

Mazina'igan Supplement

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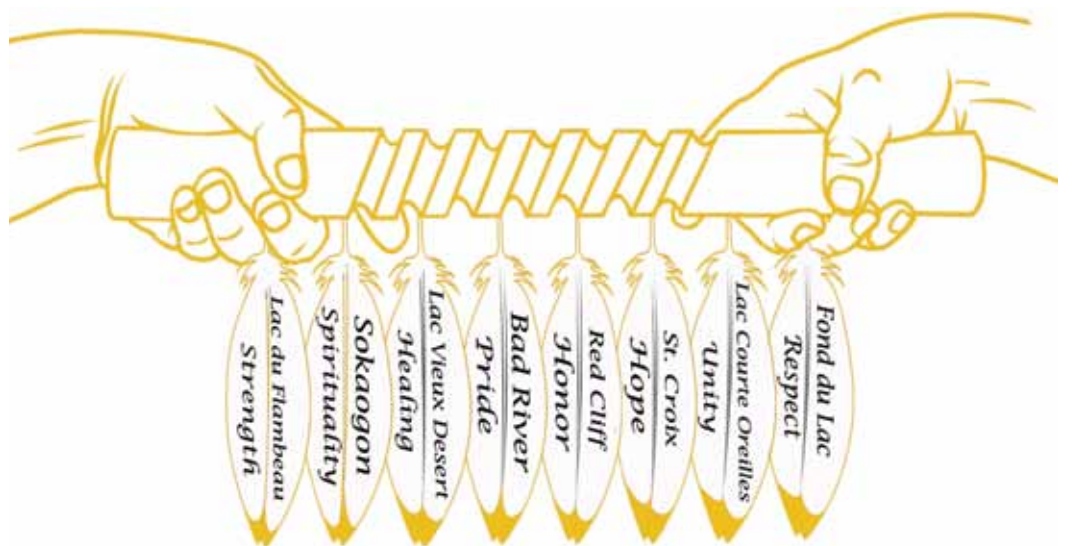
Summer 2014

25th Anniversary of the 1989 Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay



Spiritual runs promote unity & healing

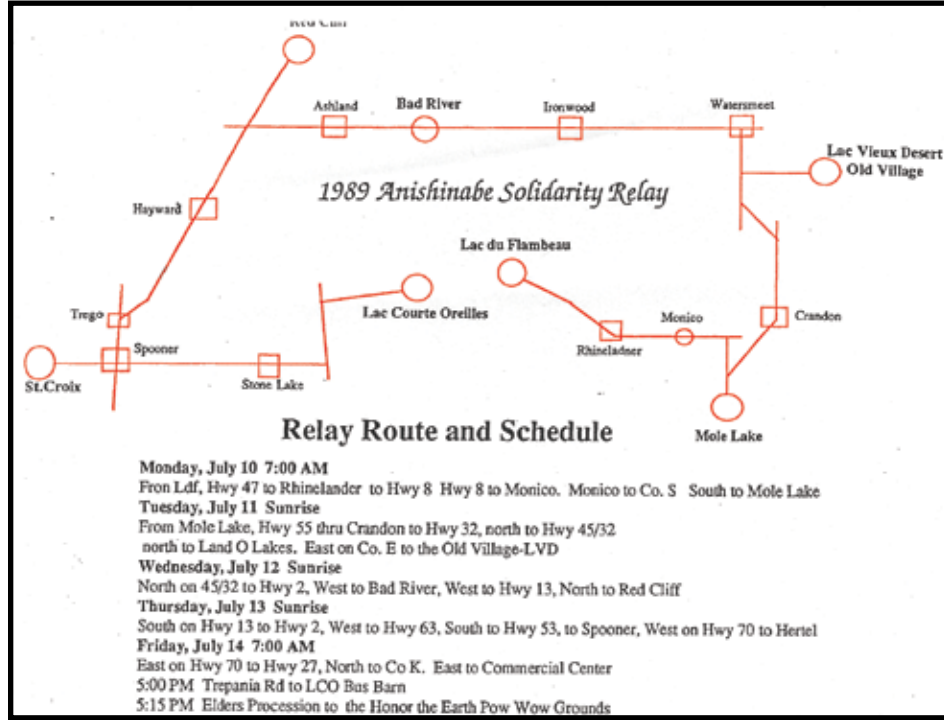
This supplement recognizes the efforts of those committed to promote physical, emotional and spiritual healing in response to violent, racist protests that dominated treaty spearfishing landings in Wisconsin from 1986-1990. Setting a course that connected tribal communities in the treaty ceded territories, the 1989 Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay promoted unity among impacted tribes and also set a path for spiritual runs to follow in years to come.





Relays unite tribes since 1989

Running tradition stays strong through the years



The original course presented by Ernie St. Germaine for the 1989 relay.

The 1989 Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay, July 10-14

The 1989 Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay was born in the aftermath of the '89's spring spearing season that witnessed a heightened and ugly protest against Ojibwe exercising their treaty rights in Wisconsin. April 26, 1987 at Ashland County's Butternut Lake was an omen of things to come. Approximately 200-300 protesters, many intoxicated, arrived at the landing that night in protest of spring spearfishing. Spearers and families were subjected to racial slurs and harassing comments. The mood was ugly. The crowd surrounded the small contingency of Native fishermen and families, and the ability of enforcement to control the large crowd was questionable. A few days later, the tribes responded with a show of solidarity on April 30 when fishermen from six Wisconsin tribes returned to Butternut Lake to spear, undaunted by the threats and taunts experienced four nights previous.

With stimulus from several anti-Indian organizations and mixed messages from the state, protests burgeoned across the ceded territories in the late 1980's, and landing scenes were filled with racist taunts, signs and symbols as well as threats. Rocks were thrown and ball bearings were launched at spearfishermen from wrist rockets. The protest continued to crescendo, requiring massive enforcement efforts to protect public safety. Yet, the Ojibwe continued to fish, while state and tribal negotiators sometimes bitterly hammered out agreements to govern various treaty seasons.

The voices of racial hatred were very fresh in mind when Lac du Flambeau's Ernie St. Germaine traveled to Lac Vieux Desert (LVD) to run in the New World Run with Billy Mills in March 1989. There he met up with LVD runner giuwe (Betty) Martin. Both were concerned at the time about unifying the tribes and heal-



In response to the growing protest and racial harassment evidenced in 1987, the tribes gathered at Butternut Lake, Ashland County, as a show of solidarity in their commitment to exercise their off-reservation treaty rights despite the harassment and threats. Several tribal leaders spoke during the gathering including Lac du Flambeau's Tom Maulson (left), while protesters lingered in boats just off the landing.



Core runner Greg LeGault carried this sign on his vehicle showing solidarity with the tribes.

ing Native communities. There had already been some talk between Kemo (Gary Kmiecik) and Ernie about a possible run around the Lac du Flambeau rez due to tensions in the high school, but it was Billy Mills' inspirational message about the healing capacity of running that really sparked the idea for the Solidarity Relay, Martin says. "His words, his challenges made us think: 'Why not use running to bring the communities together?'"

The idea was daunting, but that spark ignited a fire, and the challenge was taken. The proposed relay's course would connect seven Ojibwe bands, all communities suffering from the hostile atmosphere that simmered in neighboring towns, schools and even churches. The relay had a message according to St. Germaine: "In order to get through all the negative without striking back in anger, we need to come together as one mind, one heart. There is nothing we can't accomplish together."

They knew the relay would require a concerted effort to organize and recruit a core team. "She knew people. I knew people. Kemo would know people. There were Neil's [Kmiecik] kids. We did some press releases. Got Pishko [Larry Nesper]...", St. Germaine relates. He and Martin began brainstorming as the vision of the 1989 Solidarity Relay grew in their minds.

Meanwhile, the scenes of protests in the spring of '89 worsened, with large crowds forming and pushing against police lines at landings across the Wisconsin ceded territories. Enforcement personnel from out of the area were called in to protect public safety while organizations like PARR and STA held rallies to spur people on. Tribal boats were swamped by speedboats making large wakes. Tribal members were met with vicious, threatening signs and chants, and a price was put on the head of Lac du Flambeau's (LdF) Tribal Judge Tom Maulson.



Protesters crowded on boat landings nightly each spring in the late '80s to harass and threaten tribal members exercising their treaty right to spear fish.



By July 10, 1989, the start of the relay, the core runners had grown to 24 natives and non-natives committed to make the 400 plus miles connecting seven reservations. Local coordinators at each stop had also been recruited to help organize community runners to join the relay for the miles coming in and leaving each destination. Coordinators included: Emmanuel Polar, Mole Lake/Sokaogan; giuwe Martin, LVD, Patty Mayotte, Bad River; Marvin DeFoe and Diane Bear, Red Cliff; Gene Connor, St. Croix, Michael Taylor and John Anderson, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Ernie St. Germaine at Lac du Flambeau.

Some of the runners met with Lac Courte Oreilles elder Eugene Begay, Niigaaniigabow, at Lac du Flambeau's Round House the night before where he offered them words of encouragement.

Leading the way out of the pow wow grounds were LCO's John Anderson and former LdF Chairman Mike Allen who carried the flag.

According to Ernie, there was little organization. "Some runners wanted a plan, like a running order, but there wasn't one," he states. "They just started off covering the miles." Runners relayed a staff carved by Ernie over the miles, with all members of the team running together through the towns, but relaying the miles between. Their first destination was the Mole Lake reservation, some 60 plus miles away.



Bad River elder Ethel Plucinski carried the staff for a stretch near Odanah.

Each stop at the seven reservations proved a unique and warm experience. They were often met by community members who took the staff and covered the final miles for them. Similarly, in the morning, moms, dads, youth, and elders were there to help them on their way. The relay sparked "an outpouring at the reservations," St. Germaine relates. The people talked about coming together in this way as Ojibwe people, and shared food, laughter and healing. Days ended with feasts, prayers and ceremonies at the host reservations. The relay received an eagle feather from each community, feathers that were later placed on Ernie's staff.

For the runners the circuit was an "incredible healing experience," Ernie explains. It was at Red Cliff that the relay was getting to the point where the spirits come, he says. The runners were weary; they had done 120 miles in 90-degree heat the day before. They were half way through the relay. giuwe recalls, "It was hot. We were totally fried." They

wondered, "How are we going to do this?" But at Red Cliff Frank Dickinson performed a ceremony for the runners, by stroking their legs with two eagle feathers. The runners also received cedar for their left shoe, and Frank explained how that medicine would aid them in their run. Diane Bear, who smudged everyone, also offered healing medicines. "My feet were so blistered, I did not think I could run the next day," recalls giuwe, but those medicines healed her blistered feet. Everyone ached from the effort. "Well, the pain went out of them—just gone!" Ernie explained. "Frank was asking the Spirits to watch over us. It is important for people—breaking yourself down. This is when the Spirits come. Spirits come more easily to youth, but older people need to get pitiful."

They needed to go about 100 miles to reach St. Croix the next day.

With fresh clothing thanks to the efforts of Gretchen Morris, a core team runner from Red Cliff who stayed up and washed everyone's clothes that night, the team took off the next morning refreshed. "We made it to St. Croix like walking on air," Ernie says.

At another juncture in the relay, an elder from St. Croix and a core team member Eva Connor faced a stiff upward climb during her leg. Others offered to



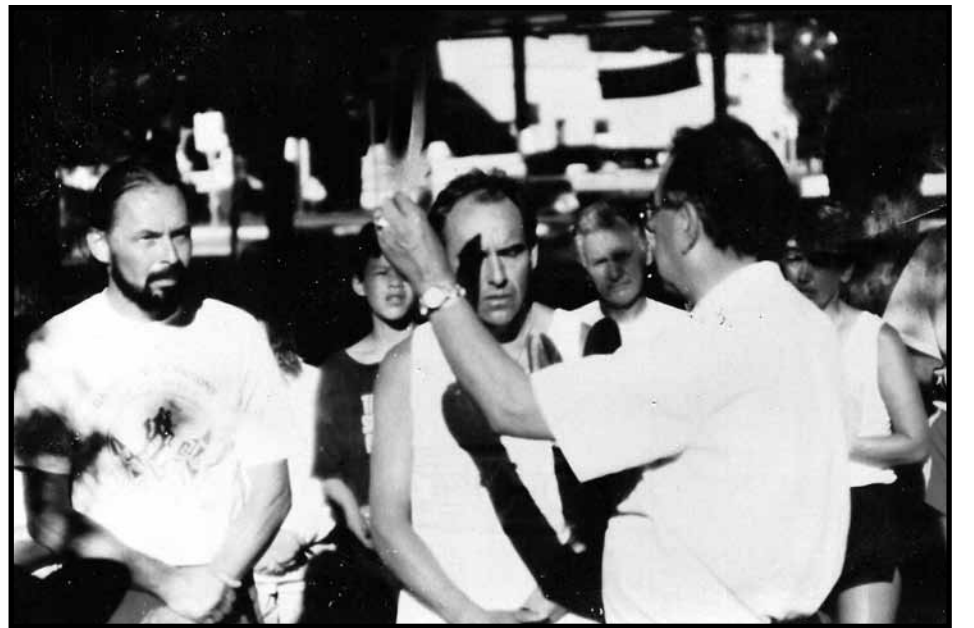
At the Sokaogan/Mole Lake reservation another eagle feather was added to the staff. Runners Ernie St. Germaine, LDF, and Mike Taylor, LCO, are greeted by Mole Lake's Emanuel (Doc) Poler and Tim Randall.



Often the runners stayed together in a close caravan as they covered the miles. Runners include John Anderson, Eva Connors, Beth Reed, Nick Vander Puy, Mike Taylor, Doug Liphart, Larry Nesper, and Ernie St. Germaine.

do the leg for her, Ernie said. But Eva refused the relief. As a gesture of support, the entire team ran with her on the uphill trek. At the top of the hill, Ernie sang an Honor Song recognizing her effort.

A special stop in the relay occurred at the Ain Dah Ing Treatment Center in Spooner, Wisconsin where the Relay was given three eagle feathers by counselor Harold Frogg—one each for courage, wisdom, and serenity. These were presented to Neil and Kemo, both Vietnam veterans, and later placed on a staff carried by Kemo. Harold said there was a fourth feather that would come later.



At the Ain Dah Ing Treatment Center in Spooner, Neil and Gary Kmiecik accepted three eagle feathers on behalf of the Relay from Harold Frogg, Ain Dah Ing counselor. The feathers, representing courage, wisdom and serenity, were placed on a veteran's staff carried by Gary Kmiecik. Later a fourth feather would be presented to the runners.

Met by Eugene Begay, LCO spiritual leader, the Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay concluded as the runners entered the Lac Courte Oreilles pow-wow grounds. It was Begay who told them every step was a prayer, and even if the runners were greeted with hostility in some communities, Begay told them those people will somehow be affected by the relay.

"When the relay ended, most core runners had difficulty facing a return to everyday life. All agreed the 450-mile trek was a once-in-a-lifetime privilege, and hoped the enthusiasm shown at each reservation—especially the outpouring of youthful runners—could be recaptured in some fashion on an annual basis, as a partial antidote to rampant unemployment and alcoholism," wrote core team runner Chris Danielson in an account appearing in the Fall 1989 issue of *Mazina'igan*.

For Ernie, the core team members became close, like brothers and sisters and many have stayed in touch. "We stuck together, stayed on a tight caravan the entire relay," Ernie says. "It was such a spiritual experience; it became a healing."

Memories of Sadie Martin Valliere who was 14 years of age as one of the first year's core runners...

The Healing Circle Run brings back so many happy memories for me. I remember so many smiling faces along the way...I remember the feeling of belonging during a time of awkward adolescence...I remember feeling a tremendous sense of pride when carrying the eagle staff...I remember admiring the beauty of Mother Earth while running my part of the journey...I remember the amazing friendships...I remember how hot it was and thinking I could not run another foot...I remember how grateful I was to be part of this core group running for solidarity and peace...I remember how I didn't want it to end!



The 1990 Solidarity Relay

With the success of the first Solidarity Relay, another was planned for 1990, only this time the route would extend to include the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community near Baraga, Michigan and was entitled the Second Annual Anishinaabe Spiritual Relay. The relay uniting eight Ojibwe reservations took off following ceremonies at Lac du Flambeau's Bear River Pow-wow grounds. Many of the core runners who had been deeply touched in 1989 returned for the second year.

Covering around 600 miles, the core team runners ran, and sometimes skated, with a purpose—to forge solidarity between tribes and to seek spiritual healing in the aftermath of the 1990 spring spearfishing season, yet another season filled with hostility and protest.

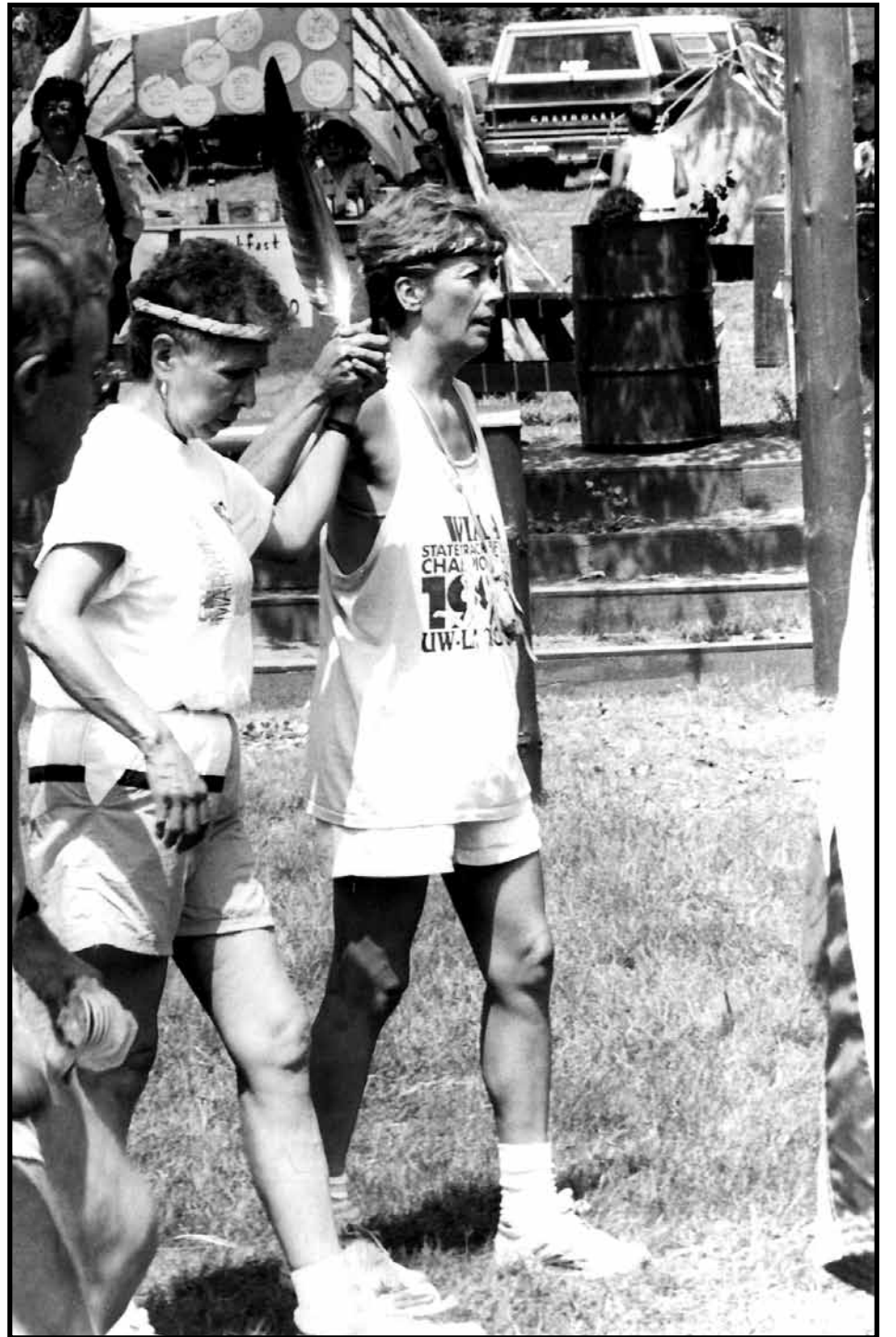
The added leg up to Keweenaw Bay took some effort. After camping the night on the floor of one of Keweenaw Bay's facilities, the runners faced a long trek to the Red Cliff reservation. "That year we were all doing many miles. I don't know how we did it!" giwe recalls. Her log shows 15 and 16 miles per day on several entries.

The journey to Red Cliff was hot, but runners got relief from Bad River. At Birch Hill on the Bad River reservation, the team was met with a Drum, and St. Germaine recalls Bad River youth taking the baton and running for them. The community also greeted them with food, drink and songs on the lawn of the community center in Odanah.

Down the road, Red Cliff's Marvin Defoe was in Ashland with a bus full of Red Cliff youth. The kids sprinted quarter-mile stretches, so the relay moved quickly. It was the final lap between Bayfield and the Red Cliff reservation that an eagle feather was lost, the white eagle feather from Red Cliff (see Kemo's story below).

In the years between 1991 and 2001, the Solidarity Relay took different forms and different routes. One year an organized relay ran the entire circumference of the Lac du Flambeau reservation.

Several runs with different purposes also took place, including the 1998 Waabanong Run from Lac du Flambeau to the Supreme Court building in Washington, DC in support of the Mille Lacs case and the Mikwendaagooziwag Run in 2000 commemorating the Sandy Lake Tragedy and honoring those ancestors who perished as a result. But it wasn't until 2001 that runners returned to the original path of the 1989-90 Solidarity Relays.



The finale': Celebrating the completion of the '89 Solidarity Relay at Lac Courte Oreilles are Eva Connors, St. Croix and giwe Martin, Lac Vieux Desert.

Kemo's staff

The staff kept by Kemo was carved by the late Nick Hockings of Lac du Flambeau. Kemo had asked Nick to help him carve a staff; however, one day he was surprised when he met up with Nick, and Nick handed him a beautifully carved and completed staff.

Kemo ties all the feathers that are placed on the staff, which carries the four feathers from Ain Dah Ing Treatment Center, and those for different veterans.



Coming into LCO's Honor the Earth Pow-Wow, the team neared the journey's end. All were recognized and welcomed as they arrived.



The Story of the White Eagle Feather

Related by:
Gary (Kemo) Kmiecik

During the 1990 Relay on a stretch from Bayfield to Red Cliff, the staff was carried by tribal youth doing ¼ mile sprints into the reservation. On that leg, the white eagle feather from Red Cliff was lost. Several of the runners went back, flashlights in hand, searching for the dropped feather in the dark, but it could not be found.

"I was crushed," relates Kemo. "As a vet, losing a feather is like leaving behind a fellow veteran." It nagged at him and made it difficult to really focus on other events.

When the relay arrived at La Courte Oreilles (LCO), Kemo found Eddie Benton, Grand Chief of the Three Fires Mide, and gave him asemaa (tobacco), saying he didn't know what to do about the feather. "It felt like we had done something wrong," he says.

Eddie thought about it and found Kemo early the next morning. Eddie had gone down to the lake very early when the fog drifted over the water to put down asemaa, and he saw the white feather out there dancing in the fog. He told Kemo he could now rest easy. The white feather is in the Spirit World with all those vets who were lost and never came home and never got an eagle feather. "They

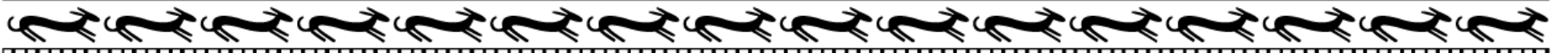
have an eagle feather now!" Eddie told him. Eddie also told him to share the story of the white eagle feather over the loudspeaker at the pow-wow.

Meanwhile Diane Bear in Red Cliff had been listening to pow-wow music and trimming a birch basket with a rim of sweetgrass she found on the reservation when she heard Kemo relate the story of the feather on the radio. Later, she brought the basket down to the pow-wow grounds and sought out Kemo.

They took a short walk and talked about her late husband Allen Bear who was also a friend of Kemo's. She and Allen had been a very close friend to a man who died during the Vietnam war when his helicopter was shot down. He never came home. The night before, Diane had a dream, and she saw that friend in the air dancing and holding up a white eagle feather!

She handed the basket to Kemo, who later, during the 2013 Healing Circle run met Allen Bear's son, also named Allen Bear, and passed on the basket to him.

Eddie told Kemo that the story about the white eagle feather must be repeated. Now Kemo dances for the veterans who have passed. He has been given eagle feathers from, and in memory of, some who have walked on which he also carries on his staff.



Carrying the staff, Red Cliff's Marvin Defoe is joined by Lac du Flambeau's Tinker (Mildred Elm) in the 1990 relay. Individuals and groups helped the core team throughout both relays, running or walking with them in some instances and relieving them for distances, especially the miles on or near the reservations. In addition to relief on the road, communities provided food, lodging and joined in ceremonies.

Reflecting on the Solidarity Run of 1989 after 25 years

By Pishko (Larry Nesper)

This run was a turning point in my life. I had visited the boatlandings as a supporter of tribal spearfishermen and women during that 1989 season. I witnessed their patience, courage, and commitment. I also heard the racial slurs, and witnessed that hideous pleasure that some of the protestors took in denigrating Indian people. I was present at the feast at Lac du Flambeau and then at Butternut Lake that evening when Indian people and their supporters supplanted the protestors on the high ground.

I recall the first time I spoke with Ernie St. Germaine in the summer of 1989. He phoned me in Chicago and described his idea of gathering a core group of vocational athletes to run between the Ojibwe communities that had endured that spearfishing season and were in need of healing, uplift, and expressions of gratitude. I joined that group and ran with them that week in July between the Bear River and Honor the Earth powwows. Spending time with each other running, visiting, praying created life-long friendships for some of us.

It is not often that we have opportunities to participate in an undertaking that integrates so many fundamental human capabilities and dispositions. The Solidarity Run had spiritual, athletic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. Both the pipe and the drum were used. The staff we carried appeared first in a dream, and then it was carved in sumac, then gifted with eagle feathers by the communities we ran to, so it accumulated symbolic and spiritual weight even as it carried us over the land, and down the highways. The run was a kind of pilgrimage that united the runners and the Ojibwe communities on the landscape of the ceded territories. These communities were beginning to experience a cultural renaissance born in political conflict over the exercise of the treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather on those lands and in those waters of that landscape.

I would return to run the same route again in 1990 with many of the same core runners. Inspired by the people I met on those runs, I would propose dissertation research at the University of Chicago on the conflict over the exercise of these treaty rights and live at Lac du Flambeau for much of 1991 to do that research. The work would lead to a book: the book led to a career as a professor in Madison where I have the opportunity to teach about the indigenous nations of Wisconsin, assist them as a consultant from time to time, and to write about their efforts in nation-building.



Bad River Anishinaabeg show support and take their turn on the pavement.



Doug Liphart hands the staff off to Bill Lontz during the 1989 relay.

Michitweg and early Ojibwe runners

In the centuries before the construction of roads and highwire communication lines, runners served a vital role in Ojibwe communities across the upper Great Lakes region. Both men and women, known as michitweg, were messengers who traveled between population centers via woodland trails, lakes and rivers. Elders passed the running tradition onto their children and grandchildren, fostering a legacy that spanned generations in some families.

Michitweg of the deep northern forests needed more than a good pair of moccasins (makizinan) as long distance travel sometimes meant toting a birch bark canoe to utilize the waterways where Ojibwe villages were usually located. To improve performance and feel "light footed," some nineteenth century Ojibwe walked around with narrow bags containing lead shot strapped to their ankles prior to running. As snow accumulated and water routes froze over in the winter, the michitweg relied on snowshoes for overland travel.

When a person fell ill without a qualified healer available, the michitweg were summoned. Attended by tobacco (asemaa), ceremony and prayer, an individual was asked to journey through the expansive northern forest to contact healers in other villages. Such excursions ranged from a few dozen miles to well over one hundred miles, requiring the michitweg to pass through other Indian communities. Runners were held in high esteem and received support from Ojibwe people along the way, including food and lodging. On long journeys that passed through multiple Ojibwe villages, local michitweg helped carry messages down the trail, creating an intertribal relay system.

"Many remarkable performances of the Indian runners are generally known. They can cover an extraordinary space of ground by their persistent and steady trot. As the sparse population of the country is scattered over wide distances, cases frequently occur in which a swift runner can save a family from destruction; and this is a sufficient reason why the [Ojibwe] honour him as greatly as a bold hunter or warrior." (Johann George Kohl, 1855)

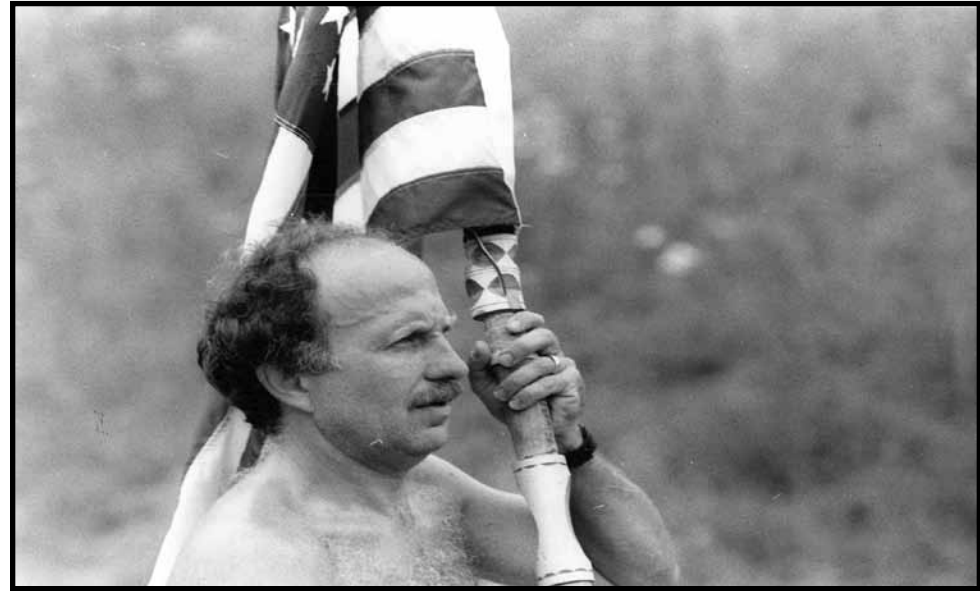
—Excerpted from *Ojibwe Journeys* by Charlie Otto Rasmussen



Images from the 1989-



The 1989 core team met at the Lac du Flambeau roundhouse on the eve of the relay.



1989 core team runner Greg LeGault takes the flag down the road.



Covering miles and having fun doing it, '90 core runners Pishko (Larry Nesper), Kemo (Gary Kmiecik) and Fred Armell keep on truckin'.



Entering the Honor the Earth Pow-wow grounds led by LCO Tribal Chairman gaiashkibos and tribal elders.



Sadie Martin Valliere, Lac Vieux Desert, participated as a core team runner in the 1989 relay at the age of 14. She shares her recollections on page 3.



At their LCO destination, runners enjoy the drum songs.



Helping out: Jim Zorn, GLIFWC, joined for a few legs of the relays.



1990 Solidarity Relays



The Bad River community and Drum welcomed runners to the reservation with songs and refreshments.



Neil Kmiecik, core team runner.



Mission accomplished, Steve Moore, Bad River, and giwe Martin smile at the completion of the '89 relay.

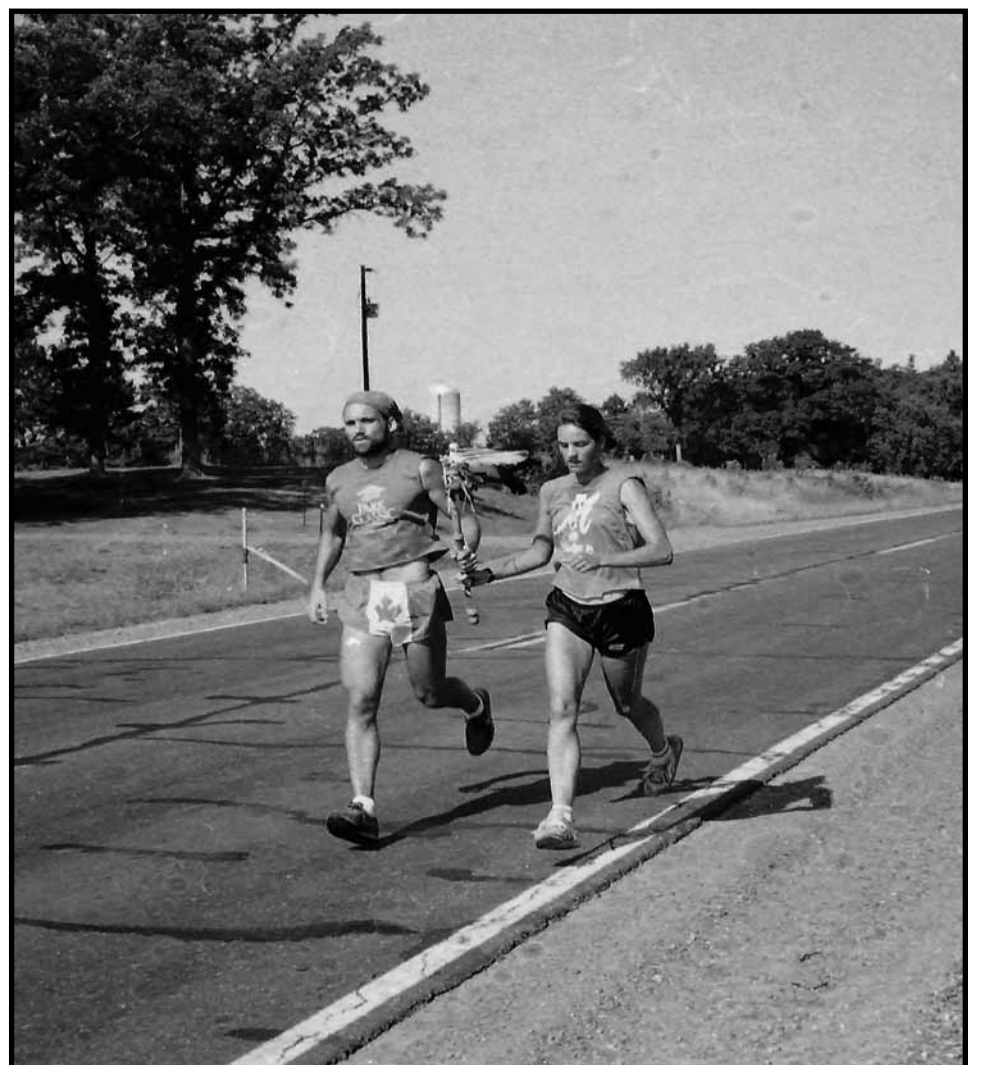


Essie Leoso and Robin Powless, Bad River, making tracks on Highway 2.

1989 and/or 1990 core runners

John Anderson
 Fred Armell
 Robin Carufel
 Eva Connor
 Gene Connor
 Tina Danforth
 Chris Danielson
 Marvin Defoe
 Bo Hammond
 Jeff Jackson
 Tom Jewiss
 Roger Kemp
 Gary Kmiecik
 Neil Kmiecik
 Greg LeGault

Doug Liphart
 Bill Lontz
 Cole Martin
 giwe Martin
 Sadie Martin
 Wes Martin
 Steve Moore
 Gretchen Morris
 Larry Nesper
 Beth Reed
 Ernie St. Germaine
 Denise Sweet
 Michael Taylor
 Nick Vander Puy
 Mark Van Zile



Core runners in 1989 Doug Liphart and Beth Reed.



Healing Circle Run revisits solidarity relay's path

Eleven years after the 1990 Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay, the 2001 Healing Circle Run once again followed the paths and purposes of the '89 and '90 relays—uniting the tribes and seeking healing. Then GLIFWC Executive Administrator Jim Schlender was a driving force behind the Healing Circle Run.

The run evolved in part as a response to the runners' pipe given to GLIFWC after the Waabanong Run by Tobasonakwut Kinew, elder and spiritual leader from Ojibways of Onigaming, Ontario, Canada. Both Jim and Neil felt a responsibility towards the pipe and helping it fulfill its purposes. As veterans of previous runs, they were aware the runs offered powerful experiences, but ultimately, the idea of the Healing Circle Run emerged when they decided to join a Canadian Run, entitled the Healing Journey, with which the 2001 Healing Circle Run connected in Canada.

"I think Jim realized the power of the run, what it had done for people and communities. He felt it had to continue, that healing had to continue," giwe Martin explains.

"The run impacts lives in a way we never forget," she says. "There is not a year that someone's life is not changed. People with problems come, even people who are sick and dying and want to come to grips with death. Every step is a prayer. We carry those prayers through the day. If you made a list of healings, it would be a very long list. I hope it continues forever. It is that strong, that powerful. Jim recognized that strength and healing had to continue."

Several sacred items traveled with the run, including the four Spirit Sticks representing the Four Directions that were carried on the Mikwendaagooziwag Run, the runners' pipe and the pipe carried by Jim.

The first Healing Circle Run began at the St. Croix reservation, close to the devastation of a recent tornado that swept through Siren, Wisconsin, an appropriate beginning for a journey focused on healing.

"The St. Croix Tribe was very involved in helping their Siren neighbors—providing meals and assisting with rescue and clean-up," Schlender stated at the time. "It was a time and a place where healing was actively taking place within the communities."

During the initial ceremony on the shores of Big Sand Lake, Benny Rogers, a St. Croix elder, offered the opening prayer. When it was his turn to speak, Kmiecik related a teaching about healing that he heard during the 1990 Bigfoot Ride (Si Tanka Wokiksuye) in South Dakota. The ride was a memorial, recalling the tragic events at Wounded Knee 100 years earlier when Black Elk said the "Hoop of the Nation" had been broken.



Horses and riders, Tyra Erickson, Sue Lemler and Stevie Lindenberg, escorted runners into the Red Cliff reservation in 2001.



Fran VanZile, Sokaogan/Mole Lake, carried the eagle staff a distance in 2007.



St. Croix elder Ben Rogers assisted giwe Martin and Neil Kmiecik during the initial ceremony starting the 2001 Healing Circle Run at Big Sand Lake.

"We were told one morning before starting out that day's journey, that for healing to occur, it had to start with the individual. Once healed, that person could help heal his/her family and extended family. Once a family was healed, then it could help heal a community. A healed community could help heal the nation," Kmiecik related. As this was being said, an eagle perched in a nearby tree flew up and out over the lake.

On the first morning of the journey, June 21, the core team—giwe Martin, Lac Vieux Desert, Neil Kmiecik, Standing Rock Lakota, and Jim Schlender, Lac Courte Oreilles, faced the first leg from St. Croix to Lac Courte Oreilles with only three people—themselves. They were delighted when Benny offered to walk the first two miles. Later, two unexpected walkers also joined to help cover about 45 miles to Lac Courte Oreilles.

That day Neil and giwe were relaying every other mile. It was hot. Neil was running through Stone Lake, looking ahead for his van, which indicated the end of his one-mile leg. He began to think this mile was being stretched because the van never came into sight. He went around a couple of turns, but still no van. Then Jim drove past him to let him know that giwe had stopped to go shopping! She had located a particular treasure—Snickerdoodle coffee—and left Neil to fend for himself. He ended that extremely long "mile" under a sultry June sun by smiling and stating simply—"Healing is hard!"

Individuals, or even groups of young people, from different reservations, arrived to help cover the miles. All told, 72 people and three horses helped cover 350 miles in the Wisconsin segment of the first Healing Circle Run that ended at Red Cliff that year.

While the protests had quieted, many of the healing prayers carried throughout the 2001 Healing Journey addressed similar issues—racism, the need for unified and healthy communities, concern for Mother Earth, and the need for personal healing.

On June 27 the Wisconsin runners/walkers took on an extra stint, joining with Nelson Johnson, originally from Alkoli Lake—Esketemc First Nation, British Columbia and Marilyn Nelson, Roseaux River, Ontario, of the Canadian Healing Journey, which traversed 1600 miles from Alkoli Lake to the US/Canadian border in Minnesota. Together the Canadian and U.S. participants covered the 100 miles to the Red Lake reservation, arriving on June 28.

The Healing Circle Runs gradually became a GLIFWC institution, with runs held each summer since 2001, organized through the efforts of Neil Kmiecik and Jim Schlender. And the Run continued to grow.

"From a cultural, spiritual standpoint, the Healing Circle Run infuses our cultural ways into the run/walk by using asemaa through the duration, using the pipes and drums, by singing songs together during ceremonies that take place every day before and after each leg of the journey. People are able to witness the power of these," says Jason Schlender, a participant in the 1990 Relay and many Healing



Aandeg Schlender got an early start in the running tradition.



Circle Runs. “They reinforce a sense of community wherever they stop, re-establish connections with elders and friends, sometimes creating new friendships.”

2003 saw over 100 participants of all ages joining the Run, including the Milwaukee Walkers and Native Styles Runners from southeast Wisconsin. Some joined for a day or two, but nine men and women spent the full week on the road, several who were veterans of the 1989 and 1990 run, including Neil and Gary Kmiecik (Kemo), Ernie St. Germaine, giwe Martin and Larry Nesper (Pishko).

A new destination added in the '03 run brought runners to Wisconsin Point, a sandy arm of land jutting into Gichigami just east of Superior, the site of an historic Ojibwe village site and burial grounds where ancestors of Fond du Lac people are interred. Around 180 of the original burials were removed from Wisconsin Point in 1918 and put into a mass grave in Superior after a railroad company took possession of the land.

On the final leg of the '03 run, runners revisited a former, significant destination: the Ain-Dah-Ing Rehabilitation Center, a Native American treatment center. During the 1990 Anishinaabe Solidarity Relay, runners received three eagle feathers from Ain-dah-Ing Counselor Harold Frogg for the staff they carried. The feathers represented wisdom, courage and serenity. Thirteen years later, runners carrying the same staff received the fourth and final feather—this one embodying strength. “It was nice to make that connection again,” said Kemo.

During the course of the Run, spiritual leaders from local communities provided thoughts and guidance at opening and closing pipe ceremonies. Among them were Eugene Begay (LCO), Louis Taylor and Ben Rogers (St. Croix), Rob Goslin (Red Cliff), Daniel Big George (Northwest Bay, Canada) and Leon Valliere (Lac du Flambeau).

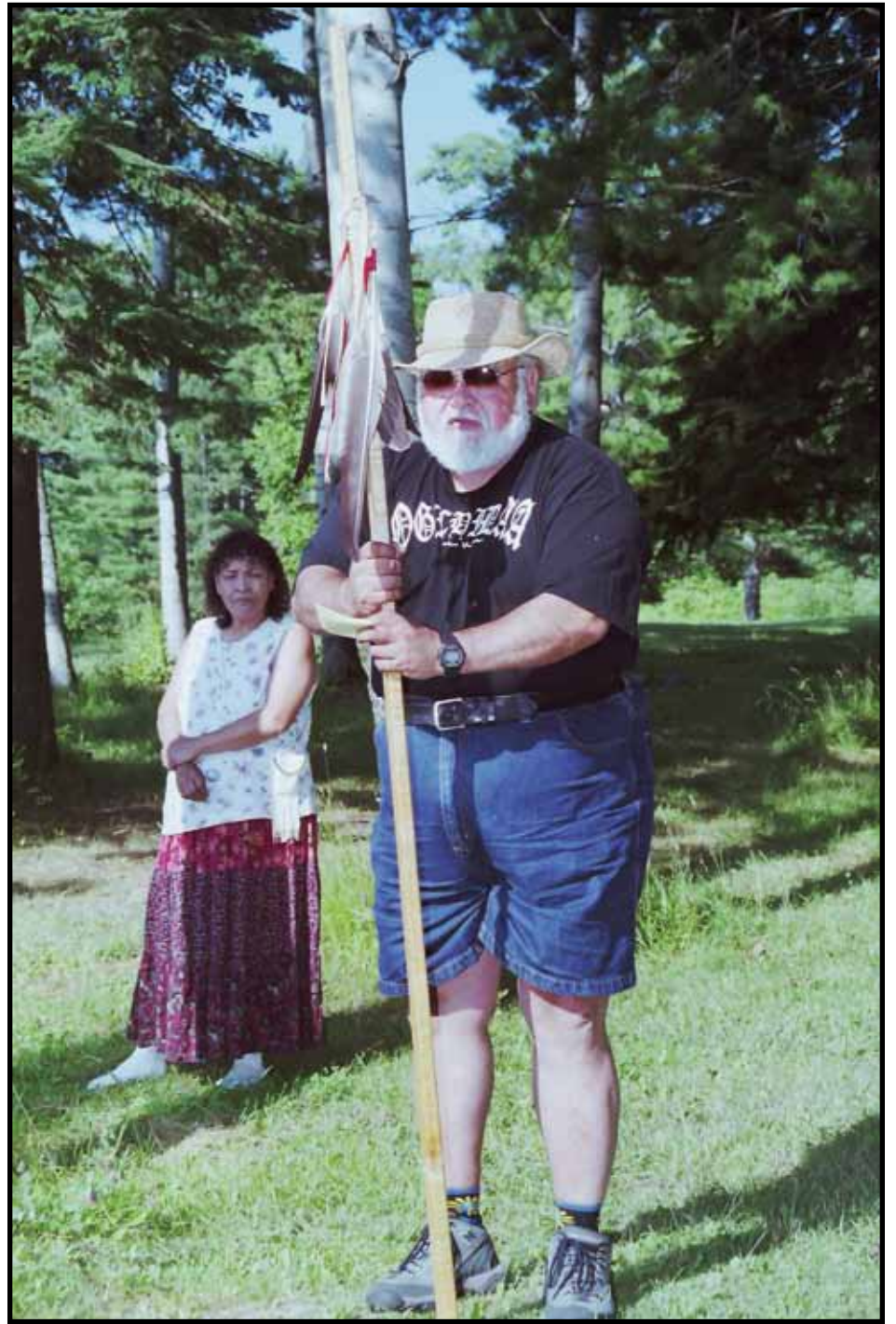
The 2004 and 2005 Healing Circle Runs continued to attract people throughout the region, many joining for a day or two to help cover the miles.

In 2005 the morning ceremonies at Red Cliff welcomed what was to be another in a series of sultry days. But the morning air was still somewhat cool and refreshing as a small group gathered by Red Cliff’s Buffalo Art Center overlooking a calm and sparkling Lake Superior. The runners were headed toward Fond du Lac’s Black Bear Hotel and Casino south of Cloquet, Minnesota that day.

Three pipes were lit that morning—a runner’s pipe carried by Neil Kmiecik, a pipe carried by Jim Schlender, and a woman’s pipe carried by Agnes Fleming, Lac Courte Oreilles tribal member and core walker. As Schlender stated, all the prayers from the circle went up to the Creator with the smoke of the pipes.

Sue Nichols, Bad River tribal member and Three Fires Mide’, spoke words and offered a song on behalf of nibi (water). As everyone looked out at the expanse of Lake Superior, they were reminded of the importance of clean, pure water to our survival and to the survival of all on Earth. Sue reminded participants that while women especially speak for the water, the need is there for all of us to care for the water. Water was passed to all participants as part of the ceremony.

Runners and walkers were led out of the Red Cliff reservation that year by Grandma Genny (Genivieve Goslin) then 85 years old and a regular participant in the Healing Circle Run as it passes through Red Cliff each year.



In 2005 the late Jim Schlender Sr., then GLIFWC executive administrator, speaks while holding Mitiginaabe, a staff given to GLIFWC by the late Niigaaniigabow (Eugene Begay) and used as a talking stick. Jim’s wife, Agnes Fleming, stands to the side.



A veteran of many runs that came to the Red Cliff reservation, Genivieve Goslin, known as Grandma Genny, was a regular participant in the HCR and participated in the 2005 talking circle.

There was a noticeable void as the 2006 Healing Circle Run prepared for the annual journey. One of the Run’s founders, James Schlender, had unexpectedly passed. It was his and Neil’s commitment that ultimately turned the Run into an annual GLIFWC event. Facing the Run without his friend was difficult for Kmiecik, but he went forward with the Run after receiving commitments from Jim’s family to strengthen the core team, all five of whom participated.

It was no easy commitment for Jim’s wife, Agnes Fleming, Lac Courte Oreilles, who struggled with misgivings about the 2006 run, thinking it would be better to avoid the pain by stirring memories of past runs with Jim. “I was unsure. I knew it would be painful,” she related, but she soon received a reprimand she is sure came from Jim, reminding her that the run was not necessarily about personal healing, but about community healing and unity, even universal healing. “The run was never really about us, but for Anishinaabe people and sharing the benefits of prayer and unity among all people,” she said. “It’s about the power of collective prayers.”

2006 saw the circle widened in a unique way. Native inmates from a federal correctional institution in New Jersey joined the Run in spirit on the first and last days with a commitment to run twelve miles in the prison’s compound on both of those days.

In 2007 and 2008 the Healing Circle Run continued to connect the eight reservations, enjoying the welcome and hospitality of the communities as they arrived and departed on their journey. The ceremonies, which included community members along with the runners/walkers, had become as significant to many as the Run itself.

As GLIFWC student intern, Sam Maday, reported in 2008, the runners were “fueled by prayer” and had their hearts and minds focused on those who needed healing.

He wrote: “Each morning started at 8:00 am with a ceremony and prayer. The unique fragrance of burning sage filled the ceremonial circle and wafted through the air beyond.

Each member of the circle was carefully smudged with the smoke produced by the embers of the burning sage—a process which cleanses and clarifies the heart and mind. Everyone was given a pinch of asemaa (tobacco) to pray with. Later the asemaa was gathered into a bowl, which was then used to fuel the pipe. The pipe carriers passed around the pipe for anyone to pray and smoke.

Each participant also received nibi, water, served from cooper bowls. The importance of water was acknowledged as an element needed for all life. It is essential that it is acknowledged in the ceremony and that the relationship between the water and the runners is also recognized and respected. The bit of water that everyone took and drank helped them throughout the day.

Also passed around were ode’ iminan (strawberries), important because they are the heart berry. Offered to break the fast in the morning, the strawberry symbolizes the heart in color and in shape. For the runners and walkers, they symbolized the veins and pumping of blood through the body as well.



HCR runners pose with Mole Lake support runners/walkers in 2008.

Understanding the relationship between the strawberry and one's self as well as man's dependence on pure water exemplify how the Ojibwe people are connected to the earth. This connection made through the run helps heal the Ojibwe people and those who participate, therefore this unique run's name—The Healing Circle Run."

In 2009 Jenny Schlender, a veteran of several years, shared her perceptions of the Run in part as follows:

"The communities that we visited this summer were overwhelmingly supportive not only with the accommodations but with their fresh walking legs—those are always welcome as we cover the miles between reservations.

The joy in doing the run is hearing the stories that people bring along with the opportunity to share your own story. With each community we are joined by new people, and everyone brings something to share, whether it is a story that is inspiring or a joke that makes us laugh. Whether they are with us for a day or a week, people leave a piece of themselves with us. As we gather at our talking circles, which both begin and end each day, we tell stories of these people and how they have touched us.

This year we were given the "Conan Stomp," a unique tradition instituted by Conan Kmiecik. The "Conan Stomp" began when closing the talking circle in Lac Du Flambeau. As Conan finished what he had to say, he took Mitiginaabe (a staff that is passed during the talking circle), stomped it on the ground and passed it on. This then lead the next person to do the same thing. Pretty soon the whole group was doing the "Conan Stomp." Simple stories and actions like this happen on the run that make us laugh. Laughter is healing.

However, sometimes the stories that are told don't make anyone laugh; some are the stories of others' illnesses and the struggles in their lives. We take all these stories and put those thoughts and others into our asemaa (tobacco), and we pray. When we step out on the road, we put down our tobacco, and we think of those that cannot be with us, whether they are in the spirit world or they are unable. We walk or run those miles with the hope of healing.

The circles created each year by the run are like the growth circles in a tree trunk. Each new circle encompasses those that were formed earlier. They are separate but all part of one living and growing entity. And so, I believe it is with



Jason Stark with daughter Zaagachiwe-gaabawik helped out in the 2008 HCR.



The late Leo LaFernier, Red Cliff, shared words at HCR morning ceremonies.

the Healing Circle Run. Over the last 20 years, many lives, many stories, much laughter and also falling tears merge to create the Healing Circle Run and continue the process of healing."

The Healing Circle Run continued to grow from 2011 through 2013 with participation from 179 people to help cover the 580-mile circle in 2011. That was a year of several firsts, according to Neil. For one it was the first year Bay Mills tribal members participated, coming from afar to help cover miles between Lac Vieux Desert and Red Cliff. It was also the first year Fond du Lac members participated and ran or walked to the Reservation Business Committee building, significantly expanding the circle.

A total of fifteen core team members participated in the entire 2011 run, probably the largest number of runners/walkers to complete the entire course since the Run's inception. In 2012 about 150 runners and walkers joined the great circle putting their feet to the pavement as they moved from reservation to reservation. But in 2013 participation in the Run peaked with 330 runners/walkers covering the circle, youth making up a large portion of those participants. (Remember the Run started with just three people in 2001.)

The 2013 course took a slight detour at Hurley. While core runners and others kept to course on Highway 2 heading to Bad River and Ashland, about ten to twelve Bad River veterans from the Odanah Legion Post 25 and a few other Bad River members headed from Hurley to Mellen carrying their veterans' staff, flag and running batons. "We thought it was important as ogichidaa to make a statement about honoring the Earth, considering the mining proposal and this was a healing walk," says Bad River veteran Dave D'Acquisto. Several women also took food up to the LCO Harvest Camp in the Penokees on that leg of the journey.

"We got some resistance in Hurley. Namecalling, obscene gestures and all," says D'Acquisto. Escorted through the downtown stretch by the sheriff's department, the contingency headed towards Mellen, where they were received with some cheers. "We definitely plan to do this again in 2014. It is important for the community," D'Acquisto says.



Gathering at Pipestone Falls near Lac Courte Oreilles at the beginning of Healing Circle Run.



St. Croix elder and spiritual leader Ben Rogers (center) provided many opening prayers on behalf of the HCR and the runners over the years, and St. Croix runners and walkers came in support for the opening leg of the run.



Currently, plans are underway for the 2014 Healing Circle Run. As always, it is open to anyone who wishes to participate either for the entire course or for a short segment.

For Jason Schlender, he is committed to the Run in the long term for multiple reasons. "I believe in the walk/run. I have seen it heal people and have a positive effect on others and myself. I also have a personal commitment to keep it going because of my Dad's commitment to the Run."

Chi miigwech to all runners, walkers and coordinators who have made the Solidarity Relays and Healing Circle Runs memorable and healing experiences over the past 25 years. We are thankful for the contributions of many in the communities whose time, energy, and "leg work" kept the Circle going. We are thankful to all who have donated food, rooms, and support over the past 25 years, to those who provided running relief along the way, for the many feasts, and the spiritual leaders who led ceremonies and helped us all heal as individuals and communities.



The late Terry Kemp, battling cancer, used the Run to come to grips with dying. She inspired the addition of a feather on Mitiginaabe in recognition of individuals and families touched by cancer.



Dancing the walk, the late Leroy Cardinal, St. Croix, got with the rhythm.



Making tracks on the 2008 Healing Circle Run were Veronica Kinsel, Hopi/Dine'; Donny "Kramer" Gokee, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Stewart Eagleman, Lakota.



Following a ceremony at Pipestone Falls, Healing Circle Run participants were ready to begin the 2013 run.



St. Croix walkers including Jimmy Barber, who placed a feather on Mitiginaabe for mothers.



Neil Kmiecik, veteran of all Healing Circle Runs and Solidarity runs/relays, with Jason Schlender at Pipestone Falls for ceremonies that precede each of the annual runs.

2001-2013 Healing Circle Run/Walks

(Core runners who completed the full circle at least once.)

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Carol Amour | Laura Moose |
| Allen Bear | Gretchen Morris |
| Lindsey Bunker | Aandeg Schlender |
| Carmen Butler | James Schlender Jr. |
| Leroy Cardinal | James Schlender Sr. |
| Mike Eagleman | Jason Schlender |
| Stewart Eagleman | Jenny Schlender |
| Agnes Fleming | Justin Schlender |
| Annie Gasper | Lana Schlender |
| Don Gokey | Margaret Schlender |
| King James | Zaagate Schlender |
| Chelsea Jenkins | Animikins Stark |
| Terry Kemp | Kekek Jason Stark |
| Veronica Kinsel | Saagi Stark |
| Gary Kmiecik | Mark Van Zile |
| Neil Kmiecik | Robert Van Zile |
| Jennifer Krueger | Bart Vander Puy |
| giuwe Martin | Nick Vander Puy |
| Shawn McKuen | Karen West |

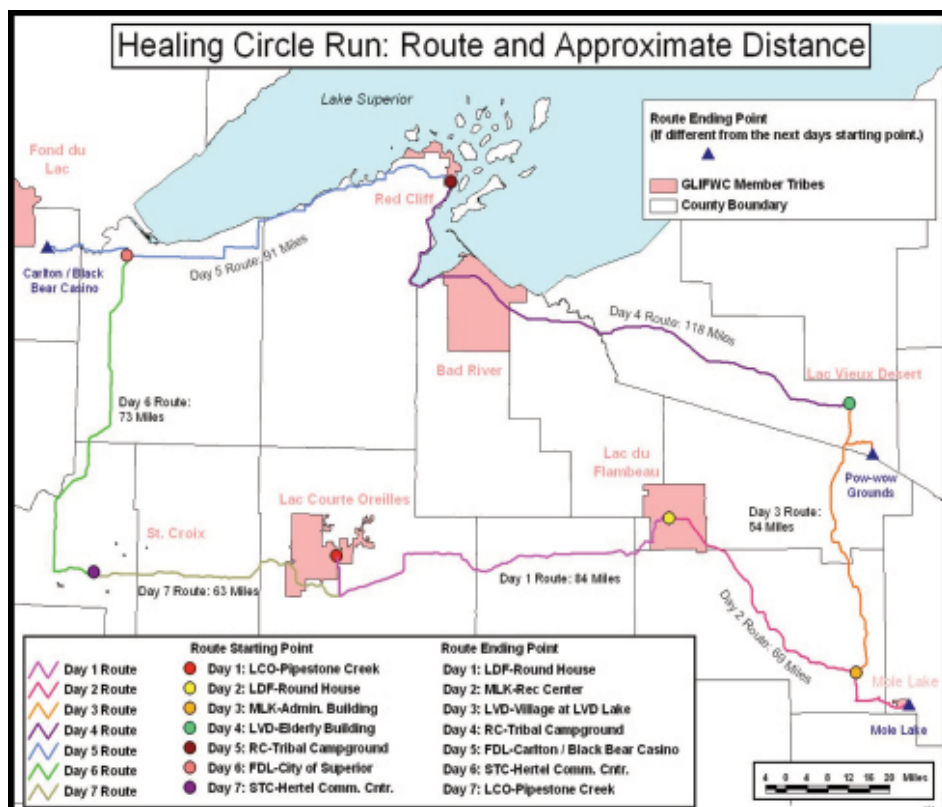


Healing Circle Run/Walk

July 12-18, 2014

The 2014 Healing Circle Run/Walk continues to be a prayer for healing. During the 2001 Healing Journey Run, participants were told of a teaching on healing—"for a nation to heal, it must begin with the individual. As a person heals, then that person can help heal his/her family. As a family begins to heal, they can help heal their community. As communities heal, they can help the nation heal." As individuals, families, communities, and nations heal, they can help Aki (the earth) and our plant and animal relatives to heal. The 2014 Healing Circle Run/Walk is an opportunity for people to come together to pray for healing for themselves, their families, their communities, their nation, Aki, and all our relatives.

The 2014 Healing Circle Run/Walk will occur from July 12-18, 2014. The run/walk will connect eight Ojibwe reservations in northern Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota (see map below) starting at the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation and ending at Lac du Flambeau on July 12 (Day 1), then ending at Mole Lake on July 13 (Day 2), at Lac Vieux Desert on July 14 (Day 3), at Bad River/Red Cliff on July 15 (Day 4), at Fond du Lac/Black Bear Casino on July 16 (Day 5), at St. Croix on July 17 (Day 6), and at Lac Courte Oreilles on July 18 (Day 7).



For more information or if you are interested in participating as a core runner, or having a group of runners from your reservation participate, please contact Jenny Krueger, Sue Lemieux, or Neil Kmiecik at GLIFWC at (715) 682-6619. All participants must assume personal liability, as well as responsibility for their own transportation and expenses.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to: giwe Martin and Neil Kmiecik who ran in both Solidarity Relays and the Healing Circle Runs and have helped to coordinate these events each year; to Ernie St. Germaine whose enthusiasm got the first relay rolling in 1989, and to the late Jim Schlender and his family who have demonstrated a strong commitment to the purpose of the Healing Circle Run.

Supplement Credits

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Event Date: Monday July 14th, 2014

- Opening Ceremony @ 5pm & Feast @ 6pm
- Special Guest Speakers
- Bundle Giveaways
- Drum Social to follow Feast
- Invited Drums- Tomahawk Circle & LVD Four Thunders

Location: Ketegitigaaning Ojibwe Round House

Directions to the Ketegitigaaning Ojibwe Round House

From Watersmeet, Michigan: Go south on Hwy 45 for approximately 7 miles; approximately one mile north of Land O' Lakes turn east on Old Indian Village Road. Stay on blacktop road and go about 8 miles until the road ends at the shore of Lac Vieux Desert Lake.

From Eagle River, Wisconsin: Go north on Hwy 45. Approximately one mile north of Land O' Lakes, turn east on Old Indian Village Road and proceed as described above.

