

# Hitchhiking boosts mileage for peace

By Robert Dolgan

A mysterious old woman who calls herself Peace Pilgrim is in town this week. For the last 23 years she has been traveling non-stop around the country in behalf of her obsession — peace.

When she began her odyssey in 1953, she said, she walked exclusively, sometimes as far as 50 miles a day. She said she covered 50,000 miles on foot. "I know because I use road maps," she said.

For the last 12 years she has been mixing hitchhiking with footwork. "I cut down my walking because it didn't give me enough time for talking," she said.

But she still walks a lot, staying in the North in warm weather and going to the South in winter. She walks briskly on crepe-soled shoes. "Each pair last about 1,500 miles," she said. "I wear out about two pair a year. People buy them for me."

Miss Pilgrim said she is penniless and has no permanent residence. She travels wearing only a tunic and slacks. In the tunic are her only earthly possessions, a comb, a toothbrush, a ballpoint pen, a map of the state she is in and the letters she gets.

Letters are sent to her in care of Peace Pilgrim, Cologne, N.J., 08213. "Cologne is a small farm community," she said. "A lady there handles my mail. She offered to do it after she heard me speak."

Miss Pilgrim said she never asks for help. "I don't accept money,"

she said. "I walk until given shelter, and I fast until given food. But I do not ask. It must be given. If I asked, it would deprive the other fellow of the joy of giving." Giving, not receiving, is one of her tenets for peace.

She said she has no trouble getting food and shelter on the road. "About three-fourths of the time I'm given a bed by total strangers," she said. "But many nights I've slept beside the road or walked all night to keep warm."

Miss Pilgrim, whose speaking itinerary is made up into June 1977, will give five admission-free talks to church groups here this week. She has made four visits here, dating to 1953. She discusses peace among individuals and nations and can be contacted through the Unity Center Church, Cleveland Heights.

Miss Pilgrim declined to divulge

much information about her past, declining to tell her name or age. "I want to emphasize my message, not myself," she said. "I used to use my real name in interviews, but it made for too much confusion. People used my real name instead of Peace Pilgrim when they wrote to me in Cologne, and everything got mixed up."

She would only say that she was born on a farm, that she never married and that she once held jobs that made her a considerable amount of money.

"I made money in several ways, all of them legal," she said. "I had fine cars, apartments and clothes, the usual thing. It was a meaningless life. Then I gave everything away. If you have more than you need you must use it to serve others, I've never seen a happy millionaire."



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Peace Pilgrim

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