

# Travel agency's bankruptcy angers would-be tourists

## Many say payments, and planned trips, vanished

By **SCOTT WILLIAMS**

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It was the trip that Mary Ann Buss and her sister had been talking about for more than 50 years.

The Oconomowoc woman and her sister, Patricia Soldner, would consort with kangaroos and koalas during two spectacular weeks in Australia.

"It was a dream," Buss said. "And it was finally coming true."

Each sister paid about \$6,000 to Carol's Tours, a Beaver Dam travel agency that promised to make their fantasy vacation come true in February 2008.

But the trip never happened.

Instead, Buss and Soldner joined more than 100 other consumers throughout Wisconsin who say that Carol's Tours took their

money and disappeared.

James and Karen Wahlgren of Slinger say they lost more than \$10,000 after booking a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Alaska that was supposed to include a cruise.

The retired couple had taken previous trips with Carol's Tours. But they now believe that the travel agency intentionally defrauded them on the Alaska trip.

"We don't trust anyone much anymore," Karen Wahlgren said. "And I don't think we're going to get to Alaska."

The travel agency closed its doors in January 2008 and filed for bankruptcy eight months later in federal court in Milwaukee.

The bankruptcy, which is still pending, lists \$543,000 in debts, including more than

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