



# Friends of Peace Pilgrim

A Non-Profit, Tax-Exempt, All Volunteer Organization

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Summer 2015 "Overcome evil with good, falsehood with truth, hatred with love." - Peace Pilgrim Number 60



*Helene Young, Peace Pilgrim's "baby" sister, celebrates her 100th birthday in their hometown of Egg Harbor City, NJ. She, too, is an inspiration for many as she continues to dance, bike, do yoga, play piano, garden – and, of course, spread her sister's message of peace. Read more about Helene on page 2.*

Dear Friends of Peace Pilgrim,

Summer is soft on the land here in New England. The open fields are full of wild flowers – Purple Asters, Queen Anne's Lace, Cardinal Flowers, Joe Pye Weed, and, just beginning to bloom, bright yellow Golden Rod. Butterflies play among the blossoms, some simply enjoying the nectar of summer, others preparing for long pilgrimages of their own to the Gulf of Mexico and beyond. How amazing that such delicate wings can cross a continent.

We are happy to bring you another issue of our newsletter. Inside you will find news of Peace Pilgrim's sister, Helene Young, who celebrated her 100th birthday this past February. Our other long article was recently found in our archives. Written by John and Ann Rush, it tells the origins of our book, *Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work In Her Own Words*. John and Ann are two of the book's compilers and founded the original Peace Pilgrim Center in Hemet, California, in 1982. Stories about upcoming events in New Jersey and a recent award given to Friends of Peace Pilgrim can also be found inside. Some letters from our friends and an updated offering sheet complete this volume.

We also want to acknowledge the contributions of our friend, Merry Brennan. Merry has been a co-editor for the past three issues of our newsletter, contributing articles, editorial skills, and design talents. She is the author of a young peoples' book about Peace Pilgrim and speaks regularly to students about Peace's life and message. We are so fortunate to have her on board. Finally, we want to wish you a delightful end of summer and a beautiful autumn ahead.

In Peace and Friendship,

*Cheryl Canfield, Richard Polese, Jeff Blom, Mayte Picco-Kline, Barbara Reynolds,  
Maurice Hoover, and Bruce Nichols - the Friends of Peace Pilgrim board of directors*

## Keeping Up With Helene Young – Peace Pilgrim’s 100-Year-Old Sister

by Merry Brennan

She walks every day. Picks up litter. Has a sharp wit and sweet smile. And she is committed to spreading a message of peace. Sound familiar?

Well, it must run in the family. Because this describes Peace Pilgrim’s little sister, Helene Young, who in February 2015 celebrated her 100th birthday!

For more than 28 years, Helene faithfully picked up Peace’s mail at the Cologne Post Office near her home, and forwarded it to wherever her sister was walking. For many years during and after that, she and her late husband, Eugene Young, collected photos, news clips, postcards and letters that Eugene carefully pasted into a Peace Pilgrim scrapbook that remains an invaluable resource about Peace’s journey, thoughts and spiritual growth.

“It always amazed me to see how tiny her handwriting was,” noted Helene. “She could fit a wealth of information in just one postcard.”

Unlike her wandering sister, Helene settled near the southern New Jersey town of Egg Harbor City where they grew up, and where their great-grandfather was a founder and first mayor. She started working at Renault Winery when her sister was employed there, and then married her brother Al’s friend. (She often jokes, “I got my job through my sister, and my husband through my brother.”) She raised a family and has treasured photographs of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren decorating her home.

Yet as different as their paths may have been, the sisters shared a deep desire to live simply and peaceably.

“I enjoy a simple life,” Helene said. “It’s all I ever wanted. It makes you much happier than striving for things you don’t need.”

She has done much on her own to spread this message. She remains active with Friends of Peace Pilgrim, and often speaks to students and community groups about her sister’s legacy. She also devoted years as a volunteer for the March of Dimes and the Heart Fund, and continues to pick up trash on several miles of highway in front of her home, which she officially “adopted” many years ago.



*Helene Young, 4, (seated) with her brother, Al, and sister, Mildred, 10.*



*Helene Young gets ready to pedal 12 miles in the Stockton University seventh annual G. Larry James Legacy Fund Bike Ride.*

### Happy Childhood

Helene has many fond memories of growing up in their rural farmhouse, with her parents, siblings and three aunts.

“We were poor, but never knew it because we were surrounded by people who loved us,” she said. “Having our aunts live with us was like having four mothers who did everything for us,” she said. As children, they were free to roam the neighboring woods and swim in the nearby creek.

She remembers their one job: preparing squab (baby pigeons) when their father got an order for the delicacy from the luxury hotels in Atlantic City, about 12 miles away.

“Mildred and I had to pluck the feathers. We got two cents for every bird. That was a lot of money back then, and we saved up to buy firecrackers for the Fourth of July.”

Because she was six years younger than her sister, Helene said it wasn’t until she was a teenager that the pair became close and began swimming, horseback riding and doing other things together. By then, Mildred was splurging her paycheck on beautiful material that her dressmaker aunts sewed into high-style outfits, then she would take the train to Atlantic City to have shoes dyed to match.

But that was soon to change.

### Full Support

When Mildred left her job at Renault Winery and became a peace activist in Philadelphia – beginning a 15-year transition to her life as Peace Pilgrim – Helene was busy working full time at the winery, raising her two children, Jeanne and Dale, and volunteering for several causes. But she was fully supportive of her sister’s search for a more meaningful life.

“Before she became Peace Pilgrim, she came to me and asked what I thought,” recalled Helene. “I knew money and ‘things’ were not bringing her fulfillment, and she had finally found something that gave her more personal meaning. I told her I thought it was an excellent way to meet people and

that I would support her, which I did for 28 years by forwarding her mail.”

**Still Using It**

When Helene retired from the winery after working there for 50 years, she received a gift of her first bicycle. She was 68. The active centenarian still pedals up to 10 miles nearly every day, even in the winter. In June, she completed the Stockton University seventh annual G. Larry James Legacy Fund Bike Ride -- cycling 12 miles on the “Use It or Lose It” team that also included Friends of Peace Pilgrim Board Members Barbara Reynolds and Bruce Nichols.

During her regular rides, Helene often stops at the cemetery where Peace Pilgrim is buried, straightening the peace signs that are fashioned out of pinecones. Then she continues on to the tiny post office, where more than 30 years after her sister’s passing, some letters still arrive for Peace Pilgrim.

Returning home, where a *War is Not the Answer* sign adorns her lawn, Helene’s joyful spirit is always unmistakable!

“My life has been a blessing,” she added.

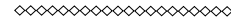
**“I try to live a healthy, simple lifestyle. I exercise daily and eat good, nourishing food. But mostly I try to have a positive attitude, smile and say ‘hi’ to people, and enjoy living.”**  
*Helene Young*



*Helene and friends dance at her 100th birthday celebration, held at Renault Winery, where she worked for 50 years after getting the job through her older sister, Peace Pilgrim. The joyful party included toasts from friends and proclamations from many public officials, including President Barack and Michelle Obama. A highlight video is posted at: [https://youtu.be/juT1ay\\_Tprs](https://youtu.be/juT1ay_Tprs).*

**“Learn to accept differences in people and don’t try to change their way of thinking, as long as they are peaceful.”**

*Helene Young*



**Friends of Peace Pilgrim  
 Fall 2015 Events in New Jersey**

*Fall is the season for celebrating Peace Pilgrim and holding our annual Appalachian Trail retreat in the hills of western NJ.*

**The Celebration:**

The weekend of Sept. 19-20 is our **8th Annual Peace Pilgrim Celebration** in Egg Harbor City, NJ. This is Peace Pilgrim’s birthplace, where she is known as a native daughter and local hero. The festivities are at Peace Pilgrim Park, which features her statue and a peace garden filled with herbs and flowers. Saturday events include early morning yoga, our traditional two mile intergenerational peace walk, a picnic pot luck, music and various activities for all ages. On Sunday there will be an Interfaith Peace Service in the afternoon. Peace Pilgrim’s sister Helene Young will be joining us. If you are in the area please stop by and enjoy this special event, which is a precursor to the United Nations’ International Day of Peace on Sept. 21.



*Peace Pilgrim statue in Peace Pilgrim Park*

**The Retreat:**

On Nov. 6-8, our **4th annual Peace Pilgrim Appalachian Trail Retreat** will be held at the Mohican Outdoor Center in Blairstown, NJ. The famed 2180-mile Appalachian Trail (AT) runs right by the Center as it makes it meandering and mountainous way from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Mt. Katahdin in Maine. In 1952 Peace Pilgrim became the first woman to walk the entire AT in one calendar year. We will make our base in a rustic lodge that accommodates 16 retreatants in shared bedrooms. There is a kitchen where we will cook our meals, modern bathrooms, and a big stone fireplace. There will be opportunities for group hiking on the Appalachian and other trails, alone time amidst the beauties of nature, and sharing about the influence Peace Pilgrim has had in our respective life journeys. Helene Young has joined us for the past three retreats and we expect to have her with us in November.

For more information about either of these events visit: [www.peacepilgrim100.com](http://www.peacepilgrim100.com).

## How the Peace Pilgrim Book Came to Be

by Ann & John Rush

*For 18 years, from 1982 to 2000, John and Ann Rush were the heart and soul of Friends of Peace Pilgrim. From their small home in Hemet, California, hundreds of thousands of the Peace Pilgrim book and 1.5 million of the Steps Toward Inner Peace booklet found their way to people around the globe who were hungry for a message of peace and simple living. Some of our longtime friends will remember the sound of Ann's voice when she answered the phone to take their requests and field their questions about Peace Pilgrim. She would always ask, "Are you sure that's enough?" when a friend would mention the number of books and booklets they wanted. We recently ran across this article written by John and Ann detailing the origins of the book, Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work in Her Own Words.*

Sometimes events occur in our lives that, at the time, do not seem to be particularly significant but turn out to be of great importance. Such an event occurred to us when we were living in the backwoods of British Columbia. In June 1957, a woman who called herself Peace Pilgrim visited our Quaker community on the shores of Kootney Lake and talked to our Friends Meeting about inner peace.

Little did we know the influence she would have on our lives. During the next 24 years we were blessed with her presence a number of times when she was passing the communities where we lived. She was in our home in New Hampshire two times, once in Kansas, and five times in Whittier, California. In 1979 Mary Eubanks of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Ann coordinated speaking engagements for her in the Los Angeles area during the six weeks she was with us.

She became a growing inspiration and influence in our lives. The more we became involved with her, the more it dawned on us the miracle of this person whose lifework was to inspire as many people as possible to develop inner peace and become peace makers.

After hearing her speak, people would gather around and say that a book should be written about her life and pilgrimage. John wrote to her a few months before she shed her "clay garment": "You should write a book. You won't live forever." She answered that she had written enough for a book, it just wasn't in book form.



*John and Ann Rush in the backyard of the Peace Pilgrim Center in Hemet, California. Photo circa 1998.*

That turned out to be our job.

We were visiting our daughter and family in New Hampshire in August, 1981 when we received word that she had been "liberated to a freer life" by a car accident while being driven to a speaking engagement. Hardly believing it could be true; Ann called the woman in Pennsylvania who had been taking care of Peace Pilgrim's mailing list and newsletters. She confirmed that it was true. This 90-year-old woman needed someone to take the material to Peace Pilgrim's sister. Unknown to us and most others was the fact that Peace Pilgrim's sister was the woman in Cologne, New Jersey, who had been forwarding Peace Pilgrim's mail for the 28 years of her pilgrimage.

We drove to Pennsylvania and picked up the mailing list and newsletters. When we arrived in Cologne we discovered that Peace's sister was being deluged with mail, telegrams and phone calls. She didn't have time to answer letters since she had a full time job. Ann offered to help answer letters that came in every mail.

With Peace Pilgrim gone, it seemed more important than ever for a book to be written to carry on her message. We began gathering material for a book, not knowing just how it would be done. We were encouraged by letters from Peace Pilgrim's friends across the country who also wanted a book about her.

### In Her Own Words

The experience of writing an article about Peace Pilgrim for a magazine caused us to realize that no one could tell her story or give her message as well as she already had in her writings and talks. So we decided that the book should be a collection of her own words.

We spent many days in the Swarthmore College Peace Library researching their Peace Pilgrim collection, full of many hundreds of articles from newspapers, church bulletins, and journals. This was a rich source of articles by her and about her. Richard Polese, a friend of Peace Pilgrim and editor of the magazine of the Museum of New Mexico, invited all friends of Peace Pilgrim to his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a two week Peace Pilgrim memorial retreat beginning the last Sunday of 1981. About 25 came from as far away as Oregon and Louisiana, bringing personal correspondence and tapes of her talks. This was a joyful time of sharing and reminiscing about our experiences with Peace Pilgrim.

There was great enthusiasm for a book at this retreat and we had so much material that four of us decided to start immediately to compile it. Richard invited us to stay in his home to work on the book while he was on an assignment in California for three weeks.

Fortunately we were recently retired and free, and Cheryl [Canfield] and Andy [Zubko], who had spent much time with Peace Pilgrim during the last few years of her life, were also free. So we started the process of editing. The source materials were the 19 Peace Pilgrim's Progress newsletters; her small booklet, *Steps Toward Inner Peace*; tapes of her talks; news articles; personal correspondence and direct quotes Andy had taken down in personal



*The office of the Friends of Peace Pilgrim center in Hemet where John and Ann set the "gold standard" for sharing Peace Pilgrim materials with the world. Their dedication and enthusiasm continue to inspire.*

interviews. We also had her unanswered mail, her current schedule, and favorite peace quotes that were in the pockets of her tunic at the time of her transition.

All four of us were inexperienced in editing and publishing, but we had an inward concern that Peace's message be spread as widely as possible. We dove into the task with vigor, transcribing tapes and dividing her messages into chapters, assigning ourselves to different chapters, compiling numerous drafts, discussing, arguing, and thoroughly enjoying ourselves as we carried on the editing process. Now and then we took time off to visit a nearby Indian Pueblo and take walks in the warm Santa Fe sunshine. At the end of the three weeks we had finished the first draft. We moved to a nearby apartment and Andy and Cheryl temporarily left Santa Fe.

Then began the long process of revising the first draft, checking for unnecessary duplications, rearranging paragraphs and sentences to make it flow more easily, blending the different versions of her stories, changing chapter titles, etc. Richard, Cheryl and Andy returned to Santa Fe and took part in this process. By the first week in April the manuscript was finished and sent to the typesetter.

We returned to our home in Whittier, California. Andy and Cheryl started a transcontinental peace walk. Richard sent the galley proofs to us for proofreading and made the final changes. He and a friend did the paste-ups and sent them to the printer, and we eagerly awaited the arrival of the advance copies.

### Deeply Rewarding

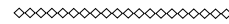
Putting Peace Pilgrim's words into book form, although requiring diligence and effort, was one of the most exciting and exhilarating experiences we have ever had. We have many fond memories of the discussions, the joy, and the laughter.

The response from readers has been overwhelming. People write to us saying such things as: "This book has changed my life," "One of the finest stories I have ever read," "A thoroughly absorbing, inspiring and delightful account of a remarkable woman." Our book appeals to a very wide range of people, from college professors to those with little education. A Tanzanian student studying in the Philippines found our book in the library and wrote: "My heart is so touched with this book which is simple to

understand, and it can fit all kinds of people."

Our book is inspiring because it contains the words of a deeply spiritual person. Peace Pilgrim has given us renewed hope in the future of this world – hope that many might gain enough inner peace to make world peace possible. She has strengthened our faith in the reality of the spiritual world and given us a concrete example of something we never dreamed possible, a person filled with inner peace and boundless energy that grew instead of diminished with age. She has given us hope of finding that same universal energy because she insists it is there for all of us. "If I can find it, you can too," she would say. The greatest inspiration of all is that her life and her words were one. She was her message.

As the constant flow of appreciative letters comes in from those who have received our book, we are thankful that we have the privilege of being instruments in helping to spread her message of peace and hope. To use Peace Pilgrim's words: "Isn't it wonderful that God can do something through us."



*Peace Pilgrim's sister Helene Young accepts the Beacon Peace Award for Friends of Peace Pilgrim.*

## Friends of Peace Pilgrim Receives 2015 Beacon Peace Award

Nestled on the eastern bank of the Hudson River, the town of Beacon, NY, has a reputation for being a center for peace activism. Pete Seeger made his home there on a hilltop overlooking the river. On Memorial Day weekend, Friends of Peace Pilgrim was one of 11 organizations to receive the 2015 Beacon Peace Award from the Center for Bringing About Peace. The Beacon Peace Award is granted annually to celebrate organizations that bring about harmony and peace through their work.

Peace Pilgrim's sister, Helene Young, received the award on behalf of Friends of Peace Pilgrim. Our friend, Pat Lamanna from Poughkeepsie, NY, sang her Peace Pilgrim song as part of the festivities. *Steps Toward Inner Peace* booklets were shared with those assembled.





“Looking through the eyes of the divine nature you see the essence within the manifestation, the creator within the creation, and it is a wonderful, wonderful world!”

*Peace Pilgrim: Her Life and Work  
In Her Own Words - Page 24*

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**INSIDE # 60**

Dear Friends of Peace Pilgrim .....	1
Helene Young, 100, Peace Pilgrim’s Sister .....	2
Friends’ Fall Happenings .....	3
How the Book Came to Be .....	4
Beacon Peace Awards .....	5
Notes from Our Friends .....	6
Friends of Peace Pilgrim Offerings .....	7

**Peace Pilgrim in History  
Providence, RI 1958**

*From the Providence Journal-Bulletin*

**Peace Pilgrim Prays For  
End to World Chaos**

Peace Pilgrim walked into Providence from Pawtucket this morning.

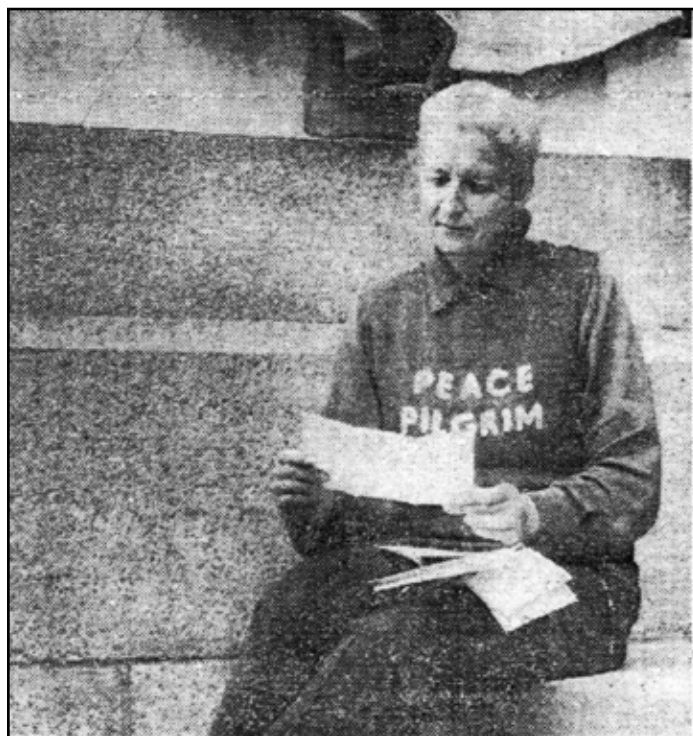
The silver-haired, otherwise anonymous woman dressed in navy blue slacks and shirt and sneakers, now has 12,250 miles behind her. All on foot, cross-country in varying route patterns, from Pacific to Atlantic coasts, from Mexico to Canada.

Today, downtown shoppers could read the message she is carrying in white letters on her shirt. The only thing that is out of date about it now is the slogan lettered across her shoulders “10,000 Miles on Foot for World Peace.” Her record has gone up 12,250 miles and she hasn’t bothered to stop for alterations.

Currently the Peace Pilgrim is on a 1,000-mile pilgrimage through New England, praying for peace and contacting people to pray and work too.

She comes here because it is the vacation season when she can garner converts from other parts of the world. She goes south in the winter.

After spending the balance of the week in Providence, she expects to move on to Fall River, New Bedford, Brocton, and then into northern New England.



**The Peace Pilgrim reads mail she collected at Post Office while seated alongside Federal Building statuary representing independent thought. —Journal-Bulletin Photo**