



**By Dave Vrbas**

### ***The Wauneta Breeze***

Pushing a baby jogger full of supplies connected to a bicycle child carrier—for his dog to ride in perched lazily upon a large pillow—Matt Charros walks with a purpose.

Setting out from the easternmost point in the United States at West Quoddy Head, Maine, and already with nearly 2,000 miles on his legs, Charros is walking to Salt Lake City, Utah, to raise awareness for the disease attacking his sister's central nervous system—multiple sclerosis.

Charros stopped by Wauneta Monday and spent the night in the public park during the 142nd straight day of walking across the nation.

He had plans to pass through Imperial on Tuesday, hoping to arrive in Colorado Springs by next week.

A native of North Dartmouth, Mass., Charros decided to take the 3,000-plus mile walk for his younger sister, Nicole, who was diagnosed with MS a couple years ago. In all, he will have put more than six million steps on his legs.

"I wanted to do this before we have to build a wheelchair ramp on her house," Charros said, standing along the road just east of Wauneta as assorted vehicles buzzed past.

Onyx, the puppy he adopted from a shelter, relaxed in the ditch.

He dubs this walk from Maine to Utah "Walk of a Lifetime" and blogs about his journey on his web site, [www.walkofalifetime.org](http://www.walkofalifetime.org).

On his way into Wauneta, one of his main concerns was in finding wireless internet so he could blog and keep avid followers of his trip updated via his Facebook page.

With just over a thousand miles to go on his walk to end up in Utah, Charros had nearly cleared eight states on this westward journey by the time he reached Wauneta, recording much of his walk through photos taken on his Canon Rebel camera.

The 38-year-old artist is also hoping to raise enough funds during his journey to be able to kick start an art therapy studio, Elemental Earth, back home. With preliminary plans already set in place, the studio may also become a reality thanks to his walk.

"Art is very therapeutic," Charros said, noting that he has plans to help those suffering debilitating physical illness as well as mental illness. He said he also has a friend who served in Afghanistan who will provide therapeutic ceramics and stained glass window instruction for military veterans.

The idea for the studio, Charros explained, started out as an art therapy outlet for victims of MS, but has grown to be all-encompassing thanks to the crew he has lined up back in Massachusetts.

Walking across Nebraska, he joked, has been a much better experience than his trip through our eastern neighbor, Iowa.

"I hate Iowa," Charros joked. "I expected it to be flat. And I was wrong."

During his walk through southwest Nebraska, Charros has been blessed with cooler weather

than what is typical and a helpful tailwind that nudges him along.

Asked what he'll remember most about hiking through Nebraska on foot, Charros smiled, "The nice people and all the marijuana in the ditches."

Charros' original trip was supposed to end in Bodago Bay, Calif., but he decided to abbreviate the trek a bit and stop in Salt Lake City where he received his bachelor's degree in art 10 years ago at Westminster College.

Ending the journey there will give him a chance to have a large media blitz at a reunion with friends from school.

"It's been quite an experience so far," Charros said. "And it's for a good cause that pushes me." Donations can be made to Walk of a Lifetime at their web site. To view Charros' art, visit [www.mattcharros.com](http://www.mattcharros.com).