

GRANDPA TIME

Grandpa Time: Phases in life of Ojibwe people

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Dec 19, 2021



David and Amy Maack and their grandsons, Kai and Tannerbert, had their photo taken in a 1960s-inspired living room at the "Ever Gleaming" Evergleam Christmas tree exhibit at the Wisconsin Historical Museum in Madison.

Submitted photo

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There is an Ojibwe prophecy of the seven fires which marks phases in the life of the Ojibwe people. During the Seventh Fire “the Sacred Fire will again be lit. It is this time that the light skinned race will be given a choice between two roads. One road will be green and lush, and very inviting. The other road will be black and charred and walking on it will cut their feet.”

It has been said that we are living in the era of the Seventh Fire. While this prophecy might appear cryptic to many, its meaning becomes clearer as we observe the world around us.

More than once, we have gone over to the kids' house to take the grandkids on an epic adventure, only to hear them complain and whine that they do not want to go anywhere. The last time, I walked into the living room and Tannerbert, my 2-year-old, was playing a videogame on TV while talking back to the TV as he played, and Kai was in his room, playing a game on his mom's phone.

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When I announced that we were going out, both kids said, "Nooooo!"

There was a time when Kai wanted to go with us, regardless of where we were going. But since discovering video games, that is all he wants to do. Now the little one is hooked too. What they didn't realize was that they had no choice, we were going on another adventure whether they protested or not.

This time, it was off to Madison to visit the Wisconsin Historical Museum across from the State Capitol. This year, they brought back their ever-popular Evergleam Christmas Tree exhibit. "Ever Gleaming" tells the story of the Aluminum Specialty Co. of Manitowoc, who introduced the Evergleam aluminum Christmas tree in 1959. The centerpiece of the exhibit was a replica living room with trees from the past.

Once in the car, they had french fries on the brain, but it was too early for that. Instead, we stocked up on some healthy snacks from Kwik Trip and embarked on our epoch adventure.

Once in the museum, we took in the "Ever Gleaming" exhibit, dreaming of one day getting our very own Evergleam aluminum Christmas tree. But as one friend pointed out, be prepared to spend a lot of money on this vintage item. After taking our pictures in the 1960's inspired living room, we headed off to see the rest of the museum. It did not disappoint.

The museum has a very nice exhibit on Wisconsin's Native American tribes. Kai was asking questions, as well as pointing out different things to us that we had taught him. Moving on, we learned about Wisconsin-made products, including tractors built in Racine. Tannerbert couldn't get enough of the CNH tractor cab, climbing in and out of it.

Our day wouldn't be complete without lunch. On the way home, we stopped at the Pine Cone Restaurant in Jefferson Creek, home of the giant eclairs. It wasn't Kai and Tannerbert's first choice, they wanted McDonald's, but they both ate their chicken tender plate.

When Amy saw that Racine County was hosting a Sports Expo at the YMCA, she insisted that we take the boys. Unfortunately, Tannerbert fell asleep but "Unca Danny," his name for my son David, agreed to babysit him.

It was a nice event. Area groups promoted their youth sports programs and many had hands-on activities like curling, tennis, soccer and baseball. Kai and I tried curling. I pushed my stone into the circle, but he knocked mine out, as his landed dead center. When we got to the baseball exhibit, he tried his hand at pitching. He had never thrown a baseball before, but they gave him some instructions. I was surprised at how well he did.

Vinnie Rottino, a former major league baseball player, was at the event. We ran into him prior to him doing a radio broadcast. Kai walked up with a baseball and Vinnie got down on Kai's level and told him that he saw Kai throwing the baseball earlier.

Amy's adamant that the grandkids are not going to spend countless hours in front of the TV and I can almost assure you that they will probably be in soccer, baseball and if I have any say, curling.

Going back to the prophecy that was given, it has been said that the first road is a spiritual path, but the second road is the way of technology. While technology can instantly connect us with people around the world, it has also isolated us from the world around us. We bury our heads in our cell phones and computers and think that we have a social life because we have a number of Facebook friends, but what it has done is estranged us from the physical world.

When kids would rather play video games than play outdoors with other kids or choose Minecraft over a day at the Racine Zoo, we should be concerned.

There is nothing like being a grandpa. In fact, it's the best job in the world!

David Maack is married to Amy. They have two children, Maria (Kiondre) and David II and two grandchildren, Kai and Tannerbert.