

MONTEREY COUNTY

Local

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IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL



Robert Ford/The Herald

CHAD TERRY drives the support car for Tom Jones as they head along 17-Mile Drive in Pebble Beach on Tuesday.

Long-distance runner calls attention to child abuse

BY MARY DANKER
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He takes the next step as a kind of insurance. And the step after that. And the step after that.

Fifteen miles a day for 100 straight days — including Tuesday's jaunt along Pebble Beach's 17 Mile Drive — Tom Jones is running the length of California in the name of child abuse awareness and prevention.

The 35-year-old Huntington Beach national champion kick-boxer started April 13, 50 feet north of the Oregon border at a place called Pelican Beach. Today will be Day No. 38. He's

traveled 555 miles and gone through five pair of Reebok DMX06.

April was the official month for this cause closest to Jones' heart. But when you're talking about a Guinness Book of Records-style undertaking, April inevitably dissolves into May, May into June.

Jones won't be finished until July 21.

But already, he's seen a herd of 50 elk along Highway 101, raised more than \$50,000 in his quest for \$250,000 and had his 1977 Dodge Sportsman RV break down in a very small Northern California town — which, by the way, had a Napa

Auto Parts store with a 1977 alternator for \$40.

He met San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, threw out the first pitch at a Giants game, received support from Reggie Jackson and Joe Montana and has almost been run off the road several times.

Most people, however, just look and cheer and flash the high sign.

"Nobody has given us the bird yet," Jones said, smiling. "I know there's more good than bad in the world."

Each morning, though, Jones

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TOM JONES has traveled 555 miles toward the Mexican border, starting from the California-Oregon state line.

RUNNER

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must remind himself.

He laces up his running shoes, pulls on his Oakley shades, looks for the chalk-marked spot from the day before and then nestles into that familiar gait just in front of the pace car — the red 1991 Geo Storm being driven by his friend Chad Terry, 25, who conveniently happens to be a mechanic.

The Geo has 165,000 miles on the odometer and 1-888-998-KIDS printed on the rear window.

Superstitiously almost, Jones puts one foot in front of the other to somehow protect himself from what some might suggest is an in-

'I'M DETERMINED TO BREAK THE CYCLE.'

— Tom Jones, runner

The cycle is well-documented. Youngsters who have been abused tend to follow the same pattern with their kids. It petrifies Jones.

He was made a ward of the state at 8. He had to testify in court against his own father, now deceased. Jones spent the rest of his childhood in the Masonic

said Jones, who doesn't have children, but would like to someday. "He would point guns at me and ask me if I loved him. If it had been every day, I think I could have gotten used to it, but it would come from out of the blue.

"I wasn't frightened. I don't think I had enough wherewithal to be scared. But I walked around

So, like over-tipping a waitress to guard against ever having to take an order yourself, Jones runs and runs and runs to avoid one day hitting his child.

"I think if I work so hard to become part of the cure, I won't be part of the cause," Jones said, blinking back tears. "It bugs me. It bugs me down deep. I do know what it's like to dance with the devil in the pale moonlight. I also know what it's like to walk with God. What I'm doing, it feels right inside.

"I won't quit because of the rain, I won't quit because of the wind, I won't quit because it's