

Cross-Country Rev. Moon is Innocent Peace Walk: Midwest Meetings

Matsuo Machida
August 31, 2015



Monday, August 24 was Mark Hernandez's first full day supporting Mr. Machida. "I was so excited to rise early with him at 3:30 am to take him to his starting place," said Mark.

Mr. Machida started that day West of Hull, Illinois on Rt. 106, a small state highway which runs almost parallel to I-72. In the afternoon, he was walking along I-72 and was stopped by a very friendly Illinois State Trooper who told him he could not be on the interstate, but was kind enough to take him back to that small road, 106, at about the same mile distance as he had progressed to on the interstate. Mr. Machida was very moved by his kindness and exactness.

Ultimately Mr. Machida walked a whole 40 miles this day, ending on the West side of a small town named Pittsfield which had only 2 motels with no vacancies, which meant they would camp outside.

"Mr. Machida was excited to see me place \$5 wrapped in an envelope with my name and car license on it, into a humble box with a sign nearby," said Mark. "I explained the honor system, which Japanese are used to, and then using the car's headlights we set up a two-man tent and slept in a park close to where he had ended his walk."

The next day, Mr. Machida encountered a narrow draw-bridge across the Illinois River next to a small town named Florence. Thankfully it was quite early, the bridge had just come down after

letting a heavy loaded barge go through, and there was not much traffic in the lane he was walking along.

Mr. Machida made excellent progress in the morning and noontime. Then in the afternoon, Mr. Machida told Mark that his conscience was bothering him, as he was reminded about the small gap he had left in his route the day before. There was no connection from where the kind trooper moved him and the interstate itself. Mark took him back where he could walk from I-72 onto 106, until the place he had been dropped off by the police. Afterward, Mark picked him up and he resumed walking where he had left off, arriving into downtown Jacksonville, Illinois.

On August 26, Mr. Machida started his journey with fresh coffee at the McDonald's of Jacksonville, at 4:00 am sharp, with the goal to arrive at the State Fairgrounds of Illinois in Springfield by nightfall.

Mr. Machida has been frustrated that his cell phone is inoperable, after getting it wet a few days earlier. He usually reports and sends pictures throughout the day to Japan, where many are following his blog. Mr. Machida thought of his lucky dollar coin and placed it next to his phone in his pocket. He arrived into the suburbs of Springfield ahead of schedule and decided to turn on the phone and try to call Mark. To his amazement and excitement, it worked!



Amica Quigley joining Mr. Machida on his walk

Around that time, a Unificationist family from Champaign, Illinois—Greg and Chizuru—met Mr. Machida for an afternoon coffee break. They took pictures with him and wished him well on his journey. From there, Mr. Machida continued to walk down the historic 6th Street of Springfield, where the old state house in which Abraham Lincoln served still stands amid other museums and statues. Mark walked the last mile with him that day to Fairgrounds, arriving before dark at 7:30 pm.



On the 27th, Mr. Machida started his trek from the gates of the Illinois State Fairgrounds and followed the streets to Old 36, a very rural road where he began to find, over the course of a mile or so, coins. First a quarter, then a penny, another penny, a nickel, a dime, more pennies, more coins. When he counted it upon stopping to rest, it was 68 cents—86 backwards, which is the number of days of his whole path from San Francisco to the Washington Monument. He felt the closeness of heaven.

At lunch time, Chizuru Quigley and her 18-year-old daughter, Amica drove out for a couple of hours to meet Mark and Mr. Machida for lunch in a small hamlet on Old 36, bringing a wonderful Japanese home-style lunch of onigiri and other goodies.

Amica walked with Mr. Machida for two hours, accomplishing more than 6 miles together. The Quigley family made a personal donation to his walk as well, which moved Mr. Machida. Amica also gave him a four-leaf clover for good luck,

which she found at the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival in New York.

In the afternoon on August 28th, Mr. Machida began finding coins again, and later one more penny which brought his total over the past two days to 86 cents, which is the number of days to his goal at the Washington Monument.

On Saturday, August 29, they decided to camp again. Mark found a camp called Walnut Hill St Park and met the camp hosts, Chuck and Sandy, a humble and active older couple. They showed him the camping area and showers and Mark told them about his journey escorting Mr. Machida across America. They were so moved that they waived the camping fee. They also told the owner of a nearby restaurant, Bill, about Mr. Machida's cross country journey. While Mark was setting up the tent, Bill stopped by and said that his and Mr. Machida's and dinners that night were "on him and Chuck". They wanted to show their

support for Mr. Machida.

“When I told Machida about it he was near to tears,” said Mark.



Mr. Machida and Bill

On Sunday, August 30 they said goodbye to Illinois and hello to Indiana, as well as hello to heat and high humidity. It was the first day of such weather on Mr. Machida’s walk so far, and it sapped his strength. He made only 30 miles, but had some nice experiences. He crossed an old wooden bridge built in 1876 that stands beside the newer roadbed, passed a memorial to a Pulitzer winning journalist who was killed in Japan as he covered World War II, and met two ladies who each surprised him with gifts: one gave him a \$4 donation so that he might get something to drink, and the other gave him a snack.

With September right around the corner, Mr. Machida just has another three weeks left until he reaches the East coast!

