

# INKLINGS AND IDLINGS

The Newsletter of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association

313 East Third Street • P.O. Box 585 • Galesburg, Illinois 61402 • (309) 342-2361 • [www.sandburg.org](http://www.sandburg.org)

Spring, 2013

## FROM SITE SUPERINTENDENT MARTHA DOWNEY

The days are lengthening, and an occasional bird song can be heard, so the change of seasons is coming. Activity will be increasing at the Site with the arrival of spring. The Songbag Concert series has returned. The concerts are the last Saturday of the month at 7 pm in the Site's Barn.

March 30—David G. Smith, a nationally known singer/songwriter

April 27—Bovee and Heil, old time music

May 25—Wacky Keys, traditional Hawaiian music, pop and swing tunes, and pretty much anything

A special Songbag Concert will be held in conjunction with the Sandburg Days Festival for the Mind on April 20 with Chris Stevens and Ken Waldman. In addition to this special concert, the Site will be hosting a writers' workshop and Girl Scout activities that Saturday.

Once again the Site is honored to host the Kick Off to the Sandburg Days Festival. This year it will be on Wednesday, April 17 at 7:30 pm. Kevin Stein, Illinois' Poet Laureate, will be speaking and reading his poetry. Refreshments will be served. Kevin Stein was named the fourth Illinois Poet Laureate in December, 2003. Howard Austin was the State's first Poet Laureate serving from 1936 to 1962. Carl Sandburg served from 1962 to 1967, and Gwendolyn Brooks served from 1968 to 2000.

Stein currently serves as the Caterpillar Professor of English at Bradley University and teaches a range of graduate and undergraduate courses in American literature. He is also director of

Bradley's Creative Writing Program. As for his views on serving as Illinois' Poet Laureate, Stein has written, "I hope to undertake projects that will make poetry more available and more accessible to people in their everyday lives." In this effort he has established a website, <http://www.illinois.gov/poetlaureate/Pages/about.aspx> which I encourage you to visit. Watch for additional information about Sandburg Days in the coming weeks.

## CSHSA WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGE

Visit the CSHSA website at [sandburg.org](http://sandburg.org). On it you will find special meeting notices, gift shop information, Galesburg locations where the DVD *The Day Carl Sandburg Died* can be purchased, the Songbag Concert Series schedule, CSHSA Board Member Barbara Schock's *Sandburg's Hometown* series, and the *Inklings and Idlings* archive. Thank you to Treasurer Rick Sayre for maintaining this attractive site.

On our CSHSA Facebook page you can watch the humorous video of Sandburg on CBS TV's old quiz show *What's My Line* with host John Daly and panelists Arlene Francis, Dorothy Kilgallen, and Bennett Cerf. Actor Nick Adams was guest panelist for this episode. Despite Sandburg using a high-pitched voice to disguise his identity, Arlene Francis guessed who he was. The host and panelists then made laudatory comments about him. You can hear poet Langston Hughes tell in 1958 of Sandburg's influence on his development as a poet. Read other people's comments. Make your own comments. Thanks to our FB page administrators Rick Sayre, Chris Winick, and Tom Foley.

## 2013 PENNY PARADE

The Annual Penny Parade was held at the Site on January 24. Eight Knox County schools participated. Ms. Krebsbach's third grade class at the White Earth Indian Reservation, Ogema, MN sent a donation. Abingdon's Hedding Grade School led the way with donations for the second year in a row. They collected \$1,017.

During the festivities at the Site CSHSA board member Barry Swanson told the students about Sandburg and read a couple of his poems in the Barn. CSHSA member John Heasley played songs that Sandburg liked. Afterward everyone enjoyed refreshments in the Site's Visitors' Center.



John Heasley plays guitar at Penny Parade  
*Courtesy Tom Foley*

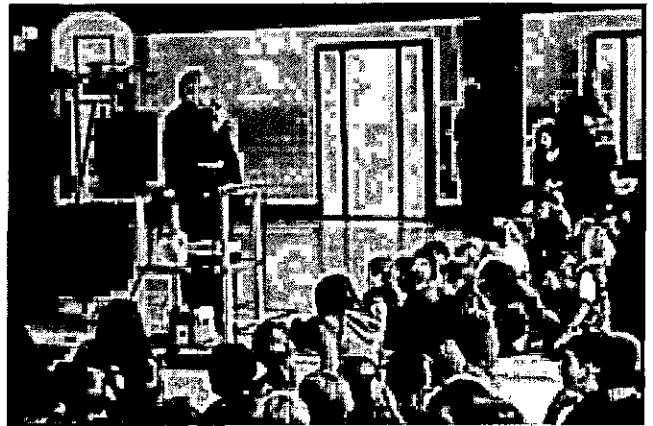
Thank you to area businesses which allowed us to place collection cannisters on their premises. Thank you to Baked, Blick Art Supplies, Cherry Street Restaurant, McDonald's on North Henderson Street, and Q's Cafe which donated refreshments and items for the students.

Abingdon Middle School invited us to a February 15 recognition of the eighth grade which spearheaded the Penny Parade at their school. CSHSA President Chuck Bednar presented a Sandburg DVD and marionette to the AMS library in appreciation of their efforts.

Board members attended an all-school assembly at Hedding Grade School on February 20 to thank the school for its Penny Parade work. President Chuck Bednar presented the school a framed poster of the Sandburg statue that will be erected in the Galesburg Public Square. PP Co-

2 INKLINGS AND IDLINGS / SPRING 2013

Chairman Mike Hobbs presented each of the three fourth grade classes two Sandburg children's books. The fourth graders coordinated the PP at Hedding



Chuck Bednar addresses Hedding Students  
*Courtesy Tom Foley*

## SMALL WORLD— 2013 PENNY PARADE

*(Submitted by CSHSA Treasurer Rick Sayre)*

It was Thursday, January 24, 2013, the day of the Penny Parade event at the Carl Sandburg Historic Site. I was just driving back to Galesburg from Monmouth College to help with the preparations for the elementary school students and teachers who accompany the thousands of pennies that their classes have collected over the past few weeks in support of the Historic Site. I'm the current treasurer of the Carl Sandburg Historic Site Association, and I have the pleasure of keeping a record of the donations from the various schools and businesses in the area... as well as escorting the hundreds of pounds of pennies to our very accommodating F&M Bank where the pennies would be counted by their coin counting machine.

As I turned the corner on Third Street, I noticed an older woman bundled up on this cold day in January pushing her own cart full of groceries after leaving the Hi-Lo Grocery. After I pulled into the parking area in front of the Visitors Center, I began to collect the various things I had brought along for the Penny Parade celebration soon to take place. As I was gathering my things out of the backseat of the car, I heard a voice calling to me from across the street. I looked over and saw an older woman at the street corner who called out, "Excuse me. Do you know if the bus stops here?" Well, I didn't really know the bus route, and I told her so. "Someone in the Visitors Center might know, though". Just then, we both happened to look down

to Seminary Street and saw the bus pulling out of the Hi-Lo Grocery lot. "Oh no," she sighed. "I think I may have missed it. Is there any way you could give me a ride?" I hesitated. I didn't really know how much time we had before the Penny Parade activities were to begin. "Hold on. Let me get these things inside," I replied.

Seeing my hands full, Mike Hobbs walked out of the Visitors Center to help. I told him the woman had missed the bus and needed a ride. Mike offered to carry everything in for me...which he did... and I turned back and beckoned the woman to come to my station wagon as I opened its tailgate door. Mike came back out to help put the lady's groceries and cart in my car.

The woman then spoke, "I just moved to Enid...excuse me, I mean, Galesburg, last week." My ears perked up. There aren't many folks in Galesburg that would have inadvertently mentioned my hometown of Enid, Oklahoma. For the first time, I looked at the woman's face as she continued, "I just moved here from Enid." Simultaneously, Mike and I both replied that I, too, was from Enid. The woman looked at me and stated very matter-of-factly, "You're Rick Sayre," and followed with "I'm Laura Deatherage", just as recognition started to kick in for me. I looked at Laura and then at Mike. "Of course, you are! Mike, Laura used to work for me in Oklahoma! It's been fifteen years since we've seen each other." Laura was originally from Galesburg and worked for me at the library at Phillips University in Enid for several years before I accepted the library director job at Monmouth College. Mike stood there speechless...well, not quite. "This is amazing! What a small world!"

We got Laura and her groceries into the car and headed off to her apartment, trying to catch up as quickly as we could. A small world, indeed. Had I not been a few minutes early to the Penny Parade event, our paths might not have crossed for some time yet. Timing is everything.

Welcome back to Galesburg, Laura Deatherage!

## CSHSA MEMBER NOTES

In early February Membership Chairman Gayle Stewart and her committee mailed 2013 dues notices to CSHSA members. Here are two notes we received with dues payments.

From Claude D. Falls, Cleveland, TN:  
"Gayle, thank you and all who are working for the Association. I, a Tennessee Country Boy, appreciate your work."

From John Steichen, Landenberg, PA:  
"Hello, I have always enjoyed *Inklings* when I make my monthly visit[to his mother, Helga Sandburg Crile in] Cleveland, but now it is time to switch, so that I can enjoy them here in Landenberg. Keep up the good work."

## ADDA GENTRY GEORGE, PART II

(Submitted by former Galesburg resident Gerald J. Shea)

When the sun rose over the Illinois prairie surrounding Galesburg the day after the birthplace dedication in October, 1946, farmhands were quietly at work as they had been for a century, busy with crops and chores. Steam locomotives snorted in the early autumn chill beyond 331 E. Third Street. The day gave way to a brilliant Indian summer afternoon. Clear blue skies as far as one could see covered the heart of the Midwest.

The spirit of what Carl Sandburg had written of for so long, of beauty on the prairie, farmhands toiling, seemed in the air itself. Although the celebration was past, Adda thought back over it. Marshall Field himself had visited Galesburg, serving as keynote speaker, saying Sandburg had been a great newspaperman, especially in covering the plight of the common person with such stories as the *Chicago Race Riots*, and representing the good and decent in democracy. In an atomic age it might seem strange to stop and dedicate a poet's birthplace, but it was by the poets the world might be saved.

Galesburg's superintendent of schools spoke, and a local labor representative Charles Cobb spoke, as well as the well-known Ralph Newman of the Lincoln Book Store in Chicago. Knox

College professor of History Dr. John Conger spoke. Quincy Wright, son of Sandburg's influential professor and first publisher, spoke about Sandburg visiting his father at home and working with the Asgard Press which printed his first booklets.

Adda thought back over the excitement of local reporters, as well as Chicago news photographers, snapping photos. The Associated Press and *Life* magazine had documented the event. All-in-all, the day had gone off without a hitch. The greatest disappointment was that the poet himself had chosen to stay away, saying that such dedications should be done only after someone's death.

Pictures, as well as news articles, were forwarded to the Sandburgs, now residing in North Carolina. Adda and friends had created the "Sandburg Birthplace, Inc." Six members were installed as the board of directors, including Adda George and Sandburg's sister, Mary Sandburg Johnson. This, so future plans and improvements could be initiated.

Adda George was not finished. She had a vision to add onto the birthplace. She had kept in constant contact through letters and telegrams with the poet. Items of the Sandburg family had been donated as well as letters and publications given for display. Sandburg himself first visited the workman's cottage in 1948. The occasion was the poet's seventieth birthday. He had come to Galesburg as a guest of Knox College President Lyndon Brown and friend Janet Greig Post. Sandburg had taken time to speak to a Galesburg High School audience that afternoon, and later he attended a birthday party in his honor at the Knox president's home.

The poet was pleased with what he saw in his first visit. He toured the three rooms and recalled his parents. Mrs. George saw to it that she had the honor of accompanying and guiding the poet. She posed with him for photographs. She was pleased at this time to make a new announcement about future plans for the cottage. She had decided that the small structure was in need of more room. Her idea was to convert the old lean-to on the rear of the house into a larger Lincoln Room where Sandburg and Lincoln memorabilia could be displayed together. The room could also act as a meeting area

for civic groups. Adda felt up to the task. It would require more funding, however. As much as \$6,000, and she had decided that the State of Illinois should pay for it.

The Association went ahead with the plans. Thankfully, determination was one of Mrs. George's blessings. With Mrs. Fred Robertson, long-time secretary of the Birthplace Association, Adda went to Springfield to lobby for funds for the project. And why not? Hadn't Sandburg brought recognition to the State? She was convinced that it would also add tourism.

It was through Representative Dick Larsen of Galesburg that Adda was able to acquire the needed capital. And what a project it would be! Dr. Jay Monaghan of Springfield spoke at the gathering of several hundred persons in June, 1949, saying Carl Sandburg had played a strong part in carrying on the story of Lincoln.

At the dedication it was exciting to see a firing squad and color guard, composed of members of the *Veterans of Foreign Wars*, the *American Legion*, and *Woman's Relief Corps*, participate. In addition, a treasure trove of items had been collected for the Lincoln Room, including documents, letters, pictures, books, even kettles to help connect Galesburg with New Salem and Springfield. Knotty pine paneling and exposed cross beams added to the period feel of Lincoln's life, while over a fireplace, constructed with bricks from part of the Underground railroad, was a portrait of a young Lincoln by N.C. Wyeth. It portrayed Lincoln in a pensive mood with down-turned eyes. Wyeth's widow had refused to sell it to art collectors, even though it was in high demand. It was a success again, but what made the day most memorable for Adda George was a gift from friends, presented by Mrs. Charles Bednar, a round-trip ticket to Flat Rock, NC to visit Mr. and Mrs. Sandburg.

The Governor of Illinois had spoken at the dedication. His appearance marked a giant step toward the recognition Adda sought for the prairie birthplace as a must stop for Lincoln enthusiasts. Adda had done something even the local politicians couldn't do, and she hadn't begun until she was past seventy years old.

After the dedication things progressed smoothly for the newly-recognized shrine, and for Sandburg, too. He had continued to publish

constantly, including his only novel *Remembrance Rock*, and in 1950 his *Collected Poems*. By now he had won a second Pulitzer Prize, one in History and one for Poetry. In 1952 he had produced *Always the Young Strangers*, his autobiographical account of growing up in Galesburg and travels as a young man. Sandburg planned a return visit to Galesburg to commemorate the book.

The previsit arrangements had been accorded to Adda and her now second-in-command Juanita Bednar. At the Central Congregational Church, which looms mountainous over the quiet Central Square, a huge crowd of locals would greet the poet. *Life* magazine sent Allen Grant, a top photographer, to cover the return and commissioned Sandburg to write the text of the visit for the publication.

It was billed as a sentimental return after a rousing seventy-fifth birthday party of 500 friends, celebrities, and admirers at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago the night before. Sandburg arrived on the Burlington Zephyr. Saturday was set aside as Carl Sandburg Day in Galesburg by the mayor. A book signing was held at O.T. Johnson's, the largest department store on Main Street. There was a return to the fire station where he had worked as a young man in college and a visit to the farm of his cousin Charlie Krans for a quiet birthday celebration.

A fresh snow brightened the city for the poet's return visit. Workers hurried to clear the roads and walkways for the evening's momentous event. *Life* magazine covered the gathering where Sandburg would publicly thank Adda George and Juanita Bednar for their efforts and results. The audience was estimated at 1,400 people, but many were turned away due to lack of seating.

First, Juanita Bednar stepped on stage and presented the aging poet with a scrapbook of antique Galesburg photos and recordings of old Lombard College songs arranged and recorded by a Knox professor and the Knox choir.

But the night belonged to Adda George. She took her rightful place beside the great man in front of the whole town. She was led from the darkness into the stage light of the auditorium. The applause came in waves as she reached the white-haired poet's side. Together the two old fighters stood briefly and smiled at the cheering throng. The

photographers went wild, falling over themselves for one more shot. That was the moment enshrined in memory. Those who were present remember it with delight and reverence, the humbly-born man who raised the English language to new artistic heights beside the dedicated, frail old English teacher who gave practically her last dollar to rescue the shack in which the poet had been born, when others, much better heeled and sensible, thought it prudent to ignore her pleas for help. Sandburg presented her with an autographed copy of his *Always the Young Strangers*, and said, "I greet you with salutations and reverence."



Sandburg & Adda George, 1953  
Courtesy Jerry Shea

Adda's finest hour had arrived. The cottage had been saved and recognized nationally. She had presented her most memorable lesson and realized what she had taught had been learned.

That year Adda George reached her eightieth birthday. She was voted Woman of the Year in Galesburg. Within the next year a serious fall had forced her relocation to Philadelphia to be near her daughter. Adda's work had ended. She continued to keep in touch with the Galesburg group, especially Juanita Bednar, and later attended Sandburg's eighty-fifth birthday party in New York.

On July 27, 1968, two months before her ninety-fifth birthday, Adda George's life ended. She died one year after Sandburg and just six months after her second-in-command Juanita Bednar. However, she had left a mark on history, her adopted town, her vocation, and the concept of civic service, showing, especially children, that greatness can come from the humblest of people.

## BAREFOOT

In *Always the Young Strangers* Sandburg wrote about Barefoot, a "huddle of shanties where Irish laborers lived with their families." Some families had "only one pair of shoes, and whoever on Sundays and holidays was the first to get out of bed jumped into that one pair of shoes." In an interesting story in the Fall, 2012 *I&I* CSHSA member Rex Cherrington wrote about the history and location of Barefoot in the vicinity of North Creek in Knox County.

Rex' second cousin, Christina Lovin, grew up in Knox County hearing about Barefoot. She wrote a poem by that name. Christina is Lecturer, Department of English and Theater at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, KY, and in 2010 was the first writer-in-residence at Connemara. She has authored many poems. This is from "Social Studies" about her roots in the prairie of west-central Illinois and is reminiscent of Sandburg's "Prairie" in Cornhuskers.

"I am from soybeans' low bustle; the gossip of tall corn,  
silks growing brittle in the heavy, heat-infused wind,  
rasp of leaves against young skin, marking me as its own  
wherever I go, harsh whispers before a storm, and the listening ears.

Her "Keeper" is a touching poem about her late father Bob Erickson, former Knox County conservation officer, who had radio shows about hunting and fishing on WGIL and WAIK for many years and was author of the "Old Bob" conservation columns which appeared in many area newspapers. Her three books of poems *A Stirring in the Dark*, *What We Burned for Warmth*, and *Little Fires* are available on amazon.com.

Christina said that she remembers when her older brother went off to college, and her mother had to go to work to help pay his expenses. Due to family budget constraints she had one pair of shoes-red shoes-at a time when matching sweaters, skirts, and shoes were very important to her. She grew to hate those red shoes, but in looking back at that

time as an adult she remarked, "I'm proud of my heritage and what my mother did to help the family."

## Barefoot

I remember that year I had only the red shoes to wear to school.

I learned to hate shoes then, embarrassed by scarlet t-straps clashing with my pink angora or blue mohair, just so brother could go away to college.

*Capezios* -to-match cost money and money was scarce as daylight had been in windowless shanties beside the mud runnels of Barefoot Nation, Illinois. Mother told me about Barefoot: impoverished immigrant Irish sharing one pair of shoes in each family of many-sized feet.

Only one at a time could venture to town, walking the ten rutted miles in boots too small to lace, or strapped with baling twine to stop them from dropping off.

I was a vain child then. What did I care of the dead who need no shoes?  
Now I see my arch is high and proud. Like hers. Like theirs.

## Ida M. Tarbell

(Submitted by CSHSA Board Member Barbara Schock)

During 1925 Carl Sandburg was reviewing and correcting for publication the 1,200 pages of *Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years*. He had done a great deal of research on Lincoln over the years. Two individuals were especially important to him in gathering material for the biography.

Oliver R. Barrett had an extensive collection of Lincoln material and was well versed in his life and times. Ida M. Tarbell was a writer and journalist. She had written about Lincoln's early life some thirty years before. In the mid-1890s she actually went to Kentucky and Illinois to interview people who had known Lincoln and his family.

She examined court records and interviewed Robert Todd Lincoln, the president's only surviving son. He gave her a photograph of his father which had never been seen by the public. Most historians of the time relied on collections of letters to write their books about history. Miss Tarbell brought much

their books about history. Miss Tarbell brought much new information to light about Lincoln, and it was reliable because of her fact-checking methods.

In 1923, Miss Tarbell wrote *In the Footsteps of the Lincolns*, a genealogy of the family in America. It was based on the information which she had gathered over the years. The book was also a meditation on her feelings about Abraham Lincoln.

Sandburg sent page proofs to Barrett and Tarbell in appreciation for their help in his writing. In his letter to her, he said, "Yourself and Oliver R. Barrett are the only two persons receiving advance sheets as you are the two who helped me most, which I believe is made clear in the preface." She replied, "Your method is so like you and gives a quality of freshness to material which delights me. I believe you've done a new kind of book."

*The Prairie Years* was serialized in the *Pictorial Review*. Five installments of 9,000 words each were published beginning in October, 1925. Sandburg received \$21,600 for the serialization rights. That was the first year Sandburg's family took a vacation. Mrs. Sandburg and their three daughters went to northern Wisconsin. Of course, Carl had to remain at home to finish his great work.

Ida Tarbell's early Lincoln book had been serialized in *McClure's Magazine* in 20 installments beginning in 1895. The public still had great interest in Lincoln thirty years after his death, especially in the Midwest. The series helped double the circulation of the magazine. *McClure's* had a connection to Galesburg. S.S. McClure and John Phillips had been classmates at Knox College before establishing the publication.

### SANDBURG'S FAMILY TREE

(Submitted by CSHSA Member Tomas Junglander of Vadstena, Sweden)

<u>Carl Sandburg</u>	1878-1967
<u>Parents</u>	
August Sandburg (Danielsson)	1843-1910
Clara Mathilda Andersdotter.	1850-1926
<u>Grandparents</u>	
Daniel Gustafsson	1801-1847
Maria Danielsdotter	1798-1877
Anders Persson	1810-1874
Eva Katarina Jonsdotter	1813-1856

<u>Grandparents</u>	
Gustaf Jonsson	1753-1812
Anna Gabrielsdotter	1766-1843
Daniel Hakansson	1762-1842
Maria Svensdotter	1756-1828
Peter Abrahamsson	1773-1844
Kerstin Eriksdotter	1782-1844
Jonas Andersson	1771-1842
Helena Svensdotter	1774-1853

<u>Wife</u>	
Lilian "Paula" Steichen	1883-1977

<u>Children</u>	
Margaret Sandburg	1911-1997
Madeline Sandburg	1913-1913
Janet Sandburg	1914-2001
Helga Sandburg-Crile	1918

<u>Sisters &amp; Brothers</u>	
Mary Sandburg Johnson	1875-1958
Martin Sandburg	1881-1944
Emil Sandburg	1885-1892
Esther Sandburg Wachs	1888-1974
Frederick Sandburg	1890-1892
Martha Sandburg Goldstone	1893-1931

<u>Sisters &amp; Brother to August Danielsson</u>	
Anna-Greta Danielsdotter	1832-1923
Johanna Danielsdotter	1834-1846
Hedda Danielsdotter	1837-1846
Johan Danielsson	1840-1853

<u>Sister &amp; Brothers to Clara Andersdotter</u>	
Karl Johan Andersson	1851-1937
Alfred Andersson	1853-1857
Augusta Andersdotter	1858-1931
Anders Andersson	1865-1967



Sandburg studying genealogy in Sweden, 1959

Courtesy  
Tomas Junglander

## STEREOGRAPHS & STEREOSCOPES

In *Carl Sandburg, A Biography* author Penelope Niven writes that Sandburg "was assigned exclusive rights to sell Underwood and Underwood stereographs and stereoscopes in Bureau County, Illinois, during the summer of 1900." "He was a good salesman." He made \$100 that summer.

Stereographic technology had been around for a while. In their weekly column "Civil War History & Heritage" in the *Galesburg Register-Mail* on October 1, 2012, Sheryl Hinman and Glenn Busse wrote about Alexander Gardner, a photographer for Mathew Brady.

"At Antietam, he used a specialized camera that captured two images simultaneously. Those photos were turned into stereograph cards that could be placed in a home viewer. The result was a three-dimensional scene."

## CHARLES WAS A BADGER!

The subject line of an e-mail sent by my Abingdon High School classmate Les Swanson, who now resides in Wisconsin, was Carl (Charles) Was a Badger!" When Sandburg arrived in Milwaukee in December, 1907, to start work as an organizer for the Wisconsin Social-Democratic Party, he was going by the name Charles. On his first day in Milwaukee he met Lilian Steichen. After six months of exchanging letters they were married there.

Les sent me the website for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries which showed that they have an extensive collection of Sandburg materials. One work they have is *The Western Illinois Poets*, edited by Dr. John Hallwas of Macomb with a section on Sandburg. Dr. Hallwas has lectured at the Sandburg Site.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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