. Drag the name from the Search Results pane into the contact list. You can drag names into an existing group in the contact list. You can also drag a distribution group into the contact list, but you cannot drag a distribution group into an existing group. To see the names of the group members, click the group name.

When you add a contact to your contact list, Communicator 2007 sends a message to that person as a courtesy.

Create a contact group:

1. Click the Show menu button and select Tools, then click Create New Group.

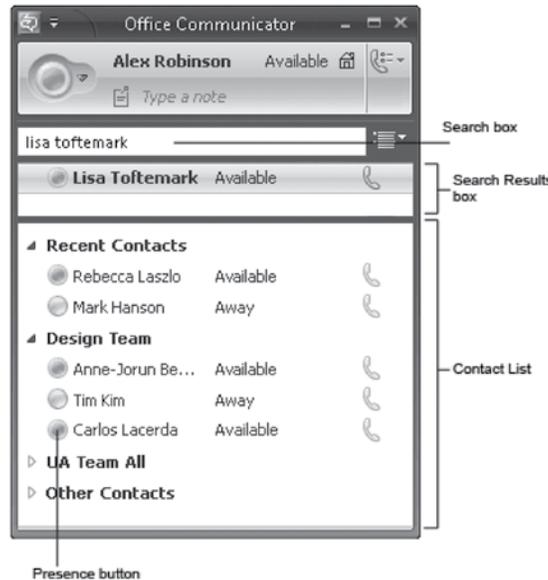
2. Type a name for the group and press ENTER.

To change a group's name later, right-click the name and then click Rename Group. You can also right-click any group name to see the Create New Group command.

Customize your views:

To change the way you view contacts, click the change the way you view your contacts button and then select a view from the menu.

To show up to 10 recent contacts as a



group at the top of the Contact List, click Show Recent Contacts.

To sort your contacts by their availability, click "Sort Contacts by Availability."

To view contacts by access levels, click Access Levels.

To see which of your contacts you have tagged, click Tagged Contacts.

Communicator 2007 can alert you when a contact's availability changes, if you have tagged the contact. To do that, right-click the contact in the list, and then click Tag for Status Change Alerts. A star will appear next to the contact name.

Send an instant message:

You typically send an instant message by double-clicking a contact name in the Contact List. To send an instant message to a distribution group or contact group, right-click a group name, click Send an Instant Message, type a message and then press ENTER.

To send an instant message to multiple contacts, hold the CTRL key to select the contacts, right-click the last contact, click Send an Instant Message,

IT Service Desk

- ▶ Call 703-324-HELP (4357), Option 1
- ▶ E-Mail ITservicedesk@fairfaxcounty.gov
- ▶ Online at <http://ITSD>

type a message and then press ENTER.

To invite someone to join an instant messaging session, click the Invite button in the conversation window to add others as needed.

▶ For more information, call 703-324-HELP (4357) or e-mail ITServiceDesk@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

Courier is a Fairfax County publication distributed most payday Fridays. The deadline for articles and information, space permitting, is two weeks before publication.



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<http://infoweb/courier>.

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