

# Mad Folk News

## Bryan Bowers House Concert

by Mike Wolkomir

**W**e are thrilled to announce an amazing house concert at our place in Barneveld!

On Monday evening, August 29, we will be honored by a presentation of music, stories and delight from Bryan Bowers.

Bryan is an internationally known recording artist, singer-songwriter and storyteller who has been an icon of American folk and roots tradition since the 1960's. He is a major musical innovator and the central influence on autoharp music and technique since Maybelle Carter. This is a show not to be missed.

This concert will be held at our beautiful venue in the hills of Southwestern Wisconsin, less than an hour from Madison. Please join us.

This event will be held outside "under canvas" with an indoor alternative in case of rain. Beverages provided. No alcohol please at this event. Bring a dessert to share.

Suggested donation is \$15 per person or what you can afford. For information and invitations, please contact:

Michael or Mary Ann  
608-924-1357  
mwolkomir@gmail.com

This is an invitational event, with limited attendance, so please contact us as soon as you can. For those unfamiliar with Bryans work, I am attaching a brief biography.

To experience Bryans work, please visit [www.bryanbowers.com](http://www.bryanbowers.com)



# Banjo Raffle to Benefit Emergency Relief Fund

by Steve Eulberg

Deering Banjo Company has generously provided a "Pete Seeger-style" Vega long-neck banjo to Local 1000 at cost for the purpose of raising funds to support our Emergency Relief Fund and the Organizing Efforts of Local 1000. His raffle is being organized and conducted under the laws of the state of New York and will begin June 10, 2011. A maximum of 600 tickets will be sold: \$20 a ticket or (6) tickets for \$100.

The drawing for this banjo will be held after 600 tickets have been sold. The proceedings will be videotaped and made public. The winner will be notified by the Local 1000 Office. The results will be announced on the Local 1000 Announcements List, the New Deal and on our website following the drawing. This is a special opportunity to help support your musicians who have fallen on

hard times, and to help provide Union benefits to other musicians so that one day we will have no more auctions or raffles to help musicians who have fallen on hard times.

Steve Eulberg  
Western Regional Board Representative Local 1000 AFM



Pete signs the banjo to be raffled

# KG & The Ranger to receive honors

KG & The Ranger will be inducted into "America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame" in Anita IA! This is a nice honor from the National Traditional Country Music Association. The induction ceremony will take place at the NTCMA Old Time Country Music Festival in LeMars IA, August 31, 2011. They have also received the 2010 "Outstanding Entertainer - Duo" award from the Western Music Association.

"KG and the Ranger sing with charm and style, they yodel spectacularly, choose great material with unerring taste, and write fine new songs as well. Their growing and continuing success is well deserved." ~ Ranger Doug, Riders In The Sky.

There will be a special Western Music Day on August 31. For more info about the festival go to their website: [www.orgsites.com/ia/oldtimemusic](http://www.orgsites.com/ia/oldtimemusic).



Karen Gogolick & Rick Roltgen  
2517 Waunona Way, Madison, WI 53713  
<http://www.kgandtheranger.com>  
608-222-4084. . . for a musical ride through the sagebrush

## *The Madison Songwriters Guild Presents:* **Songwriters in the Round-Steel Bridge Songfest Redux**

Wednesday, July 27, 7:00 PM.  
The Brink Lounge.

Songwriters David Cox, Tim Johnson and Jim Schwall are all multi-year veterans of Sturgeon Bay's annual Steel Bridge Songfest and Construction Zone collaborative songwriting week. They will be swapping songs, some of Construction Zone origins, backing themselves and each other up on various acoustic instruments. For further information, contact Jim at 608-772-1456 or [jschwall@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jschwall@sbcglobal.net)

## **MadFolk Concert Tickets**

When you see this symbol – 🎵 – you'll know that you're reading about a MadFolk sponsored event. Advance tickets for MadFolk shows are available online at [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org) and at these outlets:

- Orange Tree Imports, 1721 Monroe Street
- Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson

Purchase tickets ONLINE for Mad Folk concerts via Brown Paper Tickets:  
<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/10879>

You can also purchase advance tickets by mail. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your check payable to Mad Folk, PO Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. If all else fails, call 608-846-9214 for information.

# *JOE ELY ~ Satisfied at Last*

## 2011 Rock 'Em Records

by Kiki Schueler

Joe Ely's career spans a remarkable forty-plus years. From his first self-titled release in 1977 to the new *Satisfied at Last*, he's been an independent spirit, often walking that thin line between country and rock. Doing exactly what he pleases has made him a lot of fans—and also a lot of friends, some quite notable if inconsistent with a Texas troubadour. He opened for the Clash in the US, where they befriended him and asked him to open shows in the UK. That's Ely singing the lines in Spanish on their classic, "Should I Stay or Should I Go"; his 1995 release, *Letter to Laredo*, features backing vocals from Bruce Springsteen. But the most consistent and constant of his group of friends have been his bandmates in the Flatlanders, Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore. Both have contributed many songs to Ely's records over the years, and on this outing, Hancock has written one of the record's strongest tracks.

"Leo and Leona" is one of the story songs that Ely has done so well over the years, whether his own ("Me and Billy the Kid") or others (Robert Earle Keen's "The Road Goes on Forever" and Tom Russell's epic "Gallo Del Cielo"). We follow Leo and Leona from Laredo to Juarez, where at a bullfight Leona loses the engagement ring Leo had given her the year before, saying, "I'll marry you someday when the spirit calls." That loss is an aside to the horror of the

fight, and "she hid her eyes when the mules dragged the bull away and Leo held Leona when she cried." There's a happy ending, though. She draws a ring in the sand, and somehow that seems good enough, while the killer line comes in the last verse. "Back in Juarez out by the bullring a little beggar boy sat sifting through the sand, he found a peso and ten centavos, good god he found Leona's golden band!" The final track, the meditative "Circumstance," is also a Hancock composition.

The only other non-Ely track is Billy Joe and Eddy Shaver's "Live Forever." Instead of being loud and insistent as the title would suggest, it's a sweet declaration, all the more powerful for its understatement. The terrific Joel Guzman plays keyboards on several tracks, and even bass (!) on one. But this is the only song featuring his prodigious accordion skill, and it complements the song perfectly. At 64, Ely sings those words with utter conviction. The counterpoint to that song is "You Can Bet I'm Gone," which gives his thoughts on saying goodbye. The song's remarkable idea for a burial, of sorts, came from a true story of the last wishes of a gun enthusiast, "When I die, don't toll no bells, just put my ashes in some shotgun shells. Get all of my friends some windy day, to say goodbye, watch me float away."

"Mockingbird Hill" is another of those trademark story songs featuring a pair so sad and lonely they might

have been pulled from a Harry Chapin song. Ely overheard a waitress tell part of the story and filled in the rest. Sure it sounds similar to other songs he's done, but his Spanish guitar and Guzman's keyboard make it a heartbreaker. The record's definitive moment is the title track. Yet another look at mortality, "When I cross that river to the other side, I ain't taking nothing with me, I'm leaving it all behind," it's done with a sense of contentment, "I didn't come here with nothing but a slap on the ass. You can bet when I'm leaving I'll be satisfied at last." Considering the song features four electric guitar players (including the Flatlanders' incredible Rob Gjersoe), it would seem he isn't quite satisfied. Which is good news indeed for Ely fans.

## ***Sing-Along Update***

A lively group of campers and folk music enthusiasts sang in the main shelter of Blue Mounds State Park on the third Friday in June, led by Mac Robertson on banjo and guitar and Dave Eagen on guitar, with Mike Briggs adding some delightful British parodies. The July 15th Sing-along will be in the Amphitheater of Blue Mounds State Park (to the left of the circle); the August 19th sing-along will return to the Main Shelter. A park sticker is required to enter the park, but the sing-along is free, and Rise Up Singing books of song lyrics are provided.

To get there from Madison, take 18-151 west to County Highway F, turn left on F and follow signs to the park. The music begins at 8, and goes to 9:30.

## Madfolk Announces Helen Schneyer Memorial Scholarship: Opportunity for Folk Music Lessons

In an effort to encourage the next generation of folk musicians, the Madison Folk Music Society has established The Helen Schneyer Memorial Scholarship to fund lessons in the folk instrument of the applicant's choice. With additional generous support from our sister folk music organization, Wild Hog in the Woods, two scholarships of \$300 in lessons per year will be awarded annually, to be paid directly to the folk music instructor of choice. Budding folk musicians of all ages are encouraged to apply.

The scholarship is named in honor of the late great folk singer Helen Schneyer, who has played memorable house concerts in Madison at the home of her sister, Madfolk member Mona Wasow. Upon Helen's death on July 16, 2005 in Vermont, Mona's colleagues from the U.W. School of Social Work took up a collection in her honor, which Mona contributed to the Madison Folk Music Society. The funds were initially used to bring Ed Trickett to Madison for a Spring, 2006 Memorial concert, at which contributions were added for an additional memorial. Helen Schneyer was known for her renditions of lugubrious ballads, work songs, African American spirituals and Baptist hymns, which she sang, among other places, on Prairie Home Companion, at the White House at the request of Eleanor Roosevelt, and in Mona Wasow's living room. She shared the stage with many of

*MadFolkNews* is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area. Contact us at [madfolk@charter.net](mailto:madfolk@charter.net). Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org).

### Madison Folk Music Society Board

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Vicky Jones .....  
215-7621 ~ [mail@vickyjones.com](mailto:mail@vickyjones.com)

America's best-known folk singers and songwriters, including Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, who urged her at an early age to sing. A simple application form can be downloaded from the Madfolk web site: <[www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org)(<http://www.madfolk.org>)>, or by writing to Madfolk, P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. Applicants should identify the folk music teacher with whom they wish to study before applying; scholarships will be paid in advance, directly to the instructor. Deadline for applications is

September 1 annually. Winners will be announced and presented at the Madfolk annual meeting in October.

Tax deductible contributions to continue this memorial scholarship may be made payable to Madison Folk Music Society, with "Helen Schneyer Scholarship Fund" noted in the memo portion, and sent to the address above. In this way, Madfolk hopes to ensure that there is a new generation who will attempt to replace those now singing in the "Angel Band".

## Rural Musicians Forum Summer Concert Series

Spring Green, Wisconsin – Rural Musicians Forum is pleased to announce the 2011 Summer Concerts at Unity Chapel and Hillside School Theatre in Spring Green. The venue will shift to Hillside School Theatre at Taliesin on July 11 where world-class pianist Raffi Besalyan will perform on the newly restored Steinway grand. Back at Unity Chapel, July 25th's program is "Who was Taliesin? The Ancient Tale in Words and Music." August 8 will feature the annual "Taliesin at Taliesin" concert with choral works and more at Hillside School Theatre.

The final concert on August 13 will be the "Brass Birthday Bash" featuring the Madison Brass Ensemble. Tickets will be sold for the final concert, but a free will donation is requested for all other concerts. All concerts are at 7:30 pm. Unity Chapel is located on Hwy T, south of Spring Green and Hillside School Theatre is just a little farther south, on Hwy 23.

Contact: Jennifer Snow  
[mjsnow@charter.net](mailto:mjsnow@charter.net)



**PEOPLE & TRADITIONS OF THE UPPER MIDWEST**

# **2011 MIDWEST FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL**

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## Bruce Brackney a.k.a. Haywire Brack: Case History (a CD Review)

Recently I received a CD from Bruce Brackney of Victoria BC. I sat down and listened to the entire thing, and I can't sit through a cricket chirp these days.

*Haywire Brack*, as he is known in hobo, is an outstanding finger-pick guitarist, influenced by such greats as Dave Van Ronk and Dave "Snaker" Ray. Brack adores guitars and has owned countless varieties. His CD is called **Case History**, tying together nicely his "Haywire" persona and his instrument fascination. "I started off on my dad's 1917 L-1 Gibson. Still have it," Bruce told me in a phone chat I had with him the other day.

But Bruce is also an extraordinary folk singer, with a confident clarity of diction that reminds me of other of my folk singing heroes, like Michael Cooney and Art Thieme. And you can tell that these songs have special meaning to him. He presents just enough of an edge to assure that he has suffered the emotions portrayed, and is sincerely listening to every word he sings.

Brack's childhood had its difficulties, including his being surrendered to an orphanage from age 2 1/2 to 4. His father suffered debilitating migraines and ended up in treatment at the Mayo Clinic. His mother in Minneapolis had no access to day care, therefore the orphanage. "I have [the recollection of] feeling quite strange, in that this woman would come and visit me, take me out of there for an afternoon... and then take me back." Turns out it was his mother. This is the sort of experience that gives his rendition of the song "Orphan Train" its strength, for example. "I don't know if [the orphanage] impacted me subconsciously... I'm not a cross dresser or anything because of it..." he insists.

He also had a footloose twelve years in the 70s and early 80s, having no fixed address, crashing with friends, riding the rails, courting the girls, and playing music all over the country. "There were circuits... funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities... You play rest homes, title three meal centers, usu-

ally a humanities class... The 3.5 gigs a day at 3.5 towns a day." Eventually he teamed up with Jeff Cahill of Minneapolis, and they would each play a short set then team up for jokes, dressed as a voyageur and a Scandinavian bloke, calling themselves the Snoose Brothers.

Jeff was on the grounds crew of the Winnipeg Folk Festival. He helped Brack enlist with that outfit, where Brack soon met Margaret Potter of Winnipeg, and they were married. They moved west in 1986, worked a few adventures around Vancouver, and ended up in Victoria. Though Brack gave up long touring, he still performs sporadically and enthusiastically, but most often locally.

But many of the songs on this CD suggest wandering, being homesick, being lovelorn. The songs are traditional folk or folk-style songs, each described in Brack's brilliantly vintage writing style in the notes. The first rollicking hobo song, **Ragged but Right**, Brack says that when played as an opener, it "... serves notice to the audience that we prefer a rude vigor to a polished banality."

These are interesting songs of interesting origin. The second song is **North Star**, "A stellar, so to speak, example of the folk process." Utah Phillips wrote the lyrics of this hobo journey, Mark Ross put a melody to it and taught it to Brack "late one night in Missoula," and Brack, driving toward Minnesota, the North Star State, turned it into a "home" song. Song number four is called the **New Lee Highway Blues** written by David Bromberg, about which Brack mentions that the 60s and 70s saw many young troubadours roll across the country resulting in "an Avogadro's Number of 'Road Songs'..." and this is one of his favorites.

There are 18 songs and a poem here, including a version of the **Wabash Cannonball**, with a melodic update by Utah Phillips, but first learned by Brack from his father, who had been a gandy dancer on the Wabash RR. There's **The Dreaury Black Hills**, a cautionary song about the fake gold rush trumped up by the Northern Pacific RR to stimulate business. A hobo's love of trains is evident in many of these songs, so it's nice to hear this awareness that the old railroad tycoons were often heartless. **Old Coyote**, written by the late Al Grierson, will give you the goosebumps. Brack agrees with Art Thieme who says, "This might

be the best song I've ever heard." And Bill Monroe's **Body and Soul** will give you goosebumps the willies.

Many of the songs were recorded recently but some came from shows at old venues like the **Cafe Extempore** of Minneapolis or **Holstein's** in Chicago. This CD is haunting to me, in the best way, as my musical partner Lou and I have known so many of the characters and venues mentioned (Brack himself kindly hosted a gig for us in Victoria in 1995, as a matter of fact.) Speaking at length with Brack about his personal history, and regarding our having many mutual friends, he gave me this obviously pre-Facebook quote: "Everyone you know knows everyone else you know whether you know it or not."

Many of the names mentioned are, or were, members of or at least elbow-rubbers with what Brack calls the "self inflicted myth" of "far-flung rounders, boomers, railroad habitues and sons of habitues," called **The Rose Tattoo**, begun in the early 70s. I'm surprised I haven't written about these dozen or so trudging plunkers, with Utah Phillips as member one, father figure, and guru. Membership requirements: "1. Must spend a good deal of one's life around the railroad. 2. Must sing old songs. 3. Must have a rose tattoo."

I would add that the **Tattoos** also all use humor as a lubricant in their lives on and offstage. And, due in large part to Phillips, expound and create with an empathetic nod to the disenfranchised. Brack's CD is a prime example of this hobo-socialist-humorist-troubadour Rose Tattoo sensibility, and a grand tribute to the many inspirational figureheads in this subculture who have passed on, such as Utah Phillips himself, but it is also purely a great stand-alone traditional music recording. Thank you Bruce Brackney. This is a marvelous CD; a treasure.

This is a very limited (200 copies) recording. Brack tells me they cost him \$10 each to have made, and postage alone from Canada to the US costs \$5. He has decided to sell them at \$20, postage paid (US funds are okay). That is a steal, considering everything.

E-mail him at: [pilgrimsrest@shaw.ca](mailto:pilgrimsrest@shaw.ca)  
Or write to: Bruce Brackney  
1201 Colville Rd, Victoria BC, V9A4R2.

# The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

August 2011

## Mad Folk Events



### House Concert:

Bryan Bowers

Mon, 8/29 -- The Wolkomir's in Barneveld

For more information or to make a reservation,  
email Michael: [mwolkomir@gmail.com](mailto:mwolkomir@gmail.com)  
or call: 608-924-1357

## Venues



### The Brink Lounge

Tue. August 9 -- Brooks West -- 8 pm

Wed. August 24 -- Madison Songwriter's Group -- 7pm

701 E. Washington  
[thebrinklounge.com](http://thebrinklounge.com)  
608-661-8599



### Mad Toast Live! at The Brink Lounge

Tuesdays -- Music, talk and variety show hosted by  
Chris Wagoner and Mary Gaines -- 6:00pm -- \$5



### High Noon Saloon

- Mon. Aug. 8 -- The Ragbirds -- 8:00pm -- \$10
- Tues. Aug. 9 -- The Dirty Shirts -- 6:30pm -- \$4
- Sat. Aug. 13 -- The Gentlemen Trailblazers (feat. Mike Behrends) / Boo Bradley -- 6:00pm -- \$5
- Mon. Aug. 15 -- Sarah Lou Richards -- 8:00pm -- tbd
- Sun. Aug. 21 -- Laurie Lewis & The Right Hands -- 7:00pm -- \$25
- Mon. Aug. 22nd -- Matt the Electrician / Galyne Goodwill -- 8:00pm -- tbd
- Tues. Aug. 30 -- The Getaway Drivers (CD Release Party) -- 6:30pm -- \$5

701A E. Washington  
[www.high-noon.com](http://www.high-noon.com)  
608-268-1122

## Misc

Madison Ukulele Club -- Singalongs 1st and 3rd Weds 7:00-9:00pm -- call for location -- 246-8205 (Andrew)

## Summer Music Festivals

- August 4-7  
Greatful Garcia Gathering -- Black river Falls, WI  
[www.gratefulgarciafestival.com](http://www.gratefulgarciafestival.com)
- August 12-14  
Shawano Folk Music Festival -- Shawano, WI  
[www.shawanofestival.com](http://www.shawanofestival.com)
- August 18-21  
Irish Fest -- Milwaukee, WI  
[www.irishfest.com](http://www.irishfest.com)
- August 19-20  
Larryfest (Bluegrass) -- Rockton, WI  
[www.kvama.org/larryfest.php](http://www.kvama.org/larryfest.php)
- August 20  
Gandy Dancer Festival -- Mazomanie, WI  
[www.midcontinent.org](http://www.midcontinent.org)
- August 20-21  
Midwest Folklife Festival -- Dodgeville, WI  
[www.midwestfolklife.org](http://www.midwestfolklife.org)
- August 26-27  
Bluegrass in the Pines -- Rosholt, WI  
<http://highwatermusic.com/BluegrassInThePines.htm>
- August 26-28  
Great River Folk Festival -- La Crosse, WI  
[www.greatriverfolkfest.org](http://www.greatriverfolkfest.org)
- September 4-5  
Fox Valley Folk Music Festival -- Geneva, IL  
[www.foxvalleyfolk.com](http://www.foxvalleyfolk.com)
- November 4-6  
Stringalong Weekend -- Olympia Resort, WI  
[www.uwm.edu/Dept/Folk](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Folk)

## Gigs

Jim Schwall

- Monday, Aug. 22, Crystal Corner Bar, 9:30 -- Jim solo, no cover.
- Monday, Sep. 26, Crystal Corner Bar, 9:30 -- Jim solo, no cover  
[jschwall@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jschwall@sbcglobal.net) or 608-245-1881

KG & The Ranger

- Sunday, Aug. 28 -- Phoenix Park Band Shell, Delavan WI -- 2:00pm

Bluegrass In The Pines Festival: Rosholt Fair Park, Aug. 26-27

- Art Johnson & High Water
- Sloppy Joe
- Hand Picked Bluegrass
- Bluegrass Patriots
- The High 48's
- The Briar Pickers

Great River Folk Festival: UW-La Crosse, Aug 26-28 -- \$35/\$44 at the door

- 8/26 -- Loudon Wainwright III -- \$20/\$23
- 8/27 -- Susan Werner, Bryan Bowers, Two Many Banjos, The DitchLilies -- 6pm -- \$15
- 8/28 -- Johnsmith, Carrie Elkin, Cafe Accordion Orchetra, Radoslav Lorkovic -- 5pm -- \$15

[www.greatriverfolkfest.org](http://www.greatriverfolkfest.org) or 608-784-3033

## On the Air



[wpr.org](http://wpr.org)

Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Stephanie Elkins, Interim Host

Sun 5:00-8:00pm

Concerts recorded in Wisconsin, music and dance of people the world over. For playlists, calendars, station listings, and more, visit [www.wpr.org/simplyfolk](http://www.wpr.org/simplyfolk).



[wort-fm.org](http://wort-fm.org)

WORT 89.9 FM community radio

Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm

- On the Horizon (world music) w/Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak & Dan Talmo
- Weekdays 9:00am-noon
- Mon - Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ David & Martin Alvarado & Eugenia Highland
- Tue -- For the Sake of the Song (traditional American folk) w/Jim Schwall
- Wed -- Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/Bill Malone
- Thur -- Diaspora (folk and international) w/Terry O'
- Fri -- Mud Acres (bluegrass and acoustic) w/Chris Powers

## Madison Dance

- African/African-American Dance classes with live drumming -- Sun, 7:00-9:00pm -- Metro Dance, 3009 University Ave. -- 255-3677 / 251-4311
- English Country Dance taught -- 1st and 3rd Mon, 7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 238-9951
- International Dancing -- Wed and Sun; classes 7:30-8:30pm, request dancing 8:30-11:00pm -- The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. -- 241-3655
- Irish Dancing -- Monthly Ceili and set dance events are posted at [celticmadison.org/dance](http://celticmadison.org/dance)
- Italian Dancing -- Tue, 7:00-9:00pm, no experience or partner necessary -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 838-9403 (Philana)
- Madison Contra Dance Cooperative -- Tue; 7:30 jam band practice, intermediate level dancing 7:45-9:40pm -- \$5 for non-members -- Gates of Heaven, 302 E. Gorham -- 238-3394 (Steve)
- Morris Dancing -- Wed, 7:00pm -- call for location -- 238-9951
- Ecstatic Dance -- Sat, 8:00pm -- The Center for Conscious Living -- 843-7740
- Scottish Country Dancing -- Sun, 7:00pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 835-0914

**Is this your last copy of Mad Folk News?**

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Send your check, payable to MFMS to: Mad Folk c/o  
Tracy Comer, P.O. Box 930446, Verona, WI 53593-0446

Madison Folk Music Society

P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701

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