

Woman to Begin 5th Walk Across U.S. for Peace

BY SUSAN STOCKING
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A gray-haired woman who has made four walking pilgrimages across the United States in the name of world peace is not going to take her usual year off between pilgrimages this year "because of the world situation."

It just isn't peaceful enough.

The woman, who calls herself Peace Pilgrim, renounced an undisclosed life and identity 16 years ago and vowed she would be a wanderer "until mankind has learned the way of peace."

Since 1953, she has stuck to her vow — covering 25,000 "counted" miles and hundreds of uncounted miles through all 48 continental United States in her personal "prayer" on foot and "in faith."

'Struggle' by Mankind

During her wanderings, Vietnam, ghetto disturbances and student unrest have all escalated to the point where Peace Pilgrim says mankind is engaged in a "struggle to get to a higher level of living."

Despite this fact—and her resulting decision to start a fifth pilgrimage on the heels of her fourth—Peace Pilgrim told a press conference Wednesday that "there are hopeful signs . . . amidst all the darkness."

Peace is "very close," she said as she started her walk that will take her through Los Angeles for three weeks, then south to San Diego on her way to Florida.

Peace Pilgrim said she is optimistic and expecting "to see peace in my lifetime."

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PEACE PILGRIM

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It was difficult to determine when that might be because Peace Pilgrim declined to give her age, saying only: "I am ageless."

She also sees hope in congressmen taking peace positions on the war, and in an "inner awakening" that she said she has seen in her travels.

"I think I can testify to the goodness of mankind," she said, "for I always walk until I'm given shelter and fast until I'm given food." And she says that, although she once fasted for 45 days, she rarely goes hungry or without a place to sleep.

She has slept in bus

depots and under bridges during storms. She has worn out many a pair of shoes—about one every 1,500 miles. She has been picked up for vagrancy and for walking through dangerous parts of town at night.

Still she believes "all good effort bears good fruit," and she makes that her message wherever she goes.

In Los Angeles, she will speak at a Conference on Science and Religion in Northridge on Sunday at 11 a.m., at the Church of Truth in Pasadena a week from Sunday and at the Hayward Hotel at 2:30 p.m. Jan. 26.

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