

### Welty's Mission Statement

To provide leadership in environmental education by equitably engaging the diverse residents of the Stateline region with activities that foster an appreciation of nature and promote environmental stewardship.



# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

## Executive Director's Report—Brenda K. Plakans



Writing an annual report is a yearly exercise in reflection however, for our 2022 report, we are looking farther back. At our annual meeting on March 19, we were in the unusual position of turning over more than half of our Executive committee. See officer reports from Mark Spreitzer, Kirk Berridge, and Jan Knutson for thoughts about their time with Welty (pages 4, 7).

2022 was a return to fully in-person activities, which was a welcome change after two year of covid shutdowns (p. 2). It was also the first full year of our National Science Foundation GEOPaths grant, which allows for a variety of new programs with its multi-year funding (see Darien's report on p. 3). It is supporting numerous out-of-town conferences for staff; for example, Aaron and I were able to present on the Sky's the Limit STEM camp for autistic teenagers at the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education meeting in November...a first for Welty!

We inaugurated our new Community Engagement committee last spring. We wanted a group who would design activities to attract a broader range of nature-friendly folks who hadn't interacted with Welty before. The summer Welty Weeknight Paddles with the Beloit College Buccaneer Boathouse and the Sustainable Action Through a Beloit Lens event were the result of its planning.

To accommodate all this activity, we expanded into another room at Big Hill Center in June. This allows us to serve more classes during the regular school day. It also was another space that needed that Welty "flavor" and we had help from Kerry and Fairbanks Morse volunteers to get the room painted, while the Cawkins family created a fantastic mural of regional birds for one of the walls (p. 7).

2023 is well underway and we are on track to surpass 2022 numbers. It's an exciting start to the year and I look forward to updating you soon!

### Welty Environmental Center Staff

Brenda K. Plakans, Executive Director; Aaron Wilson, Program Director; Darien Becker, Environmental Educator; Birdia McAlister, Office Assistant

### 2022 FWEC Board Members

#### **Executive Committee**

Mark Spreitzer, President; Kirk Berridge, Vice President; Kevin Larson, Treasurer; Heidi Andre, External Secretary; Jan Knutson, Internal Secretary

#### **At-Large Directors**

Dave Bendlin, Betsy Brewer, Tony Bosco, Doug Elfstrom, Jane Fossum, Cindy Laube, Kaelyb Lokrantz, Jingjing Lou, Lynn Vollbrecht, Harry Wiersgalla

### Thank you to Outgoing Board Officers and Directors



At our 2023 annual meeting, held March 19, we celebrated our long-time Board President, Mark Spreitzer and Internal Secretary, Jan Knutson (*top*), for their years of service as officers (limited to seven years by our bylaws). We also thanked Kirk Berridge, who is stepping down as Vice President after six years. We are lucky to retain Mark and Kirk as Directors. Jingjing Lou (*bottom*) will also be leaving the board. We are grateful for all their work and appreciate their wisdom in helping Welty grow.



## Program Director's Report—Aaron Wilson



By the numbers, 2022 was amazing! We served **11,020 people** (8537 children and 2483 adults)—our best participation numbers since I started mid-2018. Numbers like those would not have been possible without a lot of help. Our amazing staff and volunteers ran, assisted, and participated in 433 activities that included 234 field trips and activities for schools, 70 public programs, 94 group and partner activities, 27 camp dates, and a few training events.

In 2022, we added several new field trips and opportunities for people in the Stateline area to get involved. My favorite is our new field trip on the Urban Heat Island Effect (the built environment, such as roads and housing, can have an impact on local temperatures). Both the School District of Beloit 6th grade and the upper levels of the Rock Prairie Montessori school became citizen scientists as they took surface temperature data. That data was then uploaded to NASA sites for scientists to compare against satellite readings and other school-age kids around the world to compare against their data. I love this trip because it allows for collaboration around the world using the language of science.

In addition to Darien Becker, our full-time Environmental Educator, we were also helped by the following seasonal staff:

- Bradford Summer Environmental Educator: Madison Suttman
- Camp Educators: Ava Dabek, Oliver Devlin, Patrick Rochester, Alec Rougvie, Maison Hosey
- Morse Environmental Educator: Estella Baret
- Interns: Dora Diaz, Bennett Donovan, Liam Flanagan, Jessica Green, Sarah Miller, Raven Regenold, Abigail West

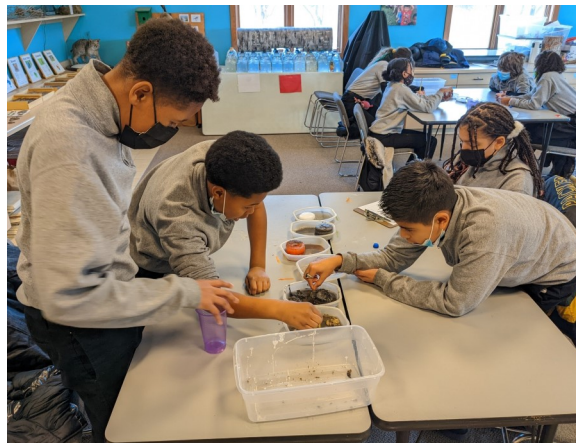
A big thank you to our program volunteers: Dave Bendlin, Bruce Cawkins, Deb Fallon, Chuck Goldstein, Sandy Kallas, Elizabeth Meek, Sarah Parsons, Ron Read, Larry Swanson, and Julie Uram. They make it possible to provide hands-on activities to large groups, bringing their unique experiences and perspectives to our programs.

### 2022 GRANT ROUNDUP

- \$750** Beloit Rotary Club: Compost bin sale education
- \$5000** Stateline Community Foundation: Summer field trips
- \$10,000** National Science Foundation: GEOPATHs 1-yr. supplement
- \$14,860** National Science Foundation: GEOPATHs grant (for 3 yrs.)



*Students measure the surface temperature of the Big Hill parking lot, which varies depending on the color of paper. This experiment demonstrates how the built environment affects temperature and what can be done to prevent a “heat island”.*



*We increased our reach during the 2021-2022 school year and hosted field trips for every grade of The Lincoln Academy in Beloit. This group is measuring the pH of ice cores to model how climate history is revealed in acid levels in Antarctic ice layers.*



*This summer we partnered with CareerTek on a day-long water science camp which included macroinvertebrate study in Turtle Creek and the Rock River.*

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## Environmental Educator's Report—Darren Becker



*Above (L to R): 2022 WELCOME interns Bennett Donovan, Darien, Raven Regenold, Liam Flanagan. Middle: Raven collects data from the Rock River. Bottom: Liam does field work in Big Hill Park.*

One of the reasons why I love teaching is I get to live vicariously through my students as they experience the wonder of ecology. The same can be said about research. I work with high school students as they take a step further from the observations they make and test what they see. Curiosity is contagious, and this is where discovery happens. We constantly find knowledge gaps, and these young scientists use those gaps to ask questions.



Over the last year, I worked with three Beloit Memorial High School seniors on research projects that included protocols developed by NASA called GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment). I was in awe each time we flipped rocks in streams where macroinvertebrates foraged, especially when Raven and I found a larva with the common name of cookie-headed mayfly—HOW CUTE IS THAT? I was baffled by the vast color differences between soil horizons with Liam, where each color indicated different ratios of sand, silt, and clay. While working with Bennett, I became evermore curious about how the sun affects soil temperature. The possibilities of future studies are endless just by one student's investigation!



A lot can happen over five months, and our 2022 WELCOME interns completed projects they can be proud of. We shared their poster presentations on our [YouTube](#) channel. I look forward to crossing paths with them in the future, as Liam and Bennett attend UW-Stevens Point to study natural resources, while Raven studies animal science at UW-Platteville. I'm honored to have helped these students achieve goals I could have only dreamed of when I was in high school. I'm eager to see the projects our 2023 WELCOME interns produce!

*Do you know a Beloit Memorial High School junior or senior who is interested in science and wants to receive valuable hands-on research experience in the field? Contact [Deb Prowse](mailto:dprowse@sdb.k12.wi.us) (dprowse@sdb.k12.wi.us) at BMHS for more information. We can get them connected to a research project as early as Fall 2023!*

### 2022 Program Partners

Aram Public Library, Beloit College, Beloit Heritage Days, Beloit League of Women Voters, Beloit Public Library, City of Beloit, City of Janesville, Clinton Public Library, Community Action Inc., Discover Wisconsin, Eager Free Public Library, Even Start, Fresh Start, Hedberg Public Library, Hendricks CareerTek, Hoo's Woods, Janesville YWCA, Merrill Community Center, Merrill Community Sharing Garden, Nature at the Confluence, Nelson Institute Center for Climatic Research, New Glarus Public Library, Nygren Wetlands, PBS Wisconsin, Remake Learning Days, Rock County Christian School, Rock County Conservationists, Rock County Parks, Rock Prairie Montessori, School District of Beloit, School District of Elkhorn, School District of Janesville, Skype a Scientist, Steline Boys and Girls Club, The Lincoln Academy, Visit Beloit, Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education, Wisconsin Science Festival, Yellow Brick Road

# WELTY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT (PAGE 4)

## **Board President's Report—Mark Spreitzer**



It has been a privilege to serve as Welty's Board President for the past 6 years, and a board member for the past 8 years. My time as President is coming to an end at this annual meeting, though I plan to stay on the board. As I reflect on the past 8 years, I am proud of how Welty has evolved into a stronger organization with a sound financial future, more staff, and the ability to reach more people in the Stateline region with our programming.

After moving to the Big Hill Center in 2015, the board quickly recognized the need to change our staffing model. We created an Executive Director position and a Program Director position to add more capacity and better split the administrative and fundraising responsibilities from the direct programming and allow staff to focus on their skills and passions while growing Welty. We have since added more programming staff to meet growing demand.

With the help of generous donors, we established Rent and General Endowments and additional investments to help provide a sustainable financial future. With the additional support of strong annual fundraising, we have been able to let our endowments grow with the market while balancing recent budgets. We weathered a global pandemic and continued to provide programming using virtual tools and smaller outdoor gatherings.

With this solid foundation to build on, 2022 marked an amazing year for Welty. In June, we signed a new operating agreement with the City of Beloit that extends our lease at Big Hill Park through 2032. Big Hill Park has truly become our home and we are excited to continue our partnerships with the City. With a strong staff, a strong board, and increased community awareness of our programming, I am confident that Welty is positioned to set new records in 2023 and provide strong leadership in environmental education for many years to come!

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## **Board Vice President's Report—Kirk Berridge**



This year I have decided to step down as Vice President because I have moved back to my home in the Hudson Valley of New York. I am still very much interested in the Welty mission and will continue on as a board member albeit remotely.

During my tenure as Vice President, I have tried to set Welty on a course that will ensure that it can continue its mission for many years to come. To that end, the board has adopted financial policies to wisely invest in endowments to help it weather any unexpected bumps in the road. The money that comes into Welty no longer sits idle. When donations come in, those earmarked by donors for our endowments are invested in the designated fund where they grow for the future needs of Welty and to allow us to pay our rent each month. Other donations and fees from membership are also invested in safe vehicles like government money-market funds where they earn interest until we need to remove those funds to pay our expenses and salaries.

No one wants to go through the tough times of the Covid pandemic again, but I am happy to say that, because of our planning for the future, we were able to continue our programming in different ways and did not have to lay anyone off due to the lack of funds. Welty is a unique organization with an impact to the community that is outstanding for its size. As Welty grows in both staff and classroom space, its outreach will expand as well. I look forward to that future, although from a distance now....

# WELTY 2022 ANNUAL REPORT (PAGE 5)

2023 Budget (approved 2/13/23)

## 2022 Budget vs. Year-End Actual Amounts

Budget Item	2022 Budget	Actual
Program Income	\$46,890.00	\$54,035.80
Miscellaneous Income	\$100.00	\$2,554.15
Special Events	\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Contributions, Unrestricted	\$70,000.00	\$52,058.43
Contributions, Restricted	\$8,250.00	\$18,500.00
Contributions, Corporate	\$100.00	\$2,625.93
Investment Income	\$13,725.00	\$17,040.55
Grants, Restricted	\$29,000.00	\$22,706.27
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$173,065.00</b>	<b>\$169,521.13</b>
Insurance	\$2,150.00	\$2,718.00
Office Expense	\$1,200.00	\$1,722.96
Miscellaneous (compost bin sale)	\$25.00	\$2,944.69
The Warbler Pub & Distrib	\$300.00	\$113.00
Membership Dues in Other Orgs	\$500.00	\$799.95
Special Events Expense	\$150.00	\$0.00
Fundraising Expense	\$1,800.00	\$1,275.43
Website	\$600.00	\$450.00
Telephone	\$1,800.00	\$1,916.26
Salaries-All Staff	\$128,107.50	\$134,467.28
Mileage	\$1,195.64	\$1,190.66
Grant Expense	\$3,500.00	\$2,028.06
Program Supplies	\$5,000.00	\$4,548.43
WEC Program Advertising	\$500.00	\$216.84
Payroll Taxes	\$9,261.35	\$10,286.76
Accounting Fees	\$1,350.00	\$1,899.00
Legal fees	\$50.00	\$76.80
Professional Development	\$1,200.00	\$239.33
<b>Ordinary (Operating) EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$158,689.49</b>	<b>\$166,893.45</b>
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$173,065.00</b>	<b>\$169,521.13</b>
<b>NET Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$14,375.51</b>	<b>\$2,627.68</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investment		-\$136,148.44
Endowment Donation	\$13,300.00	\$22,100.00
Endowment Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total (Other) INCOME</b>	<b>\$13,300.00</b>	<b>-\$114,048.44</b>
<b>Other Expense</b>		
Investment Fees/Expenses	-\$2,200.00	\$4,370.00
Rent Expense	\$7,225.00	\$7,225.00
<b>Total (Other) EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$5,025.00</b>	<b>\$11,595.00</b>
<b>Net (Other) INCOME</b>	<b>\$18,325.00</b>	<b>-\$125,643.44</b>
<b>NET 2021 INCOME</b>	<b>\$32,700.51</b>	<b>-\$123,015.76</b>

Budget Item	2023 EXPECTED
Program Income	\$48,500.00
Miscellaneous Income	\$100.00
Special Events	\$7,750.00
Contributions, Unrestricted	\$65,000.00
Contributions, Restricted	\$12,250.00
Contributions, Corporate	\$200.00
Investment Income	\$6,500.00
Grants, Restricted	\$34,000.00
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$174,300.00</b>
Insurance	\$2,150.00
Office Expense	\$1,500.00
The Warbler Pub & Distrib	\$150.00
Membership Dues in Other Orgs	\$500.00
Special Events Expense	\$2,300.00
Individual Fundraising Expense	\$1,300.00
Business & Foundation Fundraisin	\$500.00
Website	\$600.00
Telephone	\$900.00
Miscellaneous	\$25.00
Salaries-All Staff	\$134,090.00
Paid Presenter	\$500.00
Mileage	\$1,620.00
Grant Expense	\$10,000.00
Program Supplies	\$6,000.00
Camp Scholarships	\$6,000.00
WEC Program Advertising	\$500.00
Payroll Taxes	\$9,386.30
Accounting Fees	\$1,500.00
Legal fees	\$50.00
Professional Development	\$800.00
<b>Ordinary (Operating) EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$180,371.30</b>
<b>Ordinary (Operating) INCOME</b>	<b>\$174,300.00</b>
<b>NET Ordinary (Operating) INCO</b>	<b>-\$6,071.30</b>
<b>Other income &amp; expenses</b>	
Endowment Donation	\$15,000.00
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL NET INCOME</b>	<b>\$8,928.70</b>

Year-End Balance Sheet	2022
Checking/Savings Accounts*	\$ 27,631.16
RJ Rent Endowment	\$ 102,412.27
RJ General Endowment	\$ 351,445.70
RJ Money Market Account	\$ 5,216.60
Fidelity Investments	\$ 89,131.92
Investment held at SCF	\$ 36,567.46
Fixed Assets (equipment, fixtures)	\$ -
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 612,405.11</b>

**2022-23 WELTY DONORS AND MEMBERS**

**Donations were made in Honor of:**

**Catherine Anderson, Dave & Stephanie Dobson, J. Carl & Susan Welty**

**Donors of \$5,000 or more**

**Erik Berridge, Kirk Berridge, Dave & Jean Bradford, Dave & Stephanie Dobson, National Science Foundation GEOPaths, Stateline Community Foundation**

**Donors of \$1,000-\$4999**

**Jane Fossum, Bob Hunter, Nancy Johnson & Jim Van De Bogart, Jan & Dave Knutson, Kevin Larson & Nicolette Meister, William Priewe & Liz Meek, Zeeland Farm Services**

**Donors of \$500-999**

**Dennis Murphy, Dick & Shirley Newsome, Catherine & Leo Pilachowski, Beloit Rotary Club, Gary & Teresa Sommers, Richard & Carole Spreitzer, Martin & Nancy Stabb**

**Donors of \$250 - \$499**

**Larry & Karen Arft, Charles & Joy Boardman, Gillian & Mark Batterman, Elizabeth Brewer, Dave & Barb Bendlin, Mary Anne Carroll & Ron Watson, Pierre & Pam Charles, Richard Dunagan, Charles & Prudy Harker, Bill & Missy Henderson, Jingjing Lou, Connie Matusiak, Phillip & Victoria Melzer, Larry & Alice Olson, Ken & Lois O'Tool, Dave & Stacey Rougvie, James Rougvie & Brenda Plakans, Mark Spreitzer & Philip Gorman, Lynn Vollbrecht, Steve Vavrus & Sue Swanson, Michael & Polly Wolfe, Henry Woodard, Harry & Kedron Wiersgalla, Thomas & Anna Marie Warren**

**Donors of \$100 - \$249**

**Richard & Heidi Andre, Norman & Carol Aulabaugh, Randall and Jaime Benedict, Tracy Bliss, Roy Bossingham & Carol Wickersham, Lucinda Briesemeister, Cleveland & Bette Carr, Darrah Chavey & Peggy Weisensel Chavey, Annabelle Collins, Bonnie Cunningham, Paul Dionne & Jennifer Esperanza, Roger Dutcher, Marge Fizzell, Dr. Charles Grose, Mary Alice Harris, Marty & Marlene Howe, Timothy Krause & Elizabeth Babler, Thomas & Peggy Lang, Cindy Laube, Betty Magnus, David Burwell & Gloria Mathews, Jack W. Maegli, Carol Mankiewicz & Carl Mendelson, Christian & Jinjer Miller, Kristin Mosemen, Sam & Karen Niehans, Richard Ott, Fran & Jacquelyn Patch, Arlene Peterson, Barbara S. & Andrejs Plakans, Ben Reeber, Paul & Alice Roemer, Mae Sanford, Loren & Diane Sass, Daniel Schoof & Alyssa Whitney, Joan Schultz, Upal & Tracy Sengupta, Mark & Gloria Senz, Joe & Dawn Stadelman, Kaelyb Lokrantz & Catherine Tenney, Katie & Andy Udell, Dick & Kathy Vogel, Stephen & Mary Wadle, Jim & Marianne Wilson, Kelly Winterland, Tanya Zastrow**

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## 2022-23 WELTY DONORS AND MEMBERS (cont'd)

### Other Gifts & Membership Renewal

**Ace Hardware**, Judy Adler, **Ellenor Anderbyrne**, Joanne Anderson, **Clint Anderson**, Sara Arnsmeier, **Sara Avalos**, Daniel Barolsky, **Elizabeth Barbarick**, Rick & Rita Barder, **Dorothea Bedu**, Al Bennett & Nancy Hansen-Bennett, **Nancy Boutelle**, Richard Boehme, **Betty Jo Bussie**, Dawn Byrnes, **Cynthia Caldwell**, John and Margie Carroll, **Jeanne Chernick-Krueger**, Amrish Chourasia, **Kelea Christians**, Casey Cleveland, **James & Karel Cripe**, Judy Criswell, **Leslie Davidson**, Kari Daugherty, **Andre & Carmen DeKok**, George & Barbara Dilling, **Jim & Sheri Disrud**, Lance Elfstrom, **Heidi & Steve Eldred**, Eric & Willie Ericson, **Michael & Deborah Fallon**, Lee & Marilyn Fassett, **Jessica Fox-Wilson & Aaron Wilson**, Jessica Frantz, **Mary Ellen Fuentes**, Naoyuki & Susan Furukawa, **Kim Gamble**, Tom & Nancy Garrett, **Pamela Garland-Gjestson**, Yaffa Grossman, **Roy & Janet Hahn**, Chris & Ann Hankins, **William Heebink**, Gary & Darcy Hess, **Oya Horoguchi**, Tom & Marline Holmes, **Jacqueline Dougan Jackson**, Carol Josh, **Catherine Karlshoej**, Thomas & Rosemary Kautz, **Colleen Keating**, Ana Kelly & Rick McGrath, **Kristine Kennedy**, Tamara Ketabgian, **Paul & Kathleen Kleispis-Wick**, Christine Kopec, **Kristin Larson**, Laura Linek, **Deborah Sapp Lynch**, Adrienne Massel, **Birdia McAlister**, Neil McLaughlin, **Megan Miller**, Darlene Nelson, **Christine Nelson & Fred Burwell**, Mary Norman, **Dean Paynter**, Lisa Peterson, **Diep Phan**, Will Pollock, **Barbara Porter**, Kayla Poulos, **Mark Preuschel**, Judy Robson, **Steve Schmaeng**, Leana Shultz, **John Sorce**, Christa Story, **Nadine W. Stoner**, Connie & Jerry Sveum, **Gina T'ai**, Pablo Toral, **Jon Urish**, John Verhaar & Janet Herbert-Verhaar, **Shirley von Allmen**, Rebecca Wallendal, **Westley Weidemen**, Beth Welty

*\*Bold has no significance, other than to make this list easier to read*

### Board Internal Secretary's Report— Jan Knutson



It has been almost two decades...since I was invited to join the Welty team. It's been GREAT to see Welty grow... starting with EE lessons from Heidi's trunk ...to a little run-down shack on the corner of Beckman Mill....and now to our Welty Environmental Center in Big Hill Park.

One of the best things about my time at Welty has been getting to work alongside all the wonderful Welty people! The creative vision of so many connecting people with nature.

First our directors: women in nature with special talents...Brenda, Tanya and Lena. Each one has added their own stamp on our Welty story.

And then, all the knowledgeable program staff, hard-working board members, and loyal volunteers who bring so much to the environmental table.

Over the last 20 years so much has changed....

- From deficit spending to financial stability.
- From humble beginnings to modern facilities (even with indoor bathrooms).
- From basic programming to school districts to curriculum partnerships.

Welty is clearly on the right path. And I feel very confident that I am leaving it in good hands. Thanks to all who made this journey fun!



Once we moved into the "West Wing" in June, it was obvious we needed to give the room some Welty flavor. The Cawkins family (Maddie, Lora, and Bruce above) spent the winter break creating a mural inspired by The Peterson Guide to Eastern Birds. Stop by the Center and see how many birds you can identify in this amazing creation!



I want to provide support for Welty Environmental Center's operations! Welty has 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status and is solely a private, non-profit educational organization. Dues and contributions may be tax-deductible. Please accept my gift to continue these important environmental education efforts in the Stateline area.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please accept my one-time annual gift:**  
 Senior/Student (\$20)     Individual (\$30)  
 Family (\$45)          Life Member (\$1000)  
Additional Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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Check made payable to Friends of Welty Environmental Center. Mail to: FWEC 1201 Big Hill Ct. Beloit, WI 53511

**Credit Card option available on our website:**  
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