

Peace Pilgrim spreads word of love

By PHIL HASLANGER
Capital Times City Editor

Her message is a simple one, yet hard for many people to accept:

"This is the way of peace: Overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love."

For years, Peace Pilgrim, the gentle white-haired lady with a message, has been walking the roads of the nation, telling those who ask what she is about.

She is in Madison now on her seventh pilgrimage across America, not talking about military statistics or overkill ratios, but talking about the way one human being relates to another.

"My weapon is love," she said. "It has never failed me."

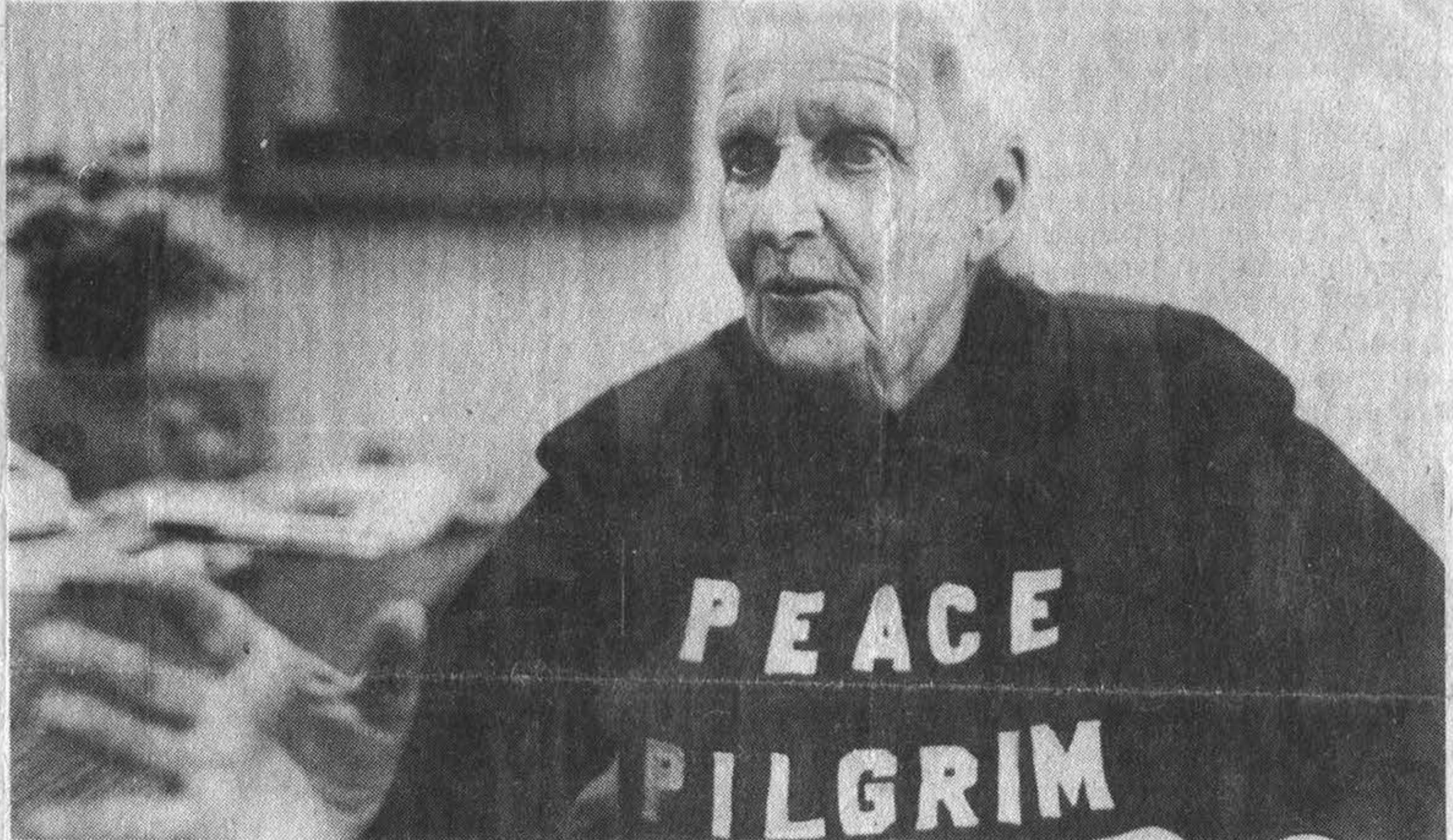
She told of one time she stepped in to defend an 8-year old girl who was about to be beaten by a large man. The girl, as one might expect, was afraid. Peace Pilgrim said, "I fear nothing and I expect good."

So, by her account, **"I put my body between the man and girl and I looked at that poor, sick man with loving compassion. He looked at me for a long time, then he turned and walked away."**

She said that if she had tried to stop the man physically, both she and the girl would have been beaten, perhaps killed.

But how can that one-to-one victory of love over hate be translated to nations?

Gandhi did it to win India's independence from England, Peace Pilgrim said. The Danes used non-



DAVID SANDELL/The Capital Times

Peace Pilgrim: "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace."

violent resistance to protect the Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

"In our immaturity, we still believe in the jungle law of the tooth and claw," Peace Pilgrim said. "That is the way of death."

So after walking thousands of miles since she began in 1953, has Peace Pilgrim seen any change in people's attitudes?

"When I started, people accepted war as a part of life. Now they are looking for alternatives to war," she said. She sees that as

progress. **"When destruction is imminent, people will choose change."**

She said she does not know how old she is now — "I think of myself as ageless and in radiant health." She said she deliberately worked to forget her age because she did not want to stop walking or running because she would consider herself too old.

So she continues to do "as much as one person can do for peace," in her words. She has this pledge on literature she hands out: "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind

has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food." She prays as she walks, stopping in cities to give talks and meet with reporters.

Sunday she spoke to the Madison Friends' meeting, and Tuesday afternoon she spoke at the 4:45 p.m. mass at St. Paul Catholic Center on State Street.

Then she will be on the road again, headed for Markesan and Manitowoc and Milwaukee, a pilgrim urging a world of war to consider her alternative.