



# News

December 2009-January 2010

From the State Employees' Association of New Hampshire SEIU Local 1984

## Benevolence Fund Busy

The SEA Benevolence Fund is responding quickly to members facing hardship – especially the state workers recently laid off by Gov. John Lynch.

“Thank you cannot express the happiness and amazement of what you did for my family,” wrote one recipient of a Thanksgiving holiday food basket. “I am proud to be part of such a wonderful, caring, generous, and giving family like SEA, SEIU 1984.”

Laurie Aucoin, president of Chapter 4 at New Hampshire Hospital in Concord, organized the emergency food drive for all laid-off state employees. “We had donations coming from everywhere,” Laurie said as she and a handful of volunteers sorted canned goods and groceries for nearly two dozen families across the state.

What started as one Chapter’s effort to help has blossomed into a larger effort involving unions throughout New Hampshire.

When a report about the holiday baskets was broadcast on WMUR, union members from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) called to offer help. They



suggested SEA contact all unions for donations for Christmas baskets. A letter went out before Thanksgiving asking all unions to help our unemployed.

The SEA Benevolence Fund will coordinate a second holiday food drive for Christmas.

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## Welcome to the new SEA News

The SEA News is changing with this edition to provide better service for members.

In the past, the News was printed like a traditional tabloid newspaper. This newsletter format will allow SEA to continue to serve our print audience with a smaller format and faster delivery time.

We’ll also be using a union printer.

While costs will remain comparable, the new format will speed delivery and cut postage costs.

We’ll continue to send the SEA News six times a year to home addresses for our active and retired members. And you can always get the latest news in our electronic newsletter at [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org)

We hope you like the new format. Let us know by contacting Mike Barwell, communications administrator, at [mbarwell@seiu1984.org](mailto:mbarwell@seiu1984.org).

## Governor Lynch lays off 117 workers

Governor Lynch began laying off State employees the day after SEA members voted down a proposed contract, by 2,708 to 1,875 votes.

As of November 30, 117 workers had been laid off, according to SEA records. The State has not yet confirmed the number of layoffs, despite a Right to Know request from the SEA and several news organizations.

Sixty-eight of the known layoffs were in the Department of Health and Human Services and 27 were

in the Department of Corrections. Seven were rehired elsewhere in state service; one was recalled and one layoff was rescinded. In addition to the 117, 20 reassignments were made in lieu of layoff; four were demoted; and one retired.

Obtaining accurate information on the scope of layoffs has been difficult. The State seemed unwilling to confirm the number of layoffs to SEA.

The SEA asked for all “relevant documentation regarding all State layoff situations within the past 90

days/6 months, including classified, non-classified and unclassified employees.”

The State’s response from the Department of Administrative Services essentially refused to release the information, saying the request was “open-ended and subject to differing interpretations.”

The SEA is resubmitting a Right to Know request that responds to the State’s letter.

Meanwhile, SEA staff has filed

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# Two ways to show leadership

It's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work on fixing what's wrong with the way government treats public employees.



We're paying a high price for failed leadership. Now we're going to show leadership.

We have a plan – two new initiatives that will move us toward better days.

The first is our new Transparency in Government Campaign. We're going to open this state's government to public scrutiny. We're working with some new partners – key legislators and the Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy – to move toward a transparent government in which every expenditure, every contract, every funding decision is accessible to the public.

It's time to make sure that the State is fully accountable for all expenditures in the budget. We also want rigorous whistleblower laws that protect public employees when they identify, expose and report fraud or abuse in State services.

The second initiative we're calling SEADs: State Employees' Association Discussions for Good Government. From Christmas through Election Day 2010, we're asking public employees to expose what's wrong with State government. We want personal stories from every agency, department and unit identifying public services and people who have been harmed by the cutbacks and layoffs.

We know there are 5,000 people who are no longer served by the Multiple Offender Unit. That's 5,000 people who aren't

being helped – and thousands more who may be at risk because the Governor wanted to save a few dollars in a multi-billion budget.

There are now hundreds of children throughout the state who won't be protected against lead poisoning because the Governor wanted to save a few thousand dollars. Lead poisoning is a life-long tragedy. How many NH kids won't be protected?

These are the stories we need to tell through SEADs. We need your help. If you have a story idea, or know about people who have been hurt, we want to know. Send them to me or go to our website [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org) and report on line.

Nobody else is going to champion public employees. We're going to have to do it ourselves.

Together we are stronger.

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## State Employees' Association of New Hampshire, Inc. SEIU Local 1984 207 North Main St., Concord, NH 03301 603-271-3411 [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org)

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## Benevolence Fund

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Donations of canned goods and non-perishable groceries will be accepted at the SEA offices from Monday, Nov. 30 through Wednesday, Dec. 16. Supermarket gift cards also are suggested as part of the baskets.

Sorting, packaging, pickup and deliveries for Christmas baskets will begin on Saturday, Dec. 19, at SEA, 207 North Main Street, Concord.

The holiday food effort is only one of the responses the Benevolence Committee is offering to members reacting to the layoffs.

Dozens of applications have been filed for emergency help as workers scramble to keep up with bills and payments before unemployment benefits start.

"I've never asked for help before," said one laid-off corrections officer. "But our oil tank is nearly empty and there's no money in the bank until the unemployment checks start."

The most common requests are for fuel, utilities, and help with rent payments.

"Some people were already living on the edge," said Jessica Paul, SEA Secretary and chair of the Benevolence Committee. "The layoffs, and just the whole economy, have left people falling into a deep, deep hole. At least we can help a little with immediate needs, like food, fuel, and electricity."

The SEA Board of Directors gave the Benevolence Fund a huge boost with a \$25,000 donation from savings.

"Even though our finances are challenging at the moment, the

## Members watching out for members

Members are looking out for each other.

Flo Davis at the Veterans Home in Boscawen called just before Thanksgiving to let us know one of the laid-off Vets Home workers was worried about her electric bill.

If you're a laid-off member, it's easy to apply: simply go to [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org) and download the one-page application form. You'll need to answer some questions, provide account information for the bills that need to be paid, and send in the form. Or, you can call Mike Barwell at 271-3411, ext 105, and do the application by phone.

Assistance is provided to members by paying to third parties – a utility, landlord, or oil company; cash is not given directly to members.

If you were laid off and need a Christmas Holiday basket, contact Mike Barwell at 271-3411, ext 105. If you need help from Operation Santa Claus, contact Terri Wright at 271-3411, ext 108.

Finance Committee and the Board of Directors decided this was the right thing to do," said SEA Treasurer Ralph Tilton, president of Chapter 44. "Together we are stronger and it is important to help our members when times are tough."

Operation Santa Claus – also headed by Laurie Aucoin – is offering to help find gifts for every child of laid-off workers.

"The need to help is especially poignant during the holiday season," Jess Paul said. "We suspect we may be seeing only the tip of the iceberg. We're going to need a lot more support to continue helping our members in need."

One way to help is by signing up for payroll deduction.

Tony Dodge, a 20-year probation and parole officer – and a new member of the Benevolence Committee – recently signed a payroll deduction card.

"I found out that even small

donations can quickly add up to enable us to offer big help, Tony said in an online appeal to fellow workers. "As of this week, we have 35 members who have signed up for payroll deduction. That's \$252.76 every two weeks – or \$6,571.76 a year that we're able to add to the Benevolence Fund."

Other Chapters are donating money by collecting loose change – New Hampshire Hospital collected over \$200 in a department challenge – or sending funds directly from the Chapter to the SEA Benevolence Fund.

Every donation helps. One beneficiary wrote: "Thank you so much for all your help with our situation. It feels so good to have been a part of such a great group of people in the SEIU1984. I hope that over the next 3 years as I sit on the waiting list to come back that you all will know that this household appreciates and respects you all greatly for reaching out and helping a needy family."

## More elections scheduled for December Council meeting

Newly elected Second Vice President Marc Bergeron resigned before his first Board meeting on Nov. 12th, citing personal and health reasons.

Bergeron stepped down after winning a special election at the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> in Nashua. He defeated incumbent Second Vice President Ken Roos in a runoff held under an agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor following the 2008 elections.

In an email sent to Board members, Bergeron wrote, "I must tell you with much regret that I am resigning from the board and the 2nd vice president position. Many things have happened to me presently and in the last two years. My health issues must be my first concern and I need to move on with my life. I will be leaving state service and NH

to start a new career. SEA will always be part of my life..."

The sudden vacancy will be filled during the Council meeting on Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> at the SEA offices in Concord.

Roos, president of Chapter 16, has submitted his nomination forms.

Also to be elected at the December Council meeting: Directors to fill two vacant, one-year terms that expire in 2010; one director to fill a vacant three-year term in the private sector.

All members were notified of the December elections by U.S. Mail in mid-November. Nominating forms and other information about the elections is available at [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org).

# Delegates re-elect Gary Smith in Nashua

Gary Smith was elected to a one-year term as president of the State Employees' Association during the 69th Annual SEA Convention in Nashua on October 24.

The special election was conducted as part of a consent agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor to resolve complaints filed after last year's elections about candidates' access to member information. The investigation was concluded with the consent agreement this summer, without findings, and without allegations of any violations.

The new elections were held because the SEA Board "wanted to ensure that all SEA members have the utmost confidence in the integrity of the elections process."

The special election also included an election for second vice president, in which Marc Bergeron, Chapter 17, won election over the incumbent, Ken Roos of Chapter 16. A few days later, Bergeron resigned – forcing yet another special election for second vice president at the December 17 Council meeting.

In other elections, 218 delegates representing 33 Chapters elected:

Jessica Paul, Chapter 36 as Secretary; she was unopposed;

Rodney Woodill, Chapter 65, as Director, County/Municipal; he was unopposed;

Laurie Aucoin, Chapter 4; Randy Hunneyman, Chapter 24; Chuck Koontz, Chapter 45 as State Directors. Other candidates for State Director were Peter Brunette, Chapter 41; Diane Fontneau, Chapter 4; Sheila Heath, Chapter 50; Wendy Parent, Chapter 28; and Brenda Thomas, Chapter 20. There was no candidate for the private sector board member.



SEA Director Chuck Kootz, Chapter 45, presents resolutions to the 69th Convention in Nashua.

Convention delegates also voted to refer Resolutions 1 and 2 to the Collective Bargaining Advisory Committee. Resolution 1 related to compensatory time provisions in the State contract.

Resolution 2 related to how the State contract applies to union members who are not in collective bargaining units.

The delegates approved Resolution 3, extending the work of the Infrastructure Ad-Hoc Study Committee for one year.

The delegates passed Resolution 4, authorizing a "Health Benefit Member Advocate" position.

The delegates rejected Constitutional Amendment 1, which would have changed the position of First Vice President to a full-time officer position.

The delegates approved Constitutional Amendment 2, which clarifies language regarding the timeframe when Board of Directors minutes are provided to Chapter presidents.

The delegates bundled and approved Constitutional Amendments 3 and 4, which clarify the role of Chapter Councilors and allow Chapters to remove Councilors who are not meeting the duties of the position.

The delegates approved Constitutional Amendment 5, which formally changes the union's name to "The State Employees' Association of New Hampshire, Incorporated, SEIU, Local 1984, CTW, CLC."

The delegates approved Constitutional Amendment 6, widening eligibility for members who want to run for President.

The delegates approved Constitutional Amendment 7, simplifying the procedure for reporting Chapter elections.

The delegates approved Constitutional Amendment 8, clarifying that SEA officers and Directors must also be elected as Convention delegates by their Chapter, to be eligible to vote at the Convention for Officers and Directors.

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**Get more news at [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org)**

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# Members honored at Convention

Two outstanding members and one exemplary Chapter were honored for their work and service during the annual Convention in Nashua.



Mary Fannion holds her award at convention.

**Mary Fannion** of Chapter 17, was presented with the John B. Parker Award for Outstanding SEA Member – the highest award given by our union. A plaque that names all the recipients of this award is on display as you come into the Union office. It is there to remind guests and members of the dedication and service the winners have given to strengthen union movement.

This year's recipient has been the presence and the voice of the Union at her workplace. Many consider her the embodiment of the word "Union". Fannion has been a chapter president, a councilor, and a steward, served on the Road Race Committee, and the Convention Arrangements Committee.

The citation read: "She is the first one to volunteer for any assignment that will move the union forward, the first one at the SEA office when there is a job to be done. She will collate, fold, staple, stuff, and make pasta salad for events. She not only does all she can do to help – she does it with a smile and a wonderful sense of humor. She has worked tirelessly to advance the goals of working people.

Fannion was speechless when she received the award. "Wow," she said later. "I never expected to receive Member of the Year. I listened to Gary speak about what this member did and thought 'this person must be special.' I never thought he was speaking about me! I'm just doing

what comes natural and that is helping others."

**Peg Smith**, president of Chapter 17, was presented the Charlie Stevens Award for Outstanding Chapter President. It is named after Charlie Stevens who served as chapter president of the Lakes Region Department of Transportation Chapter for many years.

The citation read: "This year's recipient possesses the characteristics of a true leader. She inspires others and earns real respect and trust from members.



Peg Smith

This Chapter President is a builder – she mobilizes members, getting them involved and unified. She recruits new members, trains new leaders and works diligently to create positive relationships with all employees at her worksite. She advocates for the members and doesn't stop when the going gets rough.

Like Fannion, Smith was surprised by the award. "I don't know what I did to deserve this," she said. "I would like to thank Mary Fannion for all of her help. I would also like to thank my Councilors for getting involved."

"I didn't realize all of the things I was involved with over the last year," Peg said. "I only knew what needed to be done and then found a way to make it happen."

The members of **Chapter 65**, representing the Strafford County Riverside Rest Home and Department of Corrections, were surprised by their designation as Chapter of the Year.

"Every year, we honor the SEA Chapter which best demonstrates the ideals of unionism," the citation said. "This award is intended to single out not one person, but a group

of dedicated member activists. It symbolizes a united group of members who have worked hard to make their chapter active, strong, responsive, and effective in meeting the needs of their members.

"When the stakes were high, this chapter has the ability to rise to the occasion. They have a proud history of meeting challenges head on. This past year was no exception. When faced with collective adversity, they rose to the challenge. Their employer was dauntless in pursuit of give-backs at the bargaining table. When presented with the prospect of losing their healthcare because of cost, they rallied and found a solution. One person, standing alone, could not win this battle. But the whole chapter standing together proved we can move the mountain."

"I was completely shocked by the announcement," Chapter 65 President Brenda Stone said. "I never expected we would receive Chapter of the Year award. I would like to thank my right hand person, Heather Letourneau, for her continued support throughout the past year. I also want to recognize all of the volunteers who stepped forward to help build our Union. The Chapter Officers, Councilors, Stewards, Bargaining Team and Members all deserve this recognition."



Brenda Stone, president of chapter 65, Strafford County, thanks the Convention for the honor at the podium with President Smith.

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**Rep. Deb Wheeler wins Ray Proulx Award. Page 7.**

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# Operation Santa Claus helps thousands of kids

Thousands of New Hampshire children will celebrate Christmas this year thanks to the generosity of hundreds of public employees and citizens who sent monetary donations, sponsored children, or volunteered in our 49th year of helping N.H. children.

On Dec. 1, OSC volunteers fulfilled all of the case sheets sent from the 13 District Offices of Health and Human Services, as well as dozens of requests from families of recently laid-off state employees.

"This was a challenging year for Operation Santa Claus," said OSC Chair Laurie Aucoin. "The Recession and the recent layoffs of State workers increased the needs and challenged our supporters. But I'm happy to report that the people of New Hampshire – and especially our state workers – met the challenge in record time."

Retiree volunteers from Chapter 1 have been making their lists and checking them twice under the watchful eyes of Chief Elf Charlene "Clarkie" Clark, who has overseen OSC's distribution center in Concord for the past 10 years. Joining her in this labor of love are:

Barbara Lillios, "Elf Extraordinaire" who has worked hand-in-hand with "Clarkie" for 10 years;

Carol Beaudoin, who joined the headquarters "staff" three years ago; and

Linda Farrell, during her first year at headquarters, after coordinating OSC participation at the Department of Safety for almost 20 years.

Volunteers from the New  
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Hampshire National Guard will once again take all of the collected gifts from Concord to the District Offices, this year on December 15.

Support for OSC grew this year, with large donations from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Laconia Savings Bank. Other corporate sponsors contributed \$15,890, and several schools, such as Bishop Brady High School in Concord,

again sponsored hundreds of children as community service projects.

"As we enter our 50<sup>th</sup> year for Operation Santa Claus, I am in awe of the way the people of New Hampshire respond to others in need," Aucoin said. "Some of the people who are giving are themselves struggling, yet they continue to help people who are less fortunate than they are. It's truly inspiring, especially at this time of year, to see generosity alive and well."

Volunteers are already thinking about plans for celebrating the Golden Anniversary of Operation Santa Claus in 2010.

"Fifty years ago, we began with less than 20 children – and all of those gifts were delivered by State Police on Christmas Day," Aucoin said. "We've come a long way – and we have a long way to go, especially in an economy where so many people are hurting. It's nice to know that the Spirit of Christmas is alive and well in New Hampshire, and next year will be even better."

Contributes to Operation Santa Claus are accepted all year, Please contact SEA staff member Terri Wright at 603-271-3411, ext. 108, or by email [twright@seiu1984.org](mailto:twright@seiu1984.org).



## OSC Donor Honor Roll

### Platinum - \$500 or More

NH Local Government Center  
Laconia Savings Bank – Concord  
NH Charitable Foundation

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Donors wishing to remain Anonymous – 1

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Guy & Mary Sue Newbery  
Mr. & Mrs. Palmer Jones  
Donors wishing to remain Anonymous – 6

### Bronze - \$50 or More

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Donald Baker  
Chris & Janet Dow  
Foothills Physical Therapy  
Sandra J. Hillsgrove  
Gail M. Painchaud  
Patenaude Lumber Co., Inc. (In memory of Kay Goss)  
Ted & Jennifer Sprague  
SEA Chapter 17  
Joan Spaulding (In memory of Paul Spaulding)  
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Donors wishing to remain Anonymous = 14

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# Rep. Deb Wheeler wins Ray Proulx Award

SEA's Political Education Committee presented the Ray Proulx Award for Political Action to Representative Deborah Wheeler (D - Merrimack District 6) as a "strong advocate for working people and for SEA members."

"Rep. Wheeler fought against retirement bills that sought to gut the state's retirement system, eliminate benefits to retirees, and to remove employees of their stewardship of the system," said Political Education Committee Chair Ken Roos.

"Rep. Wheeler also fought for all public employees when she stood up to a popular Governor and the

leadership of her own party, against the 2009-2010 State Budget, which reversed a promise made to her and her fellow SEA retirees, severely underfunded public services, and stripped employees of their rights at work," he said.

The Committee presented the Award at a meeting because – for the first time in years – Rep. Wheeler was not able to attend the SEA Annual Convention. The presentation took her completely by surprise.

"Every single member of the SEA can do what I did," Rep. Wheeler said. "And I would like to see more members

try. I have a dear friend whose motto is 'Can't never did nothin' 'til try showed it how'. It's not as hard as you think.

"We need more state retirees, former state employees and family members to step up and run for the Legislature," she said. "Right now, we have only 12 out of 424. Until more people step forward and run, it's going to be hard to have our voices heard."

"I want to say 'Thank you' to the Political Education Committee for choosing me for this honor. I don't feel like I did anything special," Rep. Wheeler said. "I just did what felt right."

## Unfair Labor Practice against Lynch moves forward

The Unfair Labor Practice complaint against Governor John Lynch is one step closer to resolution.

The SEA has filed its opening brief in the case, arguing that Governor Lynch violated state law last July when he made statements to the press about ongoing contract negotiations. At the time, mediators had issued a "gag order" directing the State and the SEA to refrain from making any public statements about the negotiations.

The SEA argues that Governor Lynch's July 22nd announcement that he would layoff up to 750 employees

was an Unfair Labor Practice both because it violated the mediators' gag order and because it was "direct dealing" intended to influence SEA's membership in violation of state collective bargaining laws.

The SEA's brief argues that Governor Lynch's press statements "were intended to influence bargaining unit members in this debate through threats of massive layoffs. Most disturbing, however, was the Governor's 'promise of benefit' in the event State employees turned away from their elected leaders and

accepted furloughs... The comments of Governor Lynch constitute the quintessential bad faith, direct dealing type of communication forbidden by RSA 273-A. The comments referenced the specifics of private, ongoing contract talks; they clearly laid out the Governor's preferred goal as to how talks should conclude; they contained implicit and explicit threats of massive layoffs in order to influence the SEA membership; and they most certainly included a 'promise of benefit'."

Reply briefs in the case are due on December 15th.

## Layoffs

Continued from page 1  
appeals for every member seeking to challenge the layoffs.

Entire programs are gone.

As the Governor was meeting with media the day after the contract was rejected – saying he really didn't want to do any layoffs – New Hampshire Hospital announced it was closing the I-Unit for brain damaged patients.

The Multiple Offender Program, which handled drunk-driving cases through the District Courts and operated out of the closed Lakes Region Facility in Laconia, was entirely closed. In fact, they shut off the heat and other utilities days before the layoffs were formally announced.

Nursing support for foster children was reduced by 90 percent.

Some layoffs made little sense.

Case specialists within the

Department of Probation and Parole were dismissed. These workers were assigned to collect restitution fees and administrative costs in every county. In Hillsboro County, the specialist collected more than \$700,000 last year. Every restitution repayment includes a 17 percent fee, with 15 percent going to the General Fund – meaning most of these workers were more than covering the cost of their employment as well as providing relief to crime victims.

Two inspectors in the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program – a program the Governor championed only two years ago – were laid off on the eve of an announcement from a community coalition of a \$2 million-plus grant to expand lead abatement services in the state. One inspector remains to cover the entire state.

## No progress on negotiations

Negotiations for the state employee master contract have not resumed.

"Based on numerous public statements by the Governor or his Press Secretary, Colin Manning, the Governor has no interest in returning to the negotiation table to find personnel savings that would pave the way for our laid off workers to return to work," Bargaining Team chair Diana Lacey said in early November.

"Because the Governor's original negotiation goals focused solely on finding the personnel savings, many are wondering, what would his goals be moving forward in negotiations? We should ask ourselves that same question."

## Chapter Presidents honored during 69th Convention



The SEA values leadership and honored the presidents of all Chapters attending the 69th Annual Convention in Nashua on Oct. 24 with presentations of SEA umbrellas. The one-day convention included special elections, a dozen resolutions and constitutional amendments, and annual awards for members and Chapters. Details of the election, resolutions, and honors are on pages 4 and 5.

**For the latest news, go to [www.seiu1984.org](http://www.seiu1984.org)**

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of New Hampshire, Inc.  
SEIU Local 1984, CTW, CLC  
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Concord, NH 03301**

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