

She spends her life wandering for peace

By MARGARET CHABRIS

For more than 24 years the silver-haired woman dressed in navy slacks, shirt and tunic has worked for peace.

She calls herself "Peace Pilgrim" and carries with her all her worldly possessions in the pockets of her tunic.

Although she's never been to court to have her name officially changed, she says she's been called "Peace Pilgrim" for 25 years and gently refused to say what her name was before she began her pilgrimage.

"I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I'm given shelter and fasting until I am given food," she says.

She will speak today at 7:30 p.m. at Unity in the Seven Hills Church, 4709 Myrtle St.

The gentle-spoken woman says 40 years ago she realized money and material things were not making her happy. Within five years she "lived up or gave up" all she owned and vowed not to live to receive but to live to give.

"I was born on a small farm on the outskirts of a small town and earned everything I ever got," she tells after much urging. "Making money came easy but my life was empty and meaningless."

She says she's in the habit of making quick changes and immediately decided to change her life to help others. "And since then I have never had a pain or an ache."

She says she spent 15 years in a "spiritual growth period."

"Everyone has the same potential for spiritual growth but it's a question of whether or not we elect to make use of it," she says.

The little woman spent those 15 years making ends meet on \$10 a week doing some typing. She worked with senior citizens and helped others with their problems.

And then when the struggle in her life ended, she began her pilgrimage.

She can be seen walking through a town or along the highway wearing only the one blue outfit. Across the front of her tunic sewn in white letters is "Peace Pilgrim" and across the back is "25,000 Miles on Foot for Peace."

She has long since walked the 25,000 miles, covering every state in the country, Canadian provinces and parts of Mexico.

"I go where I am invited and ask nothing for speaking to schools, universities, churches and organizations. I have an itinerary through 1984," she says pulling out a pad of paper from the tunic pocket where she keeps her toothbrush, ballpoint pen, comb and map of Virginia. "I usually zig-zag across the country, heading north in the spring and going south in the fall so my clothes will always be suitable for the weather."

Her topic is "Human Potential and Society's Potential." She adds that her discussion of the steps to inner peace are the most popular with her audiences.

When she is coaxed to speak of her experiences she selects those which have relevance to her pilgrimage. She tells of how her compassion faced the hatred of a disturbed boy and how she reached the good buried beneath his anger.

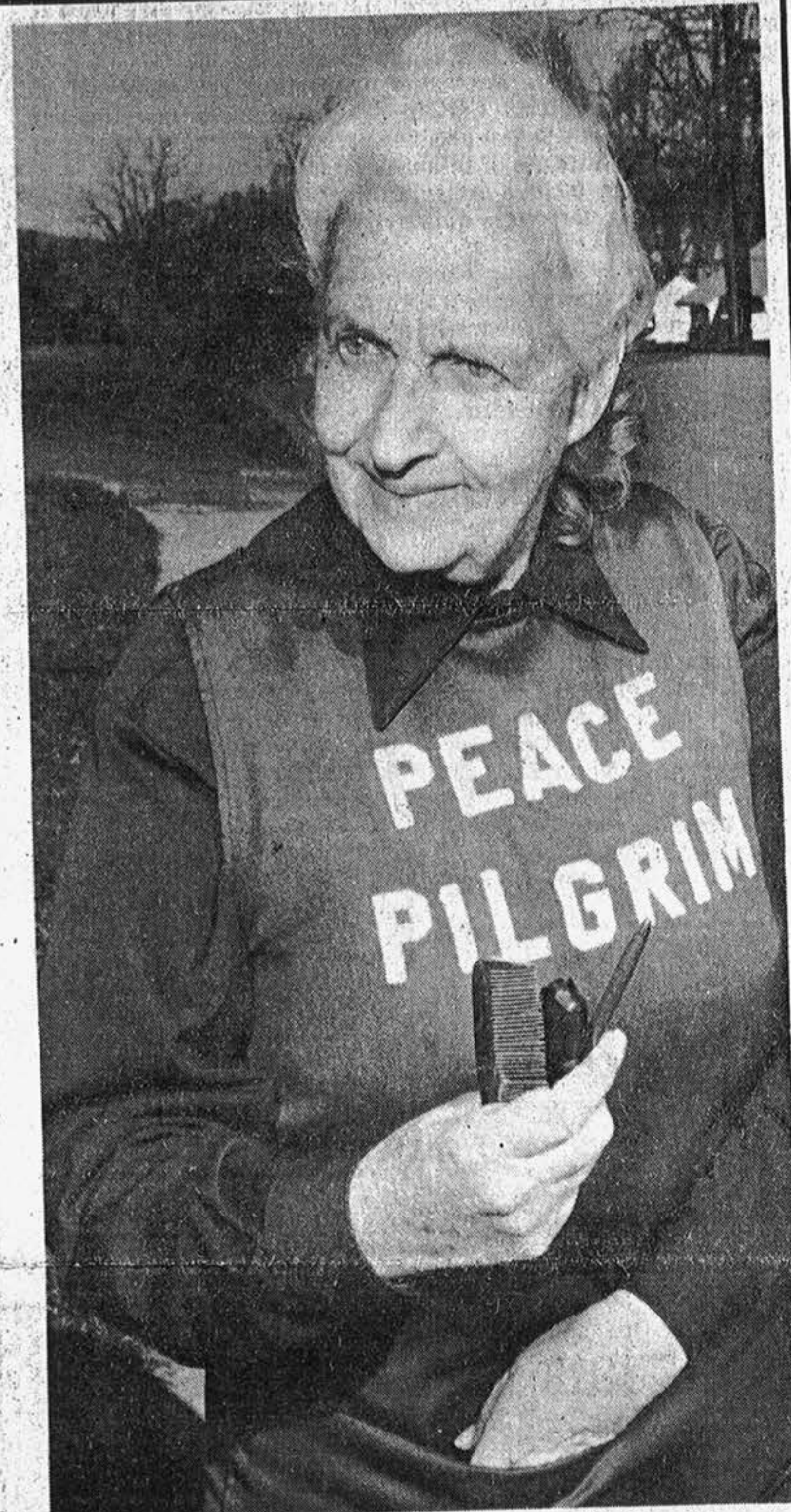
"You attract what you fear," she says. "I fear nothing but only expect good so good comes to me," she says.

"Through prayer and talking with a lot of people I try to inspire others to do something for peace whether it be writing a congressman or ending a quarrel with a friend."

The woman without church affiliation says "I've come from a time when there was little interest in an inner search to a time when its a universal interest. I come from a time when war was popular to a time when peace is essential for survival."

She says her job as a pilgrim is to "rouse people from their apathy and make them think and it seems people are doing more of this but I'm still trying to make them think of their own potential."

Without a penny in her pocket Peace Pilgrim will make her way north, speaking to those along her pilgrimage path and through the news services, pointing out there is a crisis in human history and the world must choose between a nuclear war of annihilation or a golden age of peace.



Peace Pilgrim's tunic contains all she owns
Toothbrush, pen and comb fill all her needs
(Aubrey Wiley Photo)