

Masinaigan Supplement

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Mikwendaagoziwag— We remember them

This supplement is a tribute to the Ojibwe ancestors who perished in the 1850 Sandy Lake Tragedy and to those who survived and refused to be removed.



President Clinton acknowledges Sandy Lake Tragedy

The Voigt Intertribal Task Force passed a motion in July 2000 recommending the tribes request a Presidential apology regarding the Sandy Lake Tragedy. President Clinton did not provide a formal apology as was requested; however, he did send a letter recognizing the Sandy Lake incident as "a tragic mistake" and "a dark chapter in our country's history..." The letter is as follows:

"Warm greetings to the members of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians as you gather to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Sandy Lake Tragedy in Minnesota.

This solemn occasion reminds all Americans of a dark chapter in our country's history, when thousands of Chippewa suffered and hundreds died from illness, hunger, and exposure in the winter of 1850, far from their homes and families. By coming together to remember your ancestors who lost their lives during this terrible event, you are beginning the process of healing and reconciliation and helping a new generation of Americans to learn from one of our country's most tragic mistakes.

I am pleased to know that the Army Corps of Engineers is working with your tribes to build an enduring monument to all those who suffered and died at Sandy Lake. I join you in paying tribute to the memory of your ancestors, and I extend best wishes to all for a meaningful ceremony."

Bill Clinton



Mikwendaagoziwag—
We remember them

The Sandy Lake Tragedy

A story needing to be told

"I feel so bad. I never knew (about Sandy Lake)."

—Don Graves, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

The Sandy Lake Tragedy is one of those events in history that has been known, but little known; mentioned by a few historians, but somehow never penetrated the consciousness of the public, had never been seriously brought to attention, and consequently, perhaps, never properly been brought to closure.

Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) Executive Administrator James Schlender first heard of the Sandy Lake incident when mentioned during the testimony of Dr. James Clifton as part of the *Voigt* litigation in 1985. But the significance of the event did not clearly register at the time. It was not until 1999, that his attention on the incident became more focused.

Lorraine Norgaard, WDSE T.V., Duluth, had recently visited the Sandy Lake site while filming a documentary on the Ojibwe. She sensed an unrestfulness at the location. "It was as if the place was weeping," she later said. So, she decided to quietly mention it to Jim Schlender following the *State of the Band* address at Mille Lacs.

Realizing that many of those who came to Sandy Lake in 1850 were from GLIFWC's member bands in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan, Schlender, in turn, brought concern about Sandy Lake squarely to the attention of the Voigt Intertribal Task Force, GLIFWC's Board of Commissioners, and a few Ojibwe spiritual leaders.

Commissioners and Task Force representatives went back to their respective bands and found the support and direction necessary from tribal leaders and tribal elders to proceed with a memorial.

It was from this point, that a series of events were put into motion. First and most importantly, a ceremony of closure was performed at the site in March 1999.

Led by Tobasonkwut Kinew, Ojibways of Onigaming, Ontario, the spirits of those who died were feasted.

Prayers and asemaa (tobacco) were offered and prayer sticks set afloat by representatives from many of GLIFWC's member bands, so that the spirits of those ancestors may walk on in peace.



Red Cliff firekeeper Leo LaFerner prepared the ceremonial fire at Sandy Lake in March 1999. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

Following this ceremony, many people felt still more needed to be done, so that the Sandy Lake Tragedy and those Ojibwe ancestors, who died there or en route home, would always be remembered and the tragedy never forgotten again.

The Voigt Intertribal Task Force formed the Sandy Lake Memorial Workgroup, with representatives from a number of Ojibwe bands whose ancestors journeyed to Sandy Lake, to plan a memorial.

Working closely with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), GLIFWC staff and tribal representatives began to plan for a monument at the site—a permanent tribute to those Ojibwe people who suffered or died as a result of the Sandy Lake Tragedy.

The idea for a memorial run was also born. It was set to begin on December 2, 2000 at Sandy Lake, 150 years after Ojibwe people who survived finally received partial annuities and prepared to depart for a cold, wintry trek to their home villages.

"It was as if the place (Sandy Lake site) was weeping."

—Lorraine Norgaard, Cloquet, Minn.



James Zorn, GLIFWC policy analyst, reads a letter from former President Clinton expressing sadness for the suffering endured by the Ojibwe during that "dark period in our country's history." (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)



Playing an eagle bone whistle, Fred Ackley, Mole Lake, and the Little Otter Drummers from Mille Lacs took part in the March 1999 ceremony in honor of those who died at Sandy Lake. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

On the cover

Footprints in the snow, leading away from the Sandy Lake site on December 2nd, are like the footprints left 150 years ago as Ojibwe people began their long trips home on foot. Mille Lacs runners Joel Shagobay and Don Graves participated in the Mikwendaagoziwag Run from Sandy Lake to Madeline Island, symbolizing the journeys undertaken by those ancestors. (Photos by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them

The Sandy Lake Story:

A story of greed, trickery, suffering and death

The Sandy Lake Tragedy, 1850-51

Most Wisconsin and Upper Michigan Ojibwe bands which negotiated the 1837 and 1842 Treaties received their annuities by early autumn at La Pointe on Madeline Island—a cultural and spiritual center for Ojibwe people.

Some government officials in the Minnesota Territory, however, wanted the distribution site moved out of Wisconsin in order to reap the economic benefits of a large, concentrated Indian population.

Territorial Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Minnesota, Alexander Ramsey worked with other officials to remove the Ojibwe from their homes in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan to Sandy Lake, known to the Ojibwe as Gaamiitawangagaamag. The flow of annuity money and government aid to build Indian schools, agencies, and farms would create wealth for Ramsey and his supporters in Minnesota.

Pressured by Ramsey and others, United States President Zachary Taylor issued an executive order in February 1850 that sought to move Ojibwe Indians living east of the Mississippi River to their unceded lands. Initially stunned by the breach of the 1837 and 1842 Treaty terms, Ojibwe leaders recognized that the removal order clearly violated their agreement with the United States.

Soon, a broad coalition of supporters—missionary groups, newspapers, businessmen, and Wisconsin state legislators—rallied to oppose the removal effort, and band members refused to abandon their homes.

President Taylor's removal order had failed. Nevertheless, Ramsey and Indian Sub-agent John Watrous had a scheme to lure these Ojibwe into Min-

nesota and trap them there over the winter.

They informed band members that the treaty annuity distribution site had changed from La Pointe to Sandy Lake, some 285 canoe miles to the west. If the Ojibwe hoped to receive anything that year, they were instructed to be at Sandy Lake by October 25, 1850.

While band members from Michigan and some eastern reaches of Wisconsin refused to travel with winter fast approaching, more than 5,500 Ojibwe journeyed to Sandy Lake that autumn.

They arrived fatigued and hungry after the arduous journey, only to find no one there to distribute the supplies. Wild Game was scarce, fishing was poor, and high water wiped out the local wild rice crop. For the weary travelers and the Ojibwe who resided at Sandy Lake, living conditions deteriorated rapidly.

Over a six week period as harsh winter conditions set in, band members waited near the newly established Indian sub-agency. Without adequate food or shelter, disease and exposure ravaged Ojibwe families. More than 150 died at Sandy Lake from dysentery caused by spoiled government rations and from the measles.

A partial annuity payment was finally completed on December 2, providing the Ojibwe with a meager three-day food supply and no cash to buy desperately needed provisions.

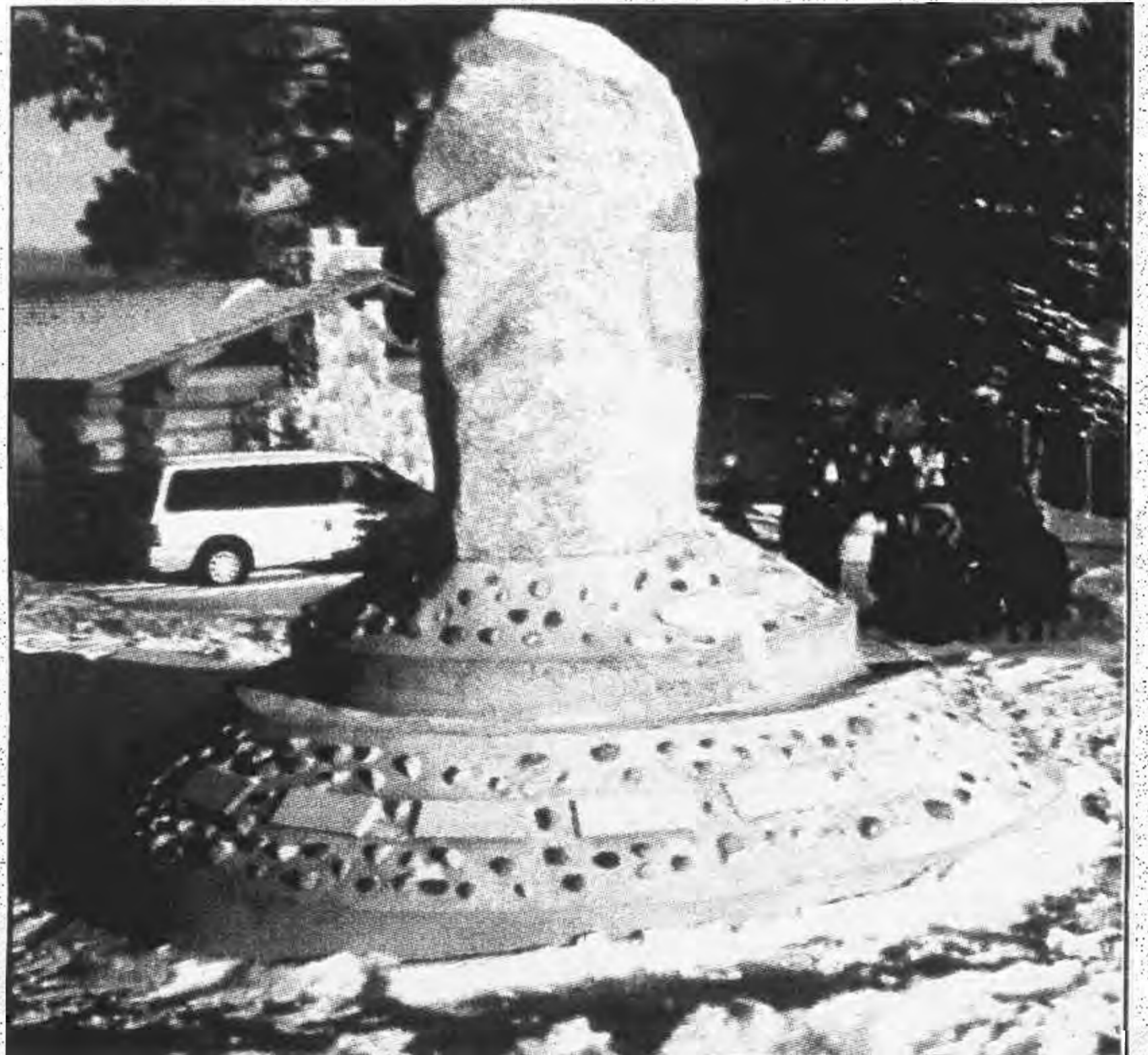
The following day most of the Ojibwe broke camp, while a few people stayed behind to care for those too ill to travel. With the canoe routes frozen and over a foot of snow on the ground, families walked hundreds of miles to get back home.

Another 250 died on that bitter trail and the Ojibwe vowed never to abandon their villages in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan for Sandy Lake.



“Tell him (the President) I blame him for the children we have lost....”

—Aish-ke-bo-go-ko-zhe (Flat Mouth), December 3, 1850



The Mikwendaagoziwag Monument at the Sandy Lake site is a permanent tribute to the Ojibwe ancestors who suffered during the Sandy Lake Tragedy. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)



Taking off from the Sandy Lake site is Joel Shagobay, runner from Mille Lacs. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)



Runners, walkers, and observers huddled around the fire at the Sandy Lake site for ceremonies at the start of the Mikwendaagoziwag Run. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

The Sandy Lake Annuity Roll

The annuity roll from Sandy Lake in 1850 shows 5,390 Ojibwe people were present, over half were children. This number does not include those who died at Sandy Lake prior to the annuity distribution.

On the Sandy Lake Annuity Roll, 1850 the following bands were listed as present: the La Pointe Bands, the Fond du Lac Bands, the Lac du Flambeau Bands, the Wisconsin Bands, the Chippewa River Bands, the Lac Courte Oreilles Bands, the Lac Chatac Band, the Long Lake Band, the Puk-kwa-wong Band, The St. Croix River Bands, the Yellow Snake Bands, the Snake River Band, the Pukagumah Band, the Grand Portage Band, the Mississippi Bands, the Sandy Lake Bands, the Mille Lacs Bands, the Pukagumah Band.

**Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them**

Mikwendaagoziwag Monument: Telling the story, receiving prayers forever

“We will not forget. My grandchildren know where this place is, and they can bring their children here to put down asemaa after I am gone.”

—Fran Van Zile, Mole Lake

The Mikwendaagoziwag Monument sits atop a knoll at the Sandy Lake site, on property now owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It quietly oversees the area where over 5,000 Ojibwe people gathered in the fall of 1850 to receive their annuity payments and promised provisions. The people who came to Sandy Lake in 1850 came from numerous Ojibwe bands signatory to the 1837 and 1842 Treaties.

The Sandy Lake Memorial Workgroup asked representatives from the participating bands to bring Grandfathers (stones) from their respective reservations to be set into the base of the monument. The Grandfathers represent those who came to Sandy Lake but never returned.



Bruce Goman, Mille Lacs Development Inc., and Jim Zorn, GLIFWC policy analyst, lower the boulder onto the pedestal of the Mikwendaagoziwag Monument last fall. Earlier in October the two-tiered pedestal was poured and the Grandfathers from 11 Ojibwe bands set into the concrete. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

“It is important to continue in this project to bring the remembrance back home. It has opened up a lot of history of which I was unaware.”

—Leo LaFernier, Red Cliff

“My great, great, great grandfather was part of a delegation that went to D.C. Many people went to Sandy Lake and didn’t make it home. They sacrificed for us. Now, we are doing our part ... We fasted a few days to show the ancestors we care for them, symbolically, by going without food.”

—Butch Stone, Bad River Firekeeper

Consequently, the two-tiered, circular base contains the Grandfathers along with plaques naming the bands present in 1850 and those participating in establishing the memorial.

A huge boulder rests on top of the pedestal, which will bear a plaque reading: “Mikwendaagoziwag—We remember the 400 Anishinaabeg who died in the winter of 1850-51.”

On the circular base, the colors of the Four Directions will be painted once warm weather returns. The monument also received a flat, plate-like piece of pipestone from Fran Van Zile, which was set into the monument to receive asemaa with people’s prayers.

Archeologists, with tribal representatives present, carefully excavated the monument’s site prior to construction to be sure no grave sites were being violated.

Before construction work began, ceremonies were held and a Sacred Fire was lit and tended by Leo LaFernier and Donald Carlson, Red Cliff. The Fire received the asemaa of all those who came to help raise the memorial. Asemaa was also offered once the earth was opened to receive the base of the monument.

GLIFWC staff and people from various bands worked hand-in-hand with the masonry crew and Bruce Goman, Mille Lacs Community Development Project Manager, as the base was poured and the Grandfathers carefully placed in October 2000. Fran Van Zile’s and Fred Ackley’s grandchildren, Roland and Kordell, even participated, helping carry Grandfathers up the knoll and placing them into the fast-drying cement.

Later, in November the boulder was set onto the pedestal, again with Mille Lacs Community Development Project and GLIFWC staff assisting.

It was a labor of love, performed in a spirit of unity and prayer, acknowledging both the suffering and perseverance of the ancestors.

With the monument, their memory will endure.

“This is something the ancestors wanted us to do for them. It was a coming together of Indian and non-Indian, a big change in our relationship and people understanding both sides of a story now.”

—Fred Ackley, Mole Lake

Miigwech to tribes for their support of the Mikwendaagoziwag Monument

Tribes supporting the Mikwendaagoziwag Monument were: Keweenaw Bay and Lac Vieux Desert in Michigan; Bad River, Lac Courte Oreilles, Lac du Flambeau, Mole Lake/Sokaogon, Red Cliff and St. Croix in Wisconsin; and Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, and Mille Lacs in Minnesota.



The Mikwendaagoziwag Monument is a tribute to those who perished during the 1850 Sandy Lake Tragedy—a place for people to offer prayers and remember the courage of those who have gone before us. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

**Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them**

The Mikwendaagoziwag Run

A prayer

The Mikwendaagoziwag Run, beginning at Sandy Lake, Minnesota on December 2, 2000 and concluding on Madeline Island on December 4, 2000 was a commemorative run and a prayer on behalf of those who suffered as part of the Sandy Lake incident.

It was a prayer, run in a spirit of thankfulness for the ancestors' courage to resist an effort to remove them from their homelands in Michigan and Wisconsin. Those who survived that ordeal came home and refused to return to Sandy Lake, a place of death and treachery.

A prayer of thankfulness was carried in the hearts and minds of each participant and held constant by the four-day, Sacred Fire lit and tended on

Madeline Island throughout the run. The vision and knowledge of the fire and Firekeepers' vigil warmed the hearts of the runners and walkers as the miles were traversed.

The course of the run symbolized, but did not replicate, the many different journeys home undertaken from Sandy Lake in 1850. People from different bands would have dispersed on various routes to their respective villages.

The logistics of organizing a run to retrace the disparate routes would have been difficult. Rather organizers decided to keep the run unified and use Madeline Island as a destination.

It was both a significant Ojibwe community at the time and also the place where annuities had historically been distributed.



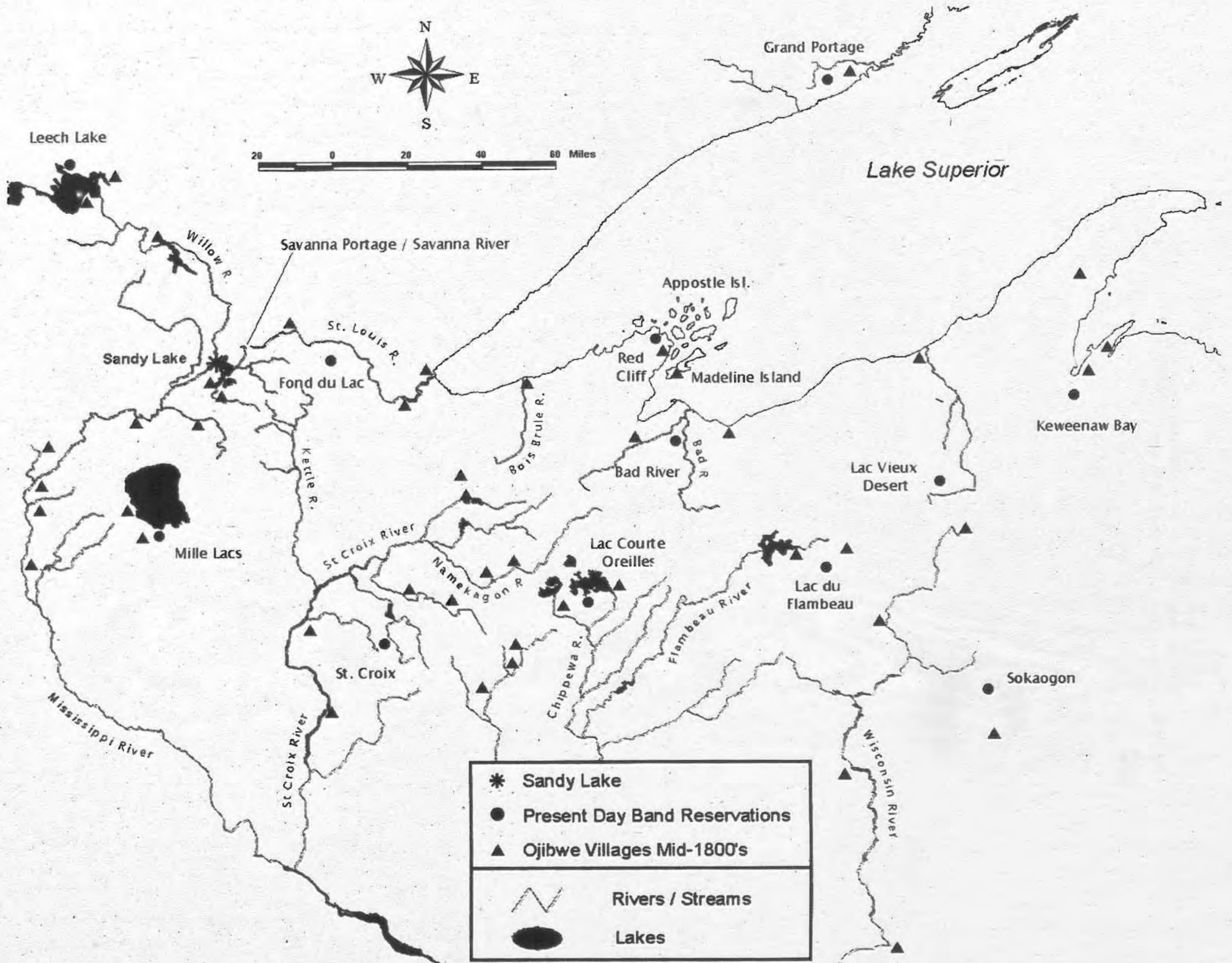
The Mikwendaagoziwag Monument was raised in a prayerful way, respectful of the ancestors' spirits and the miles of the Mikwendaagoziwag Run were also run as a prayer. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

*Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them*

“Through this we connect with our ancestors and become more involved in the meaning of the treaties—the human elements—not just hunting and fishing. It is respecting what they did for us today.”

—Fred Ackley, Mole Lake

Ojibwe Country, 1850: Western Lake Superior



Sacred Fire tended throughout run

The Mikwendaagoziwag Run officially began when the Sacred Fire was lit on Madeline Island, around noon, on December 1st. Leo LaFernier and Richard Jack set-up the fire's site, using Grandfathers brought from Red Cliff. They lit the fire and performed a pipe ceremony.

The fire burned near a monument at Ojibwe Memorial Park. According to Leo, the monument is in "memory of ancestors laying beneath the ground whose spirits walk with us still." Leo and Richard were to tend the fire during the next four days.

Leo and Richard were joined by Firekeepers from Bad River who arrived after picking up provisions for their stay. Butch Stone, Francis Leoso, and Francis' brother-in-law, Gilmore Wilson, New Mexico kept the long night vigils at the fire.

Later in the day Jim Zorn and Ken Pardun, from GLIFWC, arrived to help set up the campsite.

On the eve of the run, many participants gathered at the Mille Lacs Grand Casino Hotel for a contributing feast and ceremonies. Many had participated in other runs such as the 1998 Wabaanong Run to Washington, D.C. and the 1989 or 1990 Solidarity Runs during the height of protests over treaty rights, which lent to a spirit of camaraderie and renewed friendships.

Tobasonakwut Kinew led ceremonies with prayers honoring the ancestors who had been present at Sandy Lake. He also prepared the runners and walkers, and smudged the pipes, staffs, and Talking Sticks to be carried on the run.

Neil Kmiecik brought the Runner's Pipe, which came to GLIFWC on behalf of the Waabanong runners on December 2, 1999, a year following the Supreme Court hearing in Washington, D.C. Ernie St. Germaine, Lac du Flambeau also brought a pipe. Two staffs, one kept by Neil and another, kept by Gary (Kemo) Kmiecik, carried on the Waabanong Run were brought.

Four Talking Sticks, made by Marvin Defoe, Red Cliff, were brought by Gerry DePerry to be carried on the run as instructed earlier by Tobasonakwut. All these items were smudged.

Tobasonakwut also attached four-colored ribbons to each Talking Stick, each color representing one of the Four Directions—red for the East, white for the North, blue for the South and green for the West.

The ribbons were layered and attached to the sticks. The color on top indicated which direction each Talking Stick represented. Neil had also brought eagle feathers, which were smudged. One feather was attached to each Talking Stick.

Noting that spirits had appeared to Leo LaFernier while tending the fire at Sandy Lake in October 2000, Tobasonakwut told participants that the spirits of those who died as part of the Sandy Lake Tragedy could possibly be manifested in some form during the run.

They could present themselves as something that appears striking or as a strong feeling. If this occurs, the person should stop and put down asemaa and cedar in respect to that spirit, Tobasonakwut instructed.

As part of the ceremonies, Tobasonakwut sang two songs, using a rattle Neil carries with the Runner's Pipe. He sang a pipe-loading song which he had received from Archie Mosay, and a healing song, a very old song that was likely to have been used by the people at Sandy Lake 150 years ago.

Following the ceremonies, a spirit dish was prepared and taken out by Tobasonakwut's daughter, Diane, and everyone was invited to wiising (eat).

"We did this out of respect for our ancestors."

—Francis Leoso, Bad River Firekeeper



On December 1st, a Sacred Fire was lit on Madeline Island, the run's destination, and tended by Firekeepers Leo LaFernier and Richard Jack, Red Cliff; Butch Stone and Francis Leoso, Bad River; and Gilmore Wilson, New Mexico. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

Ojibwe ancestors remembered in ceremonies Day 1—Saturday, December 2

150 years ago on this day, many Ojibwe people were preparing to finally depart from this place of suffering, death and disease after a two month wait for annuity payments and provisions that arrived late and incomplete. About 150 had died at Sandy Lake waiting for the annuities. The journey ahead would claim the lives of another 250 Ojibwe who never came home.

The sight of Mikwendaagoziwag Monument greeted people as they arrived at the Sandy Lake site, some arriving there before the sun cracked its first rays over the horizon. At -4 degrees F, the windless winter morning dawned crispy cold and sparkling. First light revealed an icy, white environment, tree limbs shimmering with a crystalline glaze.

Preparations were soon underway to prepare a ceremonial fire. Neil Kmiecik gathered and cut tree limbs to fashion an altar for the pipes to rest adjacent to the fire. Ernie St. Germaine brought his pipe and the two staffs carried on the 1989 and 1990 Solidarity Runs; Neil brought the Runner's Pipe. The Talking Sticks were placed around the fire, each facing the direction it represented. Mitigonaabe, presented to GLIFWC by Eugene Begay, LCO, also stood near the fire. Gerry DePerry, Wayne LaBine, and Jim Schlender lit the fire near sunrise, using birch bark and split wood.

Meanwhile, Larry Nesper (Piishko) attached colored streamers to the antennas of run vehicles so they could easily be identified.

Inside the Corps building, women put out light breakfast foods, including a crockpot of wild rice porridge Fran Van Zile had cooking overnight. Red bows were tied around sprigs of cedar for the runners and walkers to wear, and cedar was made available to place in their shoes.

Once Tobasonakwut arrived, everyone formed a tight circle around the fire for the ceremonies that would launch the run. Some stood on hunks of cardboard to protect their feet from the cold.

Fred Ackley and Wayne LaBine, both from Mole Lake, spoke, acknowledging the presence of the spirits and the tribulations endured by their ancestors. Tobasonakwut offered prayers, thanking those people who traveled to Sandy Lake 150 years ago and kept their resolve to return to their homelands despite the tremendous difficulties of the trip home.

A copy of the annuity roll, brought by Jim Zorn, with names of those who had received annuities there in 1850 was smudged and made available. Jim also read the letter from President Clinton expressing regret for the Sandy Lake tragedy.

As time passed around the fire, the cold made people shuffle their feet and huddle together, but the consciousness of those people who were here 150 years ago under devastating circumstances, starving and lacking our modern clothing and conveniences, made it difficult not to humbly endure the temporary discomfort.

Asemaa was passed to everyone. The Little Otter Drum, Mille Lacs, sang a pipe-loading song. The pipes were lit and passed.

(See Sandy Lake site, page 7)



A fire was lit for opening ceremonies on the first day of the run. The four Talking Sticks were placed around the fire, each in the direction they represented. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

**Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them**



Sandy Lake site to be known as Mikwendaagoziwag

(Continued from page 6)

Tobasonakwut said that the people who had come and died here should always be remembered, never forgotten. He said this area will be known as Mikwendaagoziwag, so that we will always remember. He said that their blood flows in the blood of the people here today and will flow in the blood of generations to come.

A healing song was sung by the Little Otter Drum and an honor song for the runners and walkers. Finally, a traveling song concluded the ceremony, and people shook hands as they departed from the fire.

Following a quick breakfast, Neil briefed participants on the run's structure for the day.

The run formally began with Fran Van Zile, Joel Shagobay and several others circling the Sandy Lake Monument. Many people, run participants and observers, offered asemaa using the monument's pipestone slab to receive the first offerings.

Each carrying a Talking Stick, four runners from Mille Lacs—Joel Shagobay, Don Graves, John Mojica, and Archie Cash—covered the first four miles. The walkers' first segment began at McGregor. Fran Van Zile, her

grandson Carson Ackley, Jeannie Van Zile, and Sandy Lyons did the first leg, followed by Vicki Talier and her son Rayfield, in a support vehicle.

Weather conditions were excellent for the run, with roads clear and people pleased to get on down the road. The run proceeded down Highway 65 from the Sandy Lake site and headed eastward on Highway 210.

The runners decided to form two groups. Together with the walkers, the miles were covered quickly, with runners finishing the day around 5 p.m. near Carlton, Minnesota, fifty-four miles from the start.

As the day's light faded, many runners and walkers thought of those travelers 150 years ago, who would be finding a place to make camp. The nights must have been cold and long. No wonder another 250 perished along the way—weakened from two months of deprivation and disease at Sandy

Lake and faced with a cold, tortuous journey home.

Run participants convened at the Rice Lake room of the Black Bear Casino Hotel, enjoying the hospitality of the Fond du Lac band. A talking circle was formed and the Runners' Pipe lit and passed. Ernie St. Germaine was given a Talking Stick to begin the talking circle. As the Talking Stick was passed from hand-to-hand around the circle, each person shared some of their thoughts or feelings during the day. Fran Van Zile smudged Don Graves whose words of sorrow were hard to express. Both Ernie and Fran said they had heard thunderbirds during the day.

The group thought of the Sacred Fire on Madeline Island and the Firekeepers' vigil. Once the Talking Stick completed the circle, people retired for dinner, compliments of Fond du Lac, and sought rest in soft, warm, protected beds.

Runners on Day 1 included: Joel Shagobay, Don Graves, Archie Cash, John Mojica, Larry Nesper, Tim Arnold, Bob Jackson, Betty Martin, Neil Kmiecik, Nick Vander Puy, Charlie Rasmussen, Ernie St. Germaine, Jim and Graham Zorn.

Walkers on Day 1 included: Jim Schlender and his two daughter, Jenny and Margaret, Fran Van Zile, Carson Ackley, Jeannie Van Zile, Sandy Lyons, Russell Boyd, Lorraine Norgaard, Howard and Lydia Bichler and their foreign exchange student, Garaka Dveorakova, and Sue Erickson.

Photos by Charlie Otto Rasmussen



Tobasonakwut Kinew, Ojibways of Onigaming, Ontario, performed ceremonies before the start of the run.



Tobasonakwut Kinew prepares a pipe.



The Little Otter Drum from Mille Lacs provided several drum songs during the morning ceremony, including a healing song, an honor song for the runners and walkers, and a traveling song.



Fran and Jeannie Van Zile, Mole Lake, circle the Mikwendaagoziwag Monument prior to starting the run.

"...and I cried again that night because I kept feeling waves of what those people endured during their journey. I felt for the elders, and I would see their eyes and I could feel their patience and their strength. They are the ones who we must remember as Indian people, so that we endure and fight for the generations to come. I thought about my little granddaughter, minwewe, my children, geeschick-baageschick and waabaanogwanaabii and our paths and our lives."

—Betty Martin, runner from Lac Vieux Desert

**Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them**





Minwaanimad—The wind is from a favorable direction

Day 2—Sunday, December 3

This day began as the one before had ended, with a talking circle in the Wild Rice Room of the Black Bear Casino Hotel. Participants were smudged; the Runners' Pipe lit and passed. Thoughts went to the ancestors. **Mikwendaagoziwag.** Thoughts went to the Fire and its keepers on Madeline Island. Thoughts went to the need to inform people, so the Sandy Lake Tragedy and the people who were there will not be forgotten.

Neil encouraged runners and walkers to cover miles together, to run and walk with others, as those who had traveled from Sandy Lake had traveled together and taken care of one another.

The route for the day would take the Run through Jay Cooke State Park and turn north on Highway 13 to follow the south shore of Lake Superior.

Sunday dawned chilly and windy. The west wind's gusty breaths hit the backs of runners and walkers, propelling them up hills and over the miles. Talking Sticks or staffs in hand.

The Mille Lacs runners started the day off near two churches in Carlton. Traveling up the road, Neil, Robert and Piishko stopped at a site overlooking the St. Louis River. Robert said that Midewiwin ceremonies used to be held nearby.

Neil and Betty ran a one-mile stretch together and saw an eagle at the bottom of the hill. Tobacco was put down and a song sung. Neil, Graham and Piishko also ran a segment together, stopping on a bridge over the St. Louis River to offer tobacco.

The walkers started their first leg near Oliver, Wisconsin by an old wooden bridge. Margaret Schlender and Sandy Lyons walked the first leg, and Jim and Margaret Schlender took the second stretch. Earlier, Jim had put

"I sang a sunrise song, a veterans song about receiving an eagle feather, a healing song, and a song for when you see the Northern Lights. I felt strength and peace once again and grandma and grandpa were there."

—Betty Martin, Lac Vieux Desert runner

down tobacco at a place called Grand Portage by the St. Louis River.

Both the walkers and runners noted that a strong, gusty wind seemed to help push them along during the day. The runners found the leg through Jay Cooke State Park particularly inspirational. The park was hilly, scenic and the St. Louis River awesome.

While the beauty of the area was outstanding, the thought of traversing it in the dead of a hard winter on foot 150 years ago made runners particularly reflective during this leg.

Similarly, the second leg for walkers took them along a scenic stretch of Lake Superior lakeshore. The sight of the waves rolling in and slapping stretches of beach was exhilarating to runners and walkers alike. Some thought the travelers probably welcomed the first sight of Lake Superior 150 years ago, as it was an indication they were nearing home.

However, the route of the runners and walkers was probably not the one chosen by people journeying home from Sandy Lake. It is likely, their paths were more direct and avoided lakeshore exposure.

Robert Van Zile joined the walkers on day 2 and his son, Josh, put on many a mile as a runner. Peter David, GLIFWC wildlife biologist, joined to walk a leg. He was on his way to a meeting in Minneapolis, so could not stay.

Both runners and walkers noted a cross with a white teddy bear tied to it at

the junction of Highways 2 and 13. It was a very sad memorial marking the scene of an auto accident with the words—"JASON—Only God knows why."

The sadness and grief in the small marker was befitting the sadness and grief that underlay this run. Only the Creator knows how many of the deaths as part of Sandy Lake were deaths of children. The annuity roll indicates 2,408 children were present out of a total of 5,390 people.

Jim Schlender saw a doe and a fawn. The doe and he exchanged eye contact for a brief space of time, before she fled into the woods, followed by the startled fawn.

Around 3:15 the runners split into two groups as twelve miles still needed to be covered before nightfall. The run ended on Day 2 about two miles east of Port Wing. Fifty miles had been covered.

Participants caravanned in their vehicles to the Red Cliff Elderly Center for a talking circle. The staffs were set up. Robert Van Zile was given tobacco for a prayer to invite the spirits. Everyone was smudged. Joel and Don lit the pipe. Comments during the circle were short. Betty wept, remembering the words of her grandfather.

Runners and walkers continued to be conscious that we were experiencing little of the travail experienced by those returning from Sandy Lake 150 years ago.



Running strong over the Oliver bridge are Larry Nesper, Graham Zorn, and Neil Kmiecik. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)



Completing a segment for the walkers are Jim Schlender and daughter, Margaret. (Photo by Sue Erickson)



Run together, like the ancestors stayed together and took care of each other, was the motto for day 2. This threesome covered a few miles. They are Betty Martin, Lac Vieux Desert, Nick Van der Puy, Eagle River, and Josh Van Zile, Mole Lake. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

**Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them**



West winds gather as runners reach Madeline Island

Day 3—Monday, December 4

The day began with a talking circle and ceremony at the Red Cliff Elderly Center. The staffs were set up as usual, and Robert Van Zile provided a prayer. Joel and Don lit the pipe, and people were smudged. Then the group set off to complete the last leg of the journey, about fifty miles.

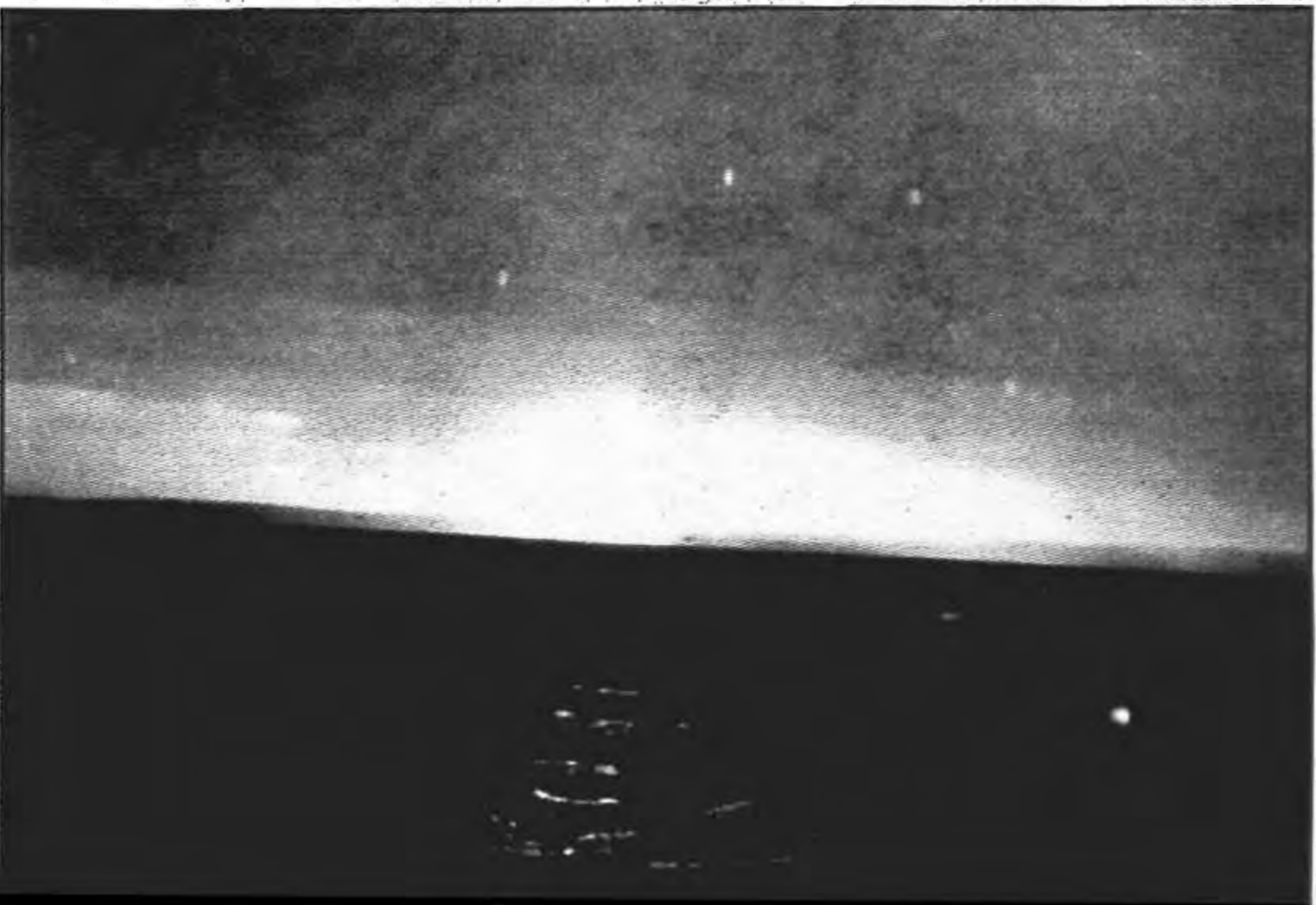
The runners started just east of Port Wing and the walkers started where the Sand River crosses Highway 13. Rachel Zorn was able to join the runners for the final stretch. The runners

“... I saw Uncle Leo (Bezhigo Gahbow—one man standing) standing there all bundled up, and who I hugged and he said he had stayed by the fire all those days. He made me cry when I saw him standing there all bundled up, and shivering and not complaining at all. What an inspiration and a real ogiichidaa (warrior).”

—Betty Martin, Lac Vieux Desert runner



West winds gathered force as ceremonies were held around the four-day fire on Madeline Island to conclude the run. (Photo by Jenny Schlender)



A hole in a totally gray sky shed rays of light. (Photo by Jenny Schlender)

decided to break into two groups, as the goal was to reach Red Cliff around noon. That meant 24 miles had to be covered in roughly three hours.

Sandy Lyons and Robert Van Zile started off the walker's segment with a mile, and were followed by other walkers, Lorraine Norgaard, Jim, Jenny and Margaret Schlender, and Sue Erickson.

Many people wept during the run for a variety of reasons—sorrow for the untimely deaths caused by the Sandy Lake incident, remembering personal losses as well.

There was much thankfulness to those who have gone before and whose

caring presence still can be felt. The walkers passed Walter Bresette's home and put down asemaa.

The runners and walkers convened at the Red Cliff Casino in order to come into Bayfield as one unit. Once there, the runners went directly to the shore of the lake. Many put down asemaa, and Neil sprinkled water on the Talking Stick he was carrying.

The wind continued to pick up its force, churning up an emerald sea of white-capped waves, as the ferry, carrying the runners and the walkers, departed from Bayfield en route to Madeline Island.

Once on the Island, twelve runners led the way to the Ojibwe Memorial Park where the Sacred Fire still burned. A ring of cedar, open to the east, surrounded the fire, which had been tended for the past four days by Francis Leoso, Butch Stone, Leo LeFornier and Richard Jack, all who welcomed the runners.

The fire burned close to a monument honoring the Ojibwe people who were buried at LaPointe. Robert Van Zile led the closing ceremonies here, offering a prayer. Leo, Butch and Francis also provided good words. Everyone was smudged. The pipes were lit and taken around and a song by the Bad River Drum honored the dead.

The wind blasted the small group, becoming stronger and stronger. The spirits of the west were gathering. Tobacco was passed and each person took that tobacco into the circle around the

fire and offered it with a prayer. As the group stood closely around the fire, the wind whipping, an opening broke through the totally gray and darkened sky, shedding a bright ray of light. “Buganageezhik,” someone said, referring to a hole in the cloud similar to a hole in the day when the sun is at its zenith each day.

On November 11, 1998, the Waabanong Run began at Lac du Flambeau with blustery weather and strong west wind. It seems those western spirits were gathering at the beginning of the Waabanong Run and at the close of the Mikwendaagoziwag Run on Madeline Island.

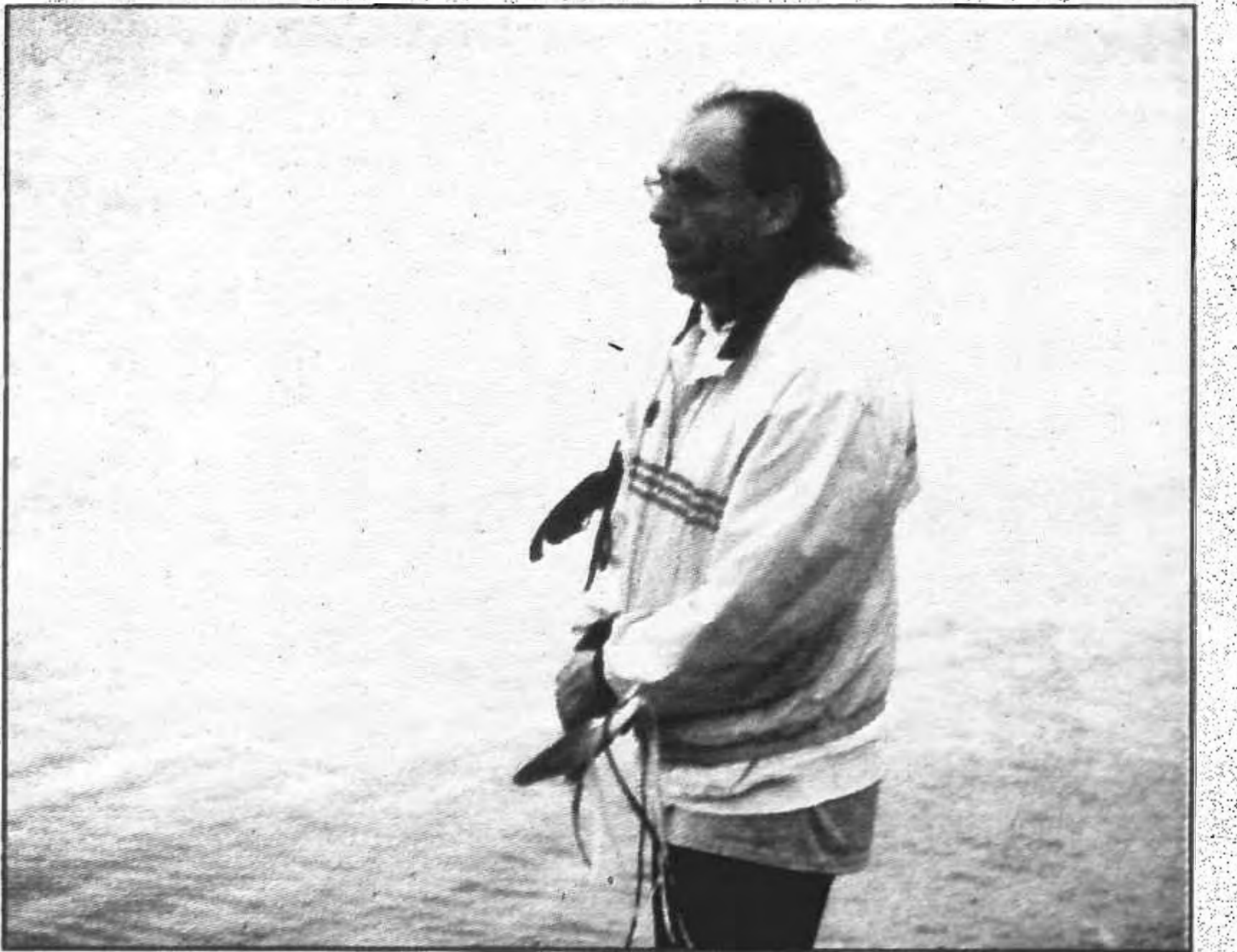
The ceremonial fire site was cleaned. The cedar burned and all participants headed back to the ferry dock where a wild wind whipped waves over the dock, forming an icy glaze. Still, the opening in the clouds remained, shedding fantastic rays of light as the ferry wended its way through the waves, carrying the Mikwendaagoziwag Run back to Bayfield.

A final talking circle on the beach near the ferry dock concluded the run. Neil found that a simple truth of this run was that “we do these things because we love you (ancestors).” This is a love that came from the ancestors and is given back, as well as carried forward to the future.

On Monday evening a jiisakaan was held in Red Cliff, and on Tuesday run participants were honored with a feast at Red Cliff.

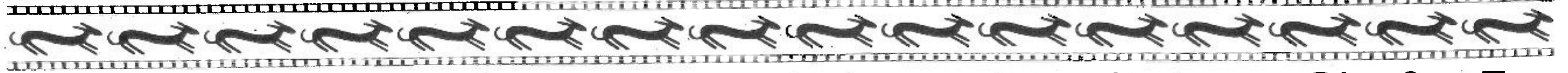
“We do these things because we love you (ancestors).”

—Neil Kmiecik, Lakota runner

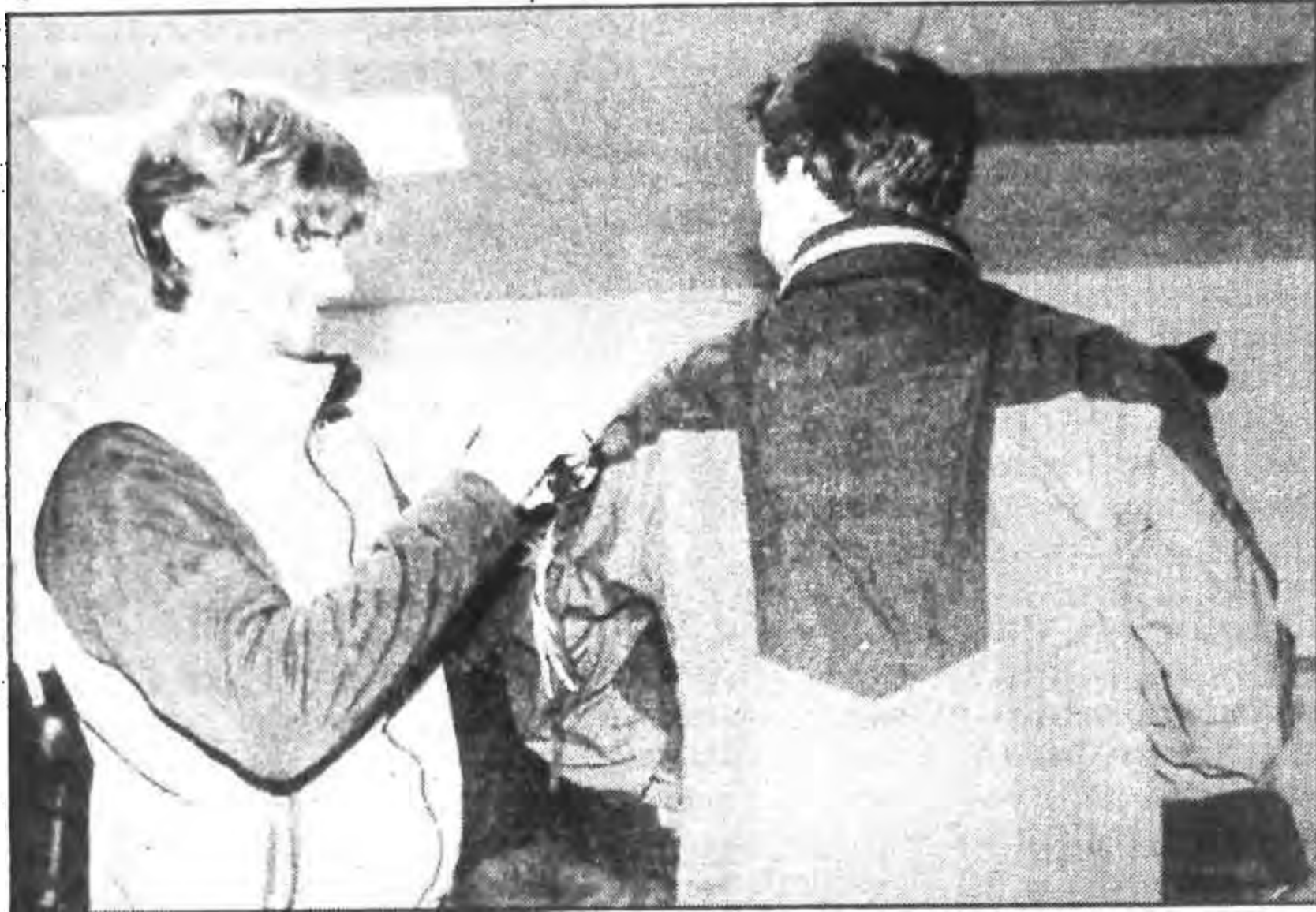


A moment of silence and prayer, remembering the ancestors and their hardships. (Photo by Jenny Schlender)

**Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them**



Over the miles—Talking Stick in hand, a prayer in the heart



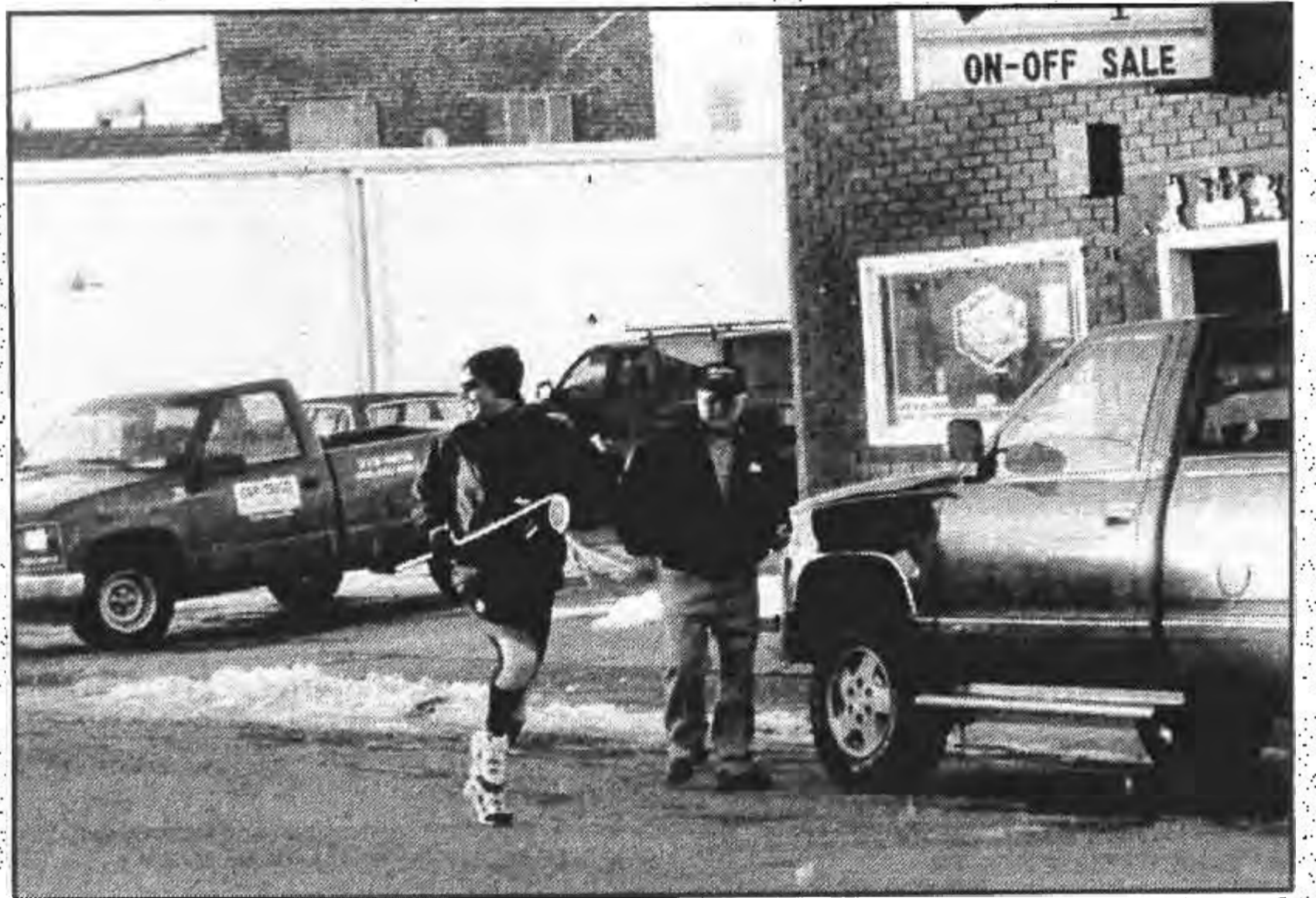
Graham Zorn attaches a cedar and ribbon pin on Jim Zorn's shoulder.



Josh Van Zile, Mole Lake, and Joel Shagobay, Mille Lacs, cross the St. Louis River.



First leg walkers—Carson Ackley, Mole Lake; Sandy Lyons, Hayward; Fran and Jeannie VanZile, Mole Lake.



A Cromwell old timer does a double-take as Jim Zorn, GLIFWC, whips through town looking backwards.



Neil Kmiecik, GLIFWC, covers the ground fast on Highway 210.



Jenny and Margaret Schlender, Lac Courte Oreilles, were hard core walkers during the three days.



Truckin' on down the road—Nick Van der Puy, Eagle River.

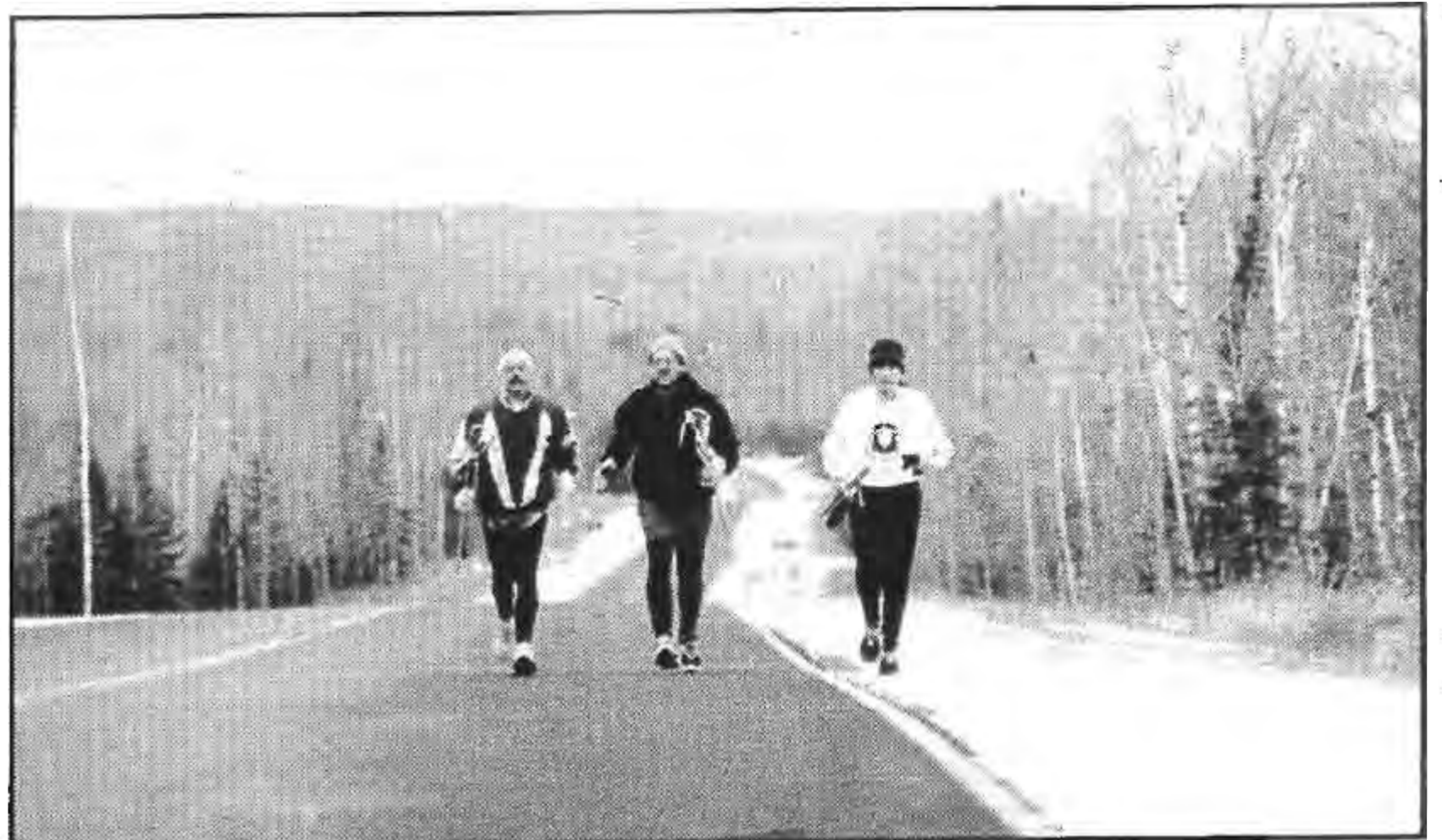
*Mikwendaagoziwag—
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Walking and running together, as the ancestors did



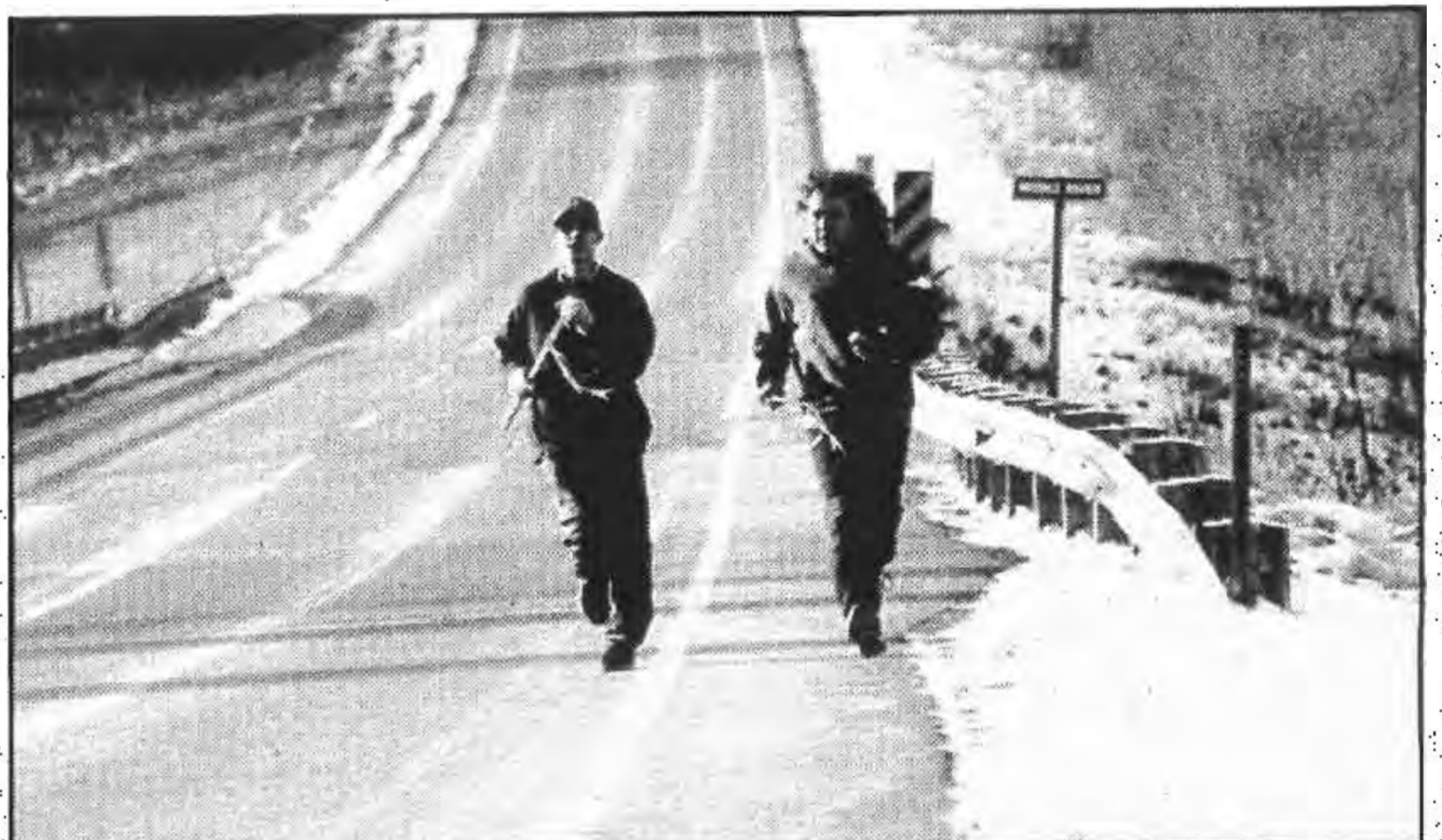
Peter David, GLIFWC biologist, walks a leg with Jenny Schlender, Lac Courte Oreilles.



Running three strong—Larry Nesper, Ball State University, Nick Van der Puy, Eagle River, and Tim Arnold, Ball State University.



Bob Jackson, BIA biologist, teams up with Tim Arnold, Ball State University.



Up and down hills, Josh Van Zile, Mole Lake, and Archie Cash, Mille Lacs, keep chuggin'.



Robert Van Zile, Mole Lake, passes a Talking Stick to Jim Schlender, GLIFWC executive administrator.



Last leg—Off the ferry boat to Ojibwe Memorial Park on Madeline Island.



Sandy Lyons, Hayward, and Lorraine Norgaard, Cloquet, put another mile behind.

“An eagle came over us right at the end, when we were singing that last honor song, and acknowledged what we were doing—that it was right.”
—Butch Stone, Bad River Firekeeper

***Mikwendaagoziwag—
We Remember Them***





Efforts and prayers of many behind monument and run

Miigwech to many people whose work, love and time made possible the Mikwendaagoziwag Monument and the Mikwendaagoziwag Run!

Miigwech for the ongoing support and commitment of GLIFWC's Board of Commissioners and the Voigt Intertribal Task Force (VITF).

Special thanks to GLIFWC commissioners and VITF representatives: Leo LaFernier, Red Cliff; Fred Ackley, Mole Lake; Wayne LaBine, Mole Lake; Leonard Sam and Don Wedll, Mille Lacs.

Miigwech for the tremendous contributions of the Sandy Lake Monument Workgroup, especially Lewis Taylor, St. Croix; Robert Van Zile Jr. and Fran Van Zile, Mole Lake; Tobasonakwut, Ojibways of Onigaming; Gerald White, Leech Lake; Vincent and Sandra Shibiash, Fond du Lac; Norman Deschampe, Grand Portage; Sylvia Cloud and Butch Stone, Bad River; Mino Giizhig, Kelly S. Jackson, Joe Chosa, and Marcus Guthrie, Lac du Flambeau; and Eddie Benton, Lac Courte Oreilles.

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Miigwech to GLIFWC staff who worked on the memorial and run projects, especially Jim Zorn, who coordinated much of the planning and construction of the Mikwendaagoziwag Monument. Jim Schlender, Neil Kmiecik, Gigi Cloud, and Charles Rasmussen also contributed much time and effort towards the monument and the run.

Miigwech to the firekeepers on Madeline Island—Butch Stone, Francis Leoso, Gilmore Wilson, Leo LaFernier and Richard Jack.

Miigwech to all runners and walkers who covered the miles, especially the youth who made the miles much lighter—Carson Ackley, Margaret Schlender, Jenny Schlender, Graham Zorn, Rachael Zorn, Tim Arnold and Josh Van Zile.

Special thanks for all the prayers from home reservations and the support and wisdom of tribal leaders and elders!



As dawn emerged on December 3rd at the Sandy Lake site, it revealed an ice-coated, crystalline world. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

Miigwech to all runners and walkers who made the Mikwendaagoziwag Run possible!



Once in Bayfield, the runners went down to Lake Superior's shore; many put asemaa in the water. (Photo by Jenny Schlender)



Miigwech to all runners, walkers, and supporters. We will remember them. (Photo by Charlie Otto Rasmussen)

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