

# Walker passes through Halton Hills

By WENDY LONG

Special to the Independent/Free Press

Last Wednesday a lone, petite figure trudged quietly along Hwy 7 through Norval, followed patiently by a crawling van.

Kilometre after kilometre, one foot after the other, the road curved into Georgetown. Traffic sped obliviously past.

The woman is Therese Weiler. The project is Venture for Life. The mission is to walk 7,000 kilometres across Canada in the promotion of the value of human life for the unborn, the elderly and the handicapped.

"It's to raise awareness of the uniqueness of all human life," said Weiler with quiet conviction. An example, "Euthanasia is seeping in on us very quickly. It disturbs me."

Weiler is a 47-year-old grandmother of five and mother of six from Eden Grove, Ontario. One of her sons is handicapped. Strongly Catholic, she believes that we should let God choose life.

"It's God who gives life and it's God who takes life. We shouldn't intervene," said Weiler.

The trek, however, stressed Weiler, is to inspire people of all faiths who respect human life.

Venture for Life has conquered over 2,300 kilometres and has roughly 4,000 left to go before reaching the Pacific Ocean.

Five years ago Weiler would have laughed if someone suggested that she walk across the province, let alone the country.

Plagued with foot trouble, she had a planter's wart that had grown the size of a looney and caused the deformity of three toes. Surgery failed to remove the painful wart. As well, Weiler suffered from bunions and varicose veins.

On her 20th wedding anniversary Weiler and her husband made a visit to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. She touched her foot with a piece of holy cloth. Despite Weiler's own skepticism, overnight the wart detached, much to her doctor's amazement.



Therese Weiler, on a cross-Canada trek to defend the uniqueness of all human life, is welcomed in Georgetown by Father House and members of the Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church community Wednesday.

"There were 15 hard roots dangling from it," described Weiler. "I thought, 'Thank you Lord and use these feet in any way you can,' " said Weiler. "And here I am!"

Weiler explained that she had been at her doctor's being fitted for orthotics one day, and the doctor asked Weiler what activities she was planning in order to designate the most suitable orthotic.

After saying that she worked for Home Care, Weiler was shocked to hear herself say, "And I'm walking across Canada."

The doctor failed to notice Weiler's own surprise, casually advising that she would need a marathon orthotic for the undertaking.

"I was in shock," stated Weiler, wondering what had come out of her mouth.

Weiler felt that she definitely had a calling. "It really wasn't my

idea," explained Weiler of the walk. "I had asked God, 'What do You want me to do?' God prepared me. I never dreamt I would be walking across Canada."

She added that she would not do anything so drastic without her family's support and God's control.

After two and a half years in the planning, Venture for Life departed Newfoundland on April 21st.

Setbacks such as a knee injury set the venture behind a month, but Weiler is going strong on her cross-Canada trek. She expects to walk until the beginning of December, and then finish Venture for Life in the spring.

Weiler covers a gruelling 40 kilometres a day during a 12 hour period, resting only on Sundays. She walks through rain, sleet, wind, and sun hour after hour.

Weiler is on her fourth pair of Nike Airs, the only shoe that fits her

beleaguered feet comfortably.

Along the way she is participating actively in speaking engagements and working to increase the value of human life for those that are traditionally devalued by society.

Although the trek is for awareness, Venture for Life hopes to raise enough funds to give sizeable donations to Birthright, the handicapped and Home Care for the elderly.

Weiler was welcomed in Georgetown by a reception given at the Holy Cross Catholic Church by Father House. An audience of 35, from small children to seniors, gathered to hear her tale.

"I have met some of the most beautiful, uplifting people," said Weiler.

"There are so many good things going on, so many good people that we don't hear about. We only hear the bad things."

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