

Squawk 'n Talk

Volume 10, Issue 2

February 2010

Greetings from the Presidential Perch!

The groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, saw his shadow on February 2. You know what that means - six more weeks of ~~football~~, I mean winter. With all of this snow, I think he may be right. By the way, spring begins on the 20th of March - just a little over six weeks from February 2.

I would like to thank Bryan Prather for his presentation at our January meeting about the Wild Bird Rehabilitation. I hope everyone enjoyed Bryan's talk and found it as interesting and informative as I did.

During our February meeting (February 21), we will be voting on the organizations to distribute our remaining available grants from our last Bird Fair. We have \$900.00 to distribute to three organizations (\$300.00 each) that support our mission statement. Please attend and vote.

Planning for this year's Fair is moving right along. To accommodate more vendors, there will be a few changes as to where the Raffle tables and Silent Auction tables will be. Again, the Fair dates are Saturday and Sunday, Aug 28 & 29, 2010 with Fri., Aug 27 as the setup day.

In conjunction with the Fair, there will also be another Cockatiel Show. Actually, two shows. See Sandy Warren for more information on the Cockatiel Shows.

I encourage everyone to make the effort to attend the meetings and get involved with your club and the Bird Fair. Your ideas and knowledge are needed to help move your club forward.

Visitors are always welcomed. Bring a friend, as well as your birds!

See you at the meetings! Dave

Tidbits

Last Call – We will confirm this at the Board meeting, but this is usually the time of year to “cut off” last year's members who have not renewed their membership for the current year. So check the cover to confirm what we believe to be your status.

Eagle Trip

Trey Shaffer

Sunday February 7, we had our 2010 Eagle outing. It was a clear, crisp, sunny day. We started at the Fisca station (which is now a Royall station) at the foot of the Alton Bridge. This is the hub of the Missouri-side wetlands birding area. We saw some great up-close eagles right in that area. We then explored the rest of the area and visited the Riverlands, Park Service building, where we found a lot of information about the area, sighting scopes in an observation area, and bathrooms.

We then crossed the Alton Bridge and visited the Melvin Price Locks and Dam facility and the Visitor Information Center, again with a lot of information, this time focused on river commerce and the US Army Corps of Engineers' part in maintaining the river. The highlight of this visit was a presentation by World Bird Sanctuary, with Liberty, the Bald Eagle. We then cruised up the Great River Road, looking out for more eagles along the bluffs. I have to admit; I've taken this road several times without realizing after going through Grafton, continuing to Pere Marquette State Park, we were actually following the Illinois River. We took the Brussels Ferry across the Illinois River, into Calhoun County, IL.

We went a few more miles to Brussels and had lunch at the Wittmonds Hotel. After an overkill meal, we browsed through the pre-Civil War building, and Caroline Wittmonds, a fifth-generation Wittmonds, gave us a tour of the second floor hotel lodging area, which is now maintained as an historical area.

Grant Nominees

Following our recent tradition, we will again disburse available funds to organizations supporting our Mission Statement. Following is the list of nominees, collected from our members. At the meeting, Feb 21, we will select three nominees to receive grants. All members are encouraged to attend and vote.

Amazing Grace Rescue

A not-for-profit organization, started in 2002 by D. Lynn Morgan as a mission dedicated to the rescue and surrender of exotic birds. [Their website...](#)

STAR

St. Louis Avian Rescue - formerly Perfectly Precious. STAR's mission is to provide public education about avian care and accept relinquished birds, then provide veterinary screening, foster homes for **rehabilitation** and eventually permanent rehoming. STAR has a standards-based screening process for potential adopters. [Their website](#)

MJM "Rescue"

MJM is Mary Jo Meyer. She had operated a traditional rescue for "healthy" birds, but now focuses on maintaining birds with PDD. Janet has visited her operation and was impressed.

Feather Distribution Project

The Project, operated for more than twenty years by Jonathan Reyman, collects feathers from a number of sources and distributes them to Native Americans in the Southwest for use in religious ceremonies, traditional clothing and artifacts. Dr. Reyman has been our guest

several times to explain the positive impact the simple act of saving our birds' feathers can have on Native Americans as well as reducing the incentive to capture wild birds just to harvest their feathers. Feathers are provided free of charge. Our donation will help offset operating expenses such as shipping costs.

World Bird Sanctuary

Our mission is to preserve earth's biological diversity and secure the future of threatened bird species in their natural environments. We fulfill that mission through education, captive breeding, field studies and rehabilitation. We maintain a parrot population as well as raptors, and have an Adoption Program, where GPC might adopt several parrots, thereby focusing a donation. WBS website

AAV Research

Association of Avian Veterinarians

[AAV](#) is the American branch of an international organization devoted to, "Advancing and Promoting Avian Medicine and Stewardship." We would donate to their Research Fund. The AAV then allocates funds to individual projects as they see fit. For a list of projects they have funded since 1982, [follow this link](#).

Parrot Toy Angels

Parrot Toy Angels is an all-volunteer organization providing toys, food and avian supplies to companion birds in difficult situations. Life-altering changes, natural disasters or an organization's lack of funding all can have a negative emotional and physical impact on both birds and companion caregivers alike. Our Angel Projects help ease the burden for the generous individuals & organizations that provide safe havens for birds in need. [Their website](#).

Monteverde Conservation League

Swedish schoolchildren started a worldwide effort in 1987 by sending money to Monteverde, Costa Rica to purchase rain forest and protect its priceless natural treasures forever. Today children from 44 nations have helped The Children's Eternal Rainforest become the largest private reserve in Costa Rica, 54,000 acres. They are committed to protecting this biodiversity, and encourage you to collaborate with them in preserving more rain forests. [Their website...](#)

GeesePeace

Mission: Building better communities through innovative, effective and humane solutions to wildlife conflict. GeesePeace volunteers work to educate the public and help manage the wild goose population in sub/urban locales.

Wild Bird Rehabilitation

WBR helps over 2,500 birds a year, representing 100 different migratory bird species. WBR receives referrals from St. Louis city, county and state animal agencies as well as many veterinarians and other animal welfare organizations. Their website.

African Parrot Overview

Editor's Note: This is the first of two parts for this article. The second should follow next month. Please note the date on the article, 1997. While most of the information is timeless, some, like estimated prices is probably out of date. If you would like to update the prices, send me a note and I will put them together as an update.

Jean Pattison, 1997

African Grey

The proper Englishman, who doesn't want to get his grey tweed suit mussed.

Genus: *Psittacus*

Nominate subspecies: *erithacus erithacus*

Forshaw, in "Parrots of The World," (the most widely accepted reference book on parrots) shows one continuous region, starting at the south-eastern Ivory Coast, arching slightly upward and turning east in an ellipse around the north, east, and south of Lake Victoria, through Kenya, and eastern Tanzania, heading back west to the coast through northern Angola. There are no natural barriers to split or divide the nominate species, which could create subspecies of the African Grey. If this is true, then why do we hear so much talk about the different, subspecies, races, or types of African greys?

There are only two recognized subspecies, the nominate African Grey, *Psittacus erithacus erithacus* (the red tail) and the subspecies *Psittacus erithacus timneh*, (the maroon tail). What we are finding, is regional differences in size and shades of grey, within the nominate subspecies.

If you start in the country of Ghana or Togo and radiate outward in all directions it will help you understand the progressive change in shade and size. The African Grey that is indigenous to Ghana and Togo are

near the size of the Timneh grey (about 275-350) grams, and about as dark as the Timneh, which could be termed, a charcoal grey. As you radiate out in all directions the African Grey gets larger. As you radiate eastwardly, the shade of grey lightens, and as you radiate South, the shade of grey remains the same. In essence, if you have an African Grey with parentage from the old Congo (Zaire, and now Congo again) it would be large (roughly 500-600 grams) and a very light grey in color. An African grey from Angola would be large and dark grey. An African Grey, who is truly, from the region of Camaroon would be a medium sized grey (roughly 400-450 grams), and a medium grey in color.

Most dealers refer to the African Grey, as the Congo grey, and some will call them Camaroons, which are touted, as bigger and lighter. This is not the case. All African Greys are of one species. The so called Camaroon Greys (bigger lighter ones), are in actuality African Greys who were taken from Zaire and moved across borders (smuggled) to Camaroon. Their papers, then, were written that they came from Camaroon, the country of ex-port.

If you have researched pet birds, and have seriously decided on an African Grey as your choice, do not purchase any other species. Your thirst will not be satisfied, and you will eventually, end up getting a grey, also. African greys, to the uneducated can sometimes be a problematic bird. It is important to do your homework beforehand (as with any pet bird). African greys are very intelligent, gregarious in nature, and very sensitive to their people and surroundings. It is important to find a pet shop, or breeder who understands their nature, and has worked in shaping and guiding their temperament as babies.

Greys are among the best talkers in the parrot kingdom. They have the ability to have hundred word vocabularies, as well as being able to mimic in a multitude of very clear, human like voices. The clearness of sounds probably puts them over the top in mimicking (talking) ability. Please note, that African Greys will normally start talking well, after one to two years old. As with a human baby, they need to practice sounds, and develop muscles to control word formation.

The African Grey should have a spacious cage, and plenty of interesting toys. They need time out of their cages on a regular basis, and interaction with all members of the family. Due to their sensitive nature and extreme intelligence, an African Grey should never have negative reactions in the training process. Ignoring a behavior while changing the subject seem to work much better with "not" reinforcing a behavior. Excitement and praise seem to work well in reinforcing good behaviors.

The average retail price is from \$1,200.00 to about \$1,800.00 All prices will depend on locations in the United States.

Timneh Grey

The proper Englishman, gone awry.

Genus: *Psittacus*

Subspecies: *erithacus timneh*

The Timneh Grey doesn't have nearly such a confusing back-ground as the African Grey. When studying the range of the Timneh Grey, we start in the same country as we did with the African Grey, but we start at the western edge of the Ivory Coast and go in an arch north-west, ending up in southern Guinea. In following Forshaw's "Parrots of The World," this shows that the range of the Timneh Grey and the African Grey do not overlap. Some people speculate that perhaps they do. Timneh greys inhabit a very small area as compared to the African Grey.

It is a shame we use the African grey as a comparison when trying to describe the Timneh Grey. This is, no doubt, due to the overwhelming abundance of the African Grey as a companion bird, as opposed to the infrequency of available baby Timnehs. Actually, they are quite a bit different in looks and temperament.

The Timneh grey weighs about 250-350 grams and is a deep charcoal grey, with a maroon tail. The scalloping on the feathers is very delicate and breathtaking, due to the contrast of white against charcoal. The tail, can be almost red, through every shade of maroon to browns and even almost black.

The Timneh Grey doesn't seem to carry the same regal air, or dignity, the African Grey projects. Because of this, Timnehs seem to be more capable of being silly and more apt to go to extremes to get your attention, and join in the fun. Timneh Greys are family oriented, and will interact with strangers more readily than a lot of pet parrots.

Timnehs should also have a spacious cage, with a multitude of toys. Most parrots like to hang, and swing on toys that hang from the ceiling in their cage, and the Timneh is no exception. They enjoy, fighting with their toys. Toys for chewing is a must, so provide plenty of soft wood, especially for that recreation.

Timnehs are excellent talkers, some with hundred word vocabularies. They too, can mimic many different voices and sounds. It seems, a natural sound that some seem to find, is a short "smoke detector" beep.

The average cost of the Timneh Grey is about \$800.00 to \$1,000.00.

Genus: *Poicephalus*

Poicephalus parrots across the board are some of the most desirable of all birds. The Genus covers a huge portion of the African continent. The largest Poicephalus is about the size of a Timneh grey, weighing in at about 275-300 grams, and the smallest is the Meyer's, which can be as low as 90 grams, and about 8-1/2 inches tall. There is a size and temperament for everyone. The Poicephalus are usually green birds with different colored heads, depending upon the species. Eye coloration is no indication of age. Birds living outside can develop the adult color just a few weeks after leaving their nest, and birds living indoors, may never achieve the eye coloration of the adult.

As a group the Poicephalus are full of themselves and they love you to death. This creates the perfect situation for the working person, the apartment person, and the family person. Poicephalus, being so full of themselves do not "need" a friend for company, and usually, would rather not have one. So you don't have to feel guilty about your bird being home alone. They love you, and their loyalty to you can cause resentment to the friend, that you provided, especially for them. If you are a working per-son, plenty of toys for entertainment, and perhaps a radio on a timer, is a good start for the Poicephalus. Most Poicephalus do require time with you, as with any bird, this is a must. They adore their caretaker, and expect the same adoration in return. Most make good first birds and some are wonderful for young adults (10 years and up). Some are very tolerant of small children, and even friendly and gentle around them.

Poicephalus when imported into the US years ago (import ceased in 1992?) were very high strung, nervous birds. Very few imported Poicephalus were ever tamed down enough to become a pet. This temperament has made the Poicephalus a "dark horse" until recent years. Imported pairs that have been in the country breeding now for ten to fifteen years, have adapted well to captivity and have become very secure and happy birds. The chicks that are produced from these older imported, well established pairs, are heads above the chicks produced early on, from the same pairs. This is particularly true for the Red-bellied parrot, who is still overshadowed with the early experience of being "nippy" even though hand raised. It took longer for the imported, adult Red-bellied to adjust, than some of its cousins. Many past experiences do not apply today, that marred the reputation of these great little birds.

The diet for your Poicephalus should be a good, standard parrot diet, consisting of pellets, veggies, and some seed. The Poicephalus seem

to do better with some seed added to their diet. Caging for most of the Poicephalus doesn't have to be overly large. A medium sized cage can provide a secure environment for a bird whose ancestors were high strung, and nervous.

Any exceptions to the overall group will be pointed out when discussing the individual species. As a side note: any time you see the 's ending in the common name (as in Meyer's) , this indicates the species was named after the discoverer, and this is the correct spelling.

The Genus Poicephalus is a very closely related group of birds. Much of their care and temperament is very similar, and what follows is just fine tuning of each of nine different species. What applies to one, is generally accepted across the board for all. To aid in the ease of understanding this group, they are usually broken down into two smaller groups consisting of the large and the small Poicephalus. Three species of Poicephalus, which include the Yellow-Faced, Poicephalus flavifrons; Niam-Niam, P. crassus; and the Ruppell's, P. ruppellii; will not be included, due to the fact that they are either very rare to non-existent in aviculture.

The Larger Poicephalus

The larger of the Genus consists of the Cape parrot, Poicephalus robustus; Jardine's, Poicephalus gulielmi, and the Yellow-Faced, Poicephalus flavifrons.

The Cape Parrot

The Gentle Giant

Genus: Poicephalus

Species: robustus

The Cape parrot is found in three distinct regions in Africa, which is conducive to them having three different subspecies. The nominate, Poicephalus robustus robustus, is found in South Africa. They have a very distinct faded yellow head, making them easily recognizable from the other two subspecies. Males as well as females may sport the coral patch above the cere. To my knowledge, there are none in the United States.

The subspecies P. r. suahelicus is found through a large region of central Africa extending down into the far north, of South Africa, and seems to be the largest member of the Cape family. P. r. fantiensis is found in a small area in western Africa, in parts of Gambia and Senegal to northern Ghana and Togo. These two subspecies are not easily distinguished from one another, and confusion exists as to

what subspecies are actually present in avicultural facilities. It appears that P. r. f. has a burgundy/brown to wine wash over much of the head, and the hen seems to have large patch of coral color above the cere, some-times extending to the back of the head and down around the eyes. P. r. s. has a more silver head, with the hen having just a moderate amount of coral color.

The Cape parrot "appears" to be about the size of a medium sized African Grey, but in actuality, it barely weighs more than a Jardine's. A Cape parrot will weigh anywhere from 200 grams to 400 grams with the average being about 250-300. The cape parrot is, at first glance, another green bird. Like most Poicephalus the head coloring is variable shades of color, the Cape's being silver grey, with the hens having a patch of coral color above the cere. The most obvious physical characteristic about a Cape parrot is the enormous beak, which is bone colored, and always wears a smile.

The Cape parrot is a very active bird, and should be supplied with time out of the cage on a regular basis. A play area that is more elaborate than most will suit a Cape parrot. They love to climb a rope or Boing™, run across the top, slide down a knot-ted rope or the edge of a ladder, scoot around and climb back up again. Many toys should be available for the momentary stop and chew, or fight, while all this is taking place. They love to swing, and fight with hanging toys, and their larger than normal cage should contain a fair amount of rugged toys. Some of the toys should consist of items to be destroyed with the activities of chewing. With a beak the size of theirs, chewing is a must.

Considering such a large beak, Capes are the least likely of all Poicephalus to bite. Perhaps, in their own way, they know how intimidating it is and they don't have to bite. They are truly "The Gentle Giant." The Cape parrot is a very affectionate bird, and scritch time is a must, so plan on spending time with your bird. Oddly enough with them being so affectionate, they do not seem to become cage bound, or one person birds, as readily as other Poicephalus.

The Cape parrot has the ability to become quite a good mimic, using many different voices. Some are rather soft spoken, but I do know of some that project their voice very well. The base diet of the Cape parrot should be what is good for most parrots, with an addition of a few more fruit and vegetables, along with just about any nuts imaginable.

Favorites on the list are macadamia, almonds, walnuts, pistachios, with the least favorite being pecans and Brazil nuts.

Prices of the Cape Parrot range in the neighborhood of about \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00.

(note: this was written before the subspecies change - see Cape Name Confusion)

The Jardine's Parrot

The Amazon of the Africans

Genus: *Poicephalus*

Species: *gulielmi*

According to Forshaw, the Jardine's subspecies ranges covers about the same range as the African Grey. Forshaw has them in close proximity or touching in some areas. Other authorities show them in distinct, separate ranges which adds credibility to the separate subspecies. A few members of the African Parrot Society, are studying the Jardine's subspecies in depth, and are developing guidelines for determining the different subspecies.

The Jardine's parrot, is the second of the large group, making it nice sized bird. The weight range is roughly from 180 grams to over 300 grams, depending on the subspecies. We find once again, another "green" bird, but upon closer inspection, one finds black feathers edged in the most iridescent greens to be found anywhere. True to form, the head colors vary from bird to bird, with color ranging from red/orange through every shade of orange to almost yellow. The Jardine's beak is over sized in two of the subspecies, and appears, on some individuals to be rather huge. Many people familiar with Jardine's, find the two subspecies with the oversize beak, posture parallel to the perch, tea-singly say that the huge beak weighs too much for the bird to stand upright.

The nominate Jardine's, *P. g. g.* is a stocky bird with very little green edging on the wing feathers giving it a "black wing" appearance, hence the common name of black wing Jardine's. The beak on this Jardine's is overly large for the bird, as well as being predominantly black. The weight averages about 270-280 grams. It may have a vast amount of the crown color on head, and extending to the back of the head. The black wing is not a Jardine's for the pet market. It is estimated by the African Parrot Society less than ten pairs are known in the U.S.

The subspecies *P. g. massaicus*, is a bit larger going to the high 200 to low 300 grams.

This Jardine's is commonly called the greater Jardine's, and is very distinct from the other two. This birds beak appears in proportion to its body, and is more tucked in, than the other two subspecies. The upper mandible is predominately horn colored. The greater Jardine's posture is upright, and appears to be a sleeker bird overall. In most

greater, the white eye ring has a distinct line of thick black right next to the iris. It sometimes looks like someone just applied fresh eyeliner. These Jardine's are good pets, if you can locate a hand fed chick. They are be-coming more available than they once were.

The most plentiful of the Jardine's is the *P. g. fantiensis*, commonly called the lesser Jardine's, is a smaller version of the black wing Jardine's. While they are very similar in appearance and posture, the lesser has a obvious black and green wing, is smaller with weights from 180 to about 240 grams, and crown color can be more to the orange yellows, in coloration. The lesser is found in quantity as pets across the U.S.

Jardine's are the Amazons of the Africans. They just plain love life, awakening in the morning just waiting to see what adventure awaits them. They are happy doing anything life has to offer. If you don't have time to play with them, that's okay, as they will just tear up their toys, roll around on the floor of their cage, or hang from the top and practice twisting their body into incredible shapes. They are active and fun loving. Most Jardine's can very often be found lying on their backs with feet in the air playing dead. It takes years off your life! Cage size does not have to be overly large for Jardine's if they have frequent, out of cage time on a play area.

Their diet is basically the same as for all other *Poicephalus*, with the exception of making sure they get plenty of natural vitamin A.

I know many 13-15 year old, young adults, that own and have wonderful Jardine's that ride on their bicycles with them. I do not recommend them around small children just because their formidable beak is capable of amputating a finger. They can talk fairly good, although in my experience they have a "parrot" voice.

Prices of Jardine's range from \$700.00 to about \$1,200.00 depending on the subspecies.

Book Picks of the Month

Christine Kinkade

Here are the library picks for this month. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have a book request, and I will bring the book to the next GPC meeting. A complete listing of books and videos can be found on the GPC website (www.GatewayParrotClub.org).

A Guide to Cage and Aviary Birds by Jiri Felix

A guide and description to various birds such as parrots, doves, finches, and more. A color illustration of every bird. Fully indexed. (224 pages).

Eclectus Parrots by Katy McElroy

This is my absolute pick if you have an Eclectus. A must read for the Eclectus owner or if you are considering an Eclectus as a companion parrot. This book has a section on first aid emergencies, a first aid kit list, and a section on making your home safe for your bird. There is also a list of safe plants and trees for your bird. Lots of full color photos and illustrations. (95 pages).

Encyclopedia of Canaries by G. T. Dodwell

A comprehensive book about the care of canaries. Chapters on housing, feeding, breeding, molting, exhibiting, diseases and parasites, and more. Several color and B&W pictures. (288 pages)

Caring For Your Pet Bird by Dr. R. Dean Axelson

A "how-to" approach for the owners of all types of cage birds, by a veterinary surgeon with years of experience in treating birds and answering their owners' questions. Contains information on the cage and home environments, tips on care, feeding your bird, sicknesses and common diseases, diets, and more. Several B&W illustrations. (160 pages).

GPC members can check out any of these featured picks at this month's meeting. Please note that some books are quite old and some of the information may be a little outdated. Please keep this in mind when reading the books.

A complete listing of the GPC library is available on the GPC website www.GatewayParrotClub.org. If you wish to check out any of these,

or any of our books, please contact me prior to the next GPC meeting by phone (636) 343-8097, or email at Librarian@GatewayParrotClub.org and I will bring them to the next meeting.

All books checked out should be returned at the following GPC meeting. If that is not possible, please return the books by mail to Christine Kinkade, 2412 Angela Dr., High Ridge, MO. 63049-2848.

Happy reading!

Christine

Recipe Skylor's Surprise

Posted by: Alexxx

antcant01@hotmail.com - February 28, 2002

Ingredients:

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup fresh veggies (you name it)
- 4 tsp baking powder
- 1 egg beaten
- 1/4 cup baby food (your choice)
- 1/4 cup rice milk
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup juice (basically 1 cup of liquids).

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Combine dry things and stir. Mix moist things and stir. Adding in the dry stuff, and stir. Put those paper cupcake things into the cupcake pan. Pour batter into the cupcake things and bake for 20-25 min or until golden brown. Can be frozen until needed.

From the Birds n Ways website, www.BirdsnWays.com

Our Mission

The Gateway Parrot Club, Inc. is a not for profit organization established in 1988 to:

Bring people together in a friendly atmosphere in the interest of exchanging information on bird care and breeding.

Create interest in bird care and responsible breeding through monthly educational programs and annual bird fairs.

Reduce neglect, cruelty and abuse of captive birds through education and public outreach.

Educate the public, as well as ourselves, on the ever present danger of extinction in the wild.

2010 Schedule

Here is the year ahead. Mark the dates.

February 21 - Missouri Raptors

March 21 - St. Louis Zoo

April 18

May 23 (Fourth Sunday)

June 13 (Second Sunday)

July 18

August - No regular meeting, Bird Fair

September 12 (Second Sunday)

October 17

November 21

December 12 (Second Sunday)

Contact Information

We welcome your comments and suggestions...

Officers

President	Dave Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
Vice President	Phyllis Cotton	(314) 537-6175
Secretary	John O'Grady	(636) 384-6657
Treasurer	Nancy Marron	(314) 984-9524
Membership	Niki Shaffer	(314) 853-5323

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Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
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Committees

Education	Cheryl Rowland	(636) 577-1240
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Librarian	Christine Kinkade	(636) 343-8097
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