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PEACE PILGRIM—Peace Pilgrim (right) a silver-haired marathon walker who has walked over 25,000 miles in the name of peace, tells Review Society Editor Mrs. Dorothy Maville of her travels through all 50 states, parts of Canada and Mexico. See related story. (Review Photo)

Silver Haired Peace Pilgrim Walks Over 25,000 Miles In 23 Years

By DOROTHY MAVILLE
Review Society Editor

"In the beginning, I just walked until I found shelter and fasted until someone gave me food." Vibrantly alive, the Peace Pilgrim nodded her silver head. "In 23 years of walking and more than 25,000 miles — I stopped counting after 25,000 — I have actually been satisfied with everything I need without asking for it. It shows you how good people really are. They are, you know, although the good may be deeply hidden."

In the warm afternoon sunshine on the patio outside the Student Center, PAU students

and passers by listened intently to the tanned, ageless woman addressing them in a voice filled with life and energy. "If there's a spark of good in you, yourself," she continued, "how can you deny there's a spark of good in the other fellow? This is the way of Peace: Overcome evil with good; falsehood with truth, and hatred with love."

"There's nothing new about that except the practice of it!"

Peace Pilgrim — she is known by no other name — has walked through 50 states and parts of Mexico and Canada in the 23 years of her pilgrimage. Before that, she spent 15 years in inner

preparation. "That was when I did the spiritual growing up," she said. "My hair had already turned to silver when I started. Instead of living to get, I started living to give, and life just blossomed out. And I'm still going strong."

"I speak mostly on peace within ourselves. Most people only scratch the surface of their real potential. We have no idea what we are capable of doing until we stop getting sidetracked — until we move from a self-centered life to a God-centered life."

Asked about results of her efforts, Peace Pilgrim said that she didn't worry about results.

All good efforts bear good fruit, she added, although perhaps not in this lifetime. Most interesting to her during the period of her pilgrimage has been the changing concept about war.

"People used to accept war as a way of life; now I am on the popular side! There was almost no interest in the inner search, now there is almost universal interest in the inner search. To me, that's the most hopeful sign of all."

Dressed in navy slacks and shirt and a blue tunic with patch pockets all around it to hold her

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belongings, Peace Pilgrim travels light. No money, no luggage. "All I own is what I wear and the few things I carry." With a twinkle in her eye, Peace Pilgrim gave the Pilgrim's Slogan: "Every ounce counts."

She has many tales to tell of her experiences along the road. Now that she's stopped counting the miles, she says, she often takes to the back roads, the side roads, the mountains, the beaches. In the early days of her pilgrimage she was investigated by a Congressional Committee — a penniless vagrant, could she be subversive? There was great apathy then, she recalls toward the idea of peace. Now she is invited to speak in schools and churches. People everywhere are interested in the message the Peace Pilgrim brings.

Over the years she has changed her priorities, too. In the beginning, she put walking first, then speaking, then answering mail. Now, Peace

Pilgrim says, in order to do the maximum amount to reach out to people, she puts speaking first; next, answering mail, and last, walking.

Peace Pilgrim will be speaking at 10:30 Sunday morning to the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship at the Student Center for Social Involvement, 1615 West Kuhn, Edinburg. Sunday evening at 6:30 she will speak at First United Methodist Church, Main and Cedar, McAllen.

She expects to leave the Valley next week to go to Corpus Christi and then to Houston, and on — and on.

Plugged into the source of universal energy. That's Peace Pilgrim.