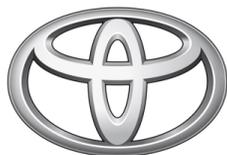




Mad Folk Logo

The other day my sister Mary asked me my opinion on cars. She drives a VW and likes it but it's getting old, and she's looking around. I asked her what she thought of Hondas and Toyotas. She said she'd never buy a Toyota. I asked her why and she said



because she hates the Toyota logo (left). Since then I've asked around and found that some people like this logo and others agree vehemently with my sister. It's clever, containing (if you work at it) all the letters in the word TOYOTA, but you have to admit it doesn't seem to suggest anything desirable about the car, unless I'm missing something.

But I wondered if an unappealing logo is enough of a reason to not buy a particular car. It took me about two seconds to decide: Yes! And corporations know the importance of a good logo all too well. The website graphicdesign.com lists the world's five most expensive logos. The winner is Symantec's black check mark in a yellow circle (right), for the designing of which Symantec reportedly paid one billion, two hundred eighty million dollars.



All this reminds me of a recent personal coincidence with the Wisconsin Blue Fist union logo (left). On the WI AFL-CIO page there's a short article about it. Inspired by earlier union-fist logos, it was designed by Carrie Worthen of Third Thing in Los Angeles. It was mentioned that Carrie is from Appleton. I grew up in Appleton around the corner from a family

named Worthen. Our family cat, who lived with us for twenty years, was one of the Worthen family cat's offspring. I wrote to her out of curiosity, and to thank her for creating this rallying graphic. Turns out Carrie was indeed my neighbor, as she explained in a very cordial reply. That logo was a powerful unifying force in the recent populist uprising, and now I like to think our cat Tippy had something to do with Carrie's inspiration.

But what can all this logo-talk possibly have to do with folk music? Well, a few months ago, knowing that one of my stints in this weird life was as a graphic artist, Madison Folk Music Society's head cheese Darlene Buhler mentioned that Mad Folk was looking for a new logo, and wondered if I'd like to give it some thought. The current logo (left) is friendly and informative,



but maybe something a bit less complicated might be more convenient and memorable.

You can divide logos into two groups: Those that are based upon the organization's name or initials (called *logotypes*), like the logos of Ford, Coca Cola, and IBM, and those that aren't, like Nike, Apple, and Starbucks. Most folk music society logos are a sort of combo. I tried playing with a few of the second type -- a design only -- but decided this wouldn't mean much to anyone who wasn't already familiar with Mad Folk. After goofing around on many a napkin and envelope, and noodling with my cut rate graphics software, I've come up with a combo idea that is far from perfect, but may serve as a starting point for discussion.

Obviously, there are many considerations in logo design. For the Mad Folk logo, you wonder if the nickname "Mad Folk" should be included, or just the full society name, or neither. You wonder if the Capitol dome should be included, or the state outline, or some other indication of the club's location. You wonder if a musical symbol or musical instrument should be shown, to hint at the nature of the group. You consider if color should come into it, or if it should be a single, black and white

design, easy to make into a rubber stamp.

After trying a few ideas that incorporated the Capitol, I kept feeling queasy about associating the club with the state government, so gave up that idea, though it was tempting to use the dome and its reflection in the lake as the head of a banjo, with the neck being the shoreline, and the tuning pegs doubling as MG&E smokestacks.

So anyway, and this is just a suggestion, I have come up with the following, with one possible variation. It's a banjo-like thing, with the name AND the nickname of the club, very rubber-stamp-able and easy to put on a T-shirt or guitar case sticker. It has no reference to locality, and that's where the variation comes in. By adding the suggestion of a reflection, as shown below, it gives the idea (I hope) of a frozen lake, and what more represents Madison than a frozen lake?

I propose the use of both versions of the logo, with the reflection-less version used for incidences where reproducing the reflection's gradient would be difficult (rubber stamp, T-shirt) and also where a more stark logo is desirable. The one with the reflection could be used on stationary, on the web site, etc.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it. This all falls smack dab in the center of the "just a suggestion" inbox; would love to hear any thoughts on the matter. Meanwhile I'm trying to decide what to do with my one billion, two hundred eighty million dollars.

Here it is. Whatcha think? No banjo jokes, please:

