

## Nauroth: Help world learn to live in harmony

Sunday, December 26, 2004

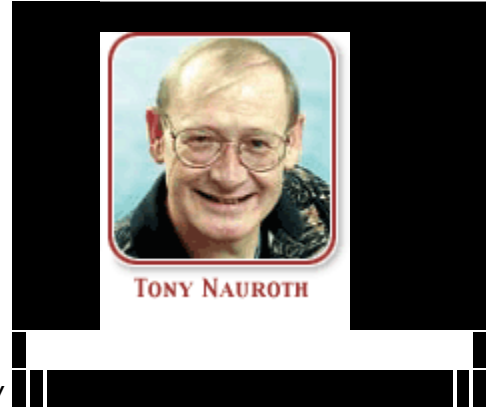
Bob Mark walked into the Do-Re Music Store on Main Street in Dallas, Pa., on a chilly fall afternoon in 1973.

He was a skinny, gangly, 16-year-old kid with a guitar in his hand and an attitude at the tip of his tongue.

The hair, the speech, the wardrobe, even the first name -- I thought Bob Dylan had walked through the door.

I was teaching guitar lessons, mostly to very young beginners with bad guitars strung with strings a lumberjack couldn't press down on the neck.

Parents always think they'll buy a cheap guitar first and if the kid sticks with it, then they'll get him something better. Well, here's news for future parents -- the child gets so frustrated she gives up. The parent then says, "Whew, I'm glad I didn't buy her a good one." The prophecy is almost always self-fulfilled.



Bob, on the other hand, had a decent guitar, he was older than all my other students and he could play.

Instead of guitar lessons, we ended up jamming. Then he joined my bluegrass band, Chaz Bones and the Endless Mountain Boys.

The Boys eventually broke up, I joined the Army and Bob went off to college and into another life. He moved to Israel, claimed dual citizenship, and joined a budding new kibbutz called Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, which means Oasis of Peace in both Israeli and Arabic.

Bob married an Israeli woman and they soon had two children. He teaches at the kibbutz, where they also live among both Palestinians and Jews and where they all learn the ideal of cooperation between the faiths. It's something they work especially hard on to instill in the children.

I've seen Bob only one time since he left The Endless Mountain Boys. My wife and I had dinner with his family up in the Dallas area. He spoke passionately about the mission of the Oasis of Peace.

I write about this now because last week I received a plea in the mail for contributions to the organization.

In promotional literature, its American fund-raising group out of Mt. Laurel, N.J., writes, "Each and every day we see, hear, and read news regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that tells us of the negative happenings and/or the latest violence and bloodshed in the region.

"Very seldom do we see reports on the many who have dedicated their entire lives to promote peace, like those who live and work at the village of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam." Bob's adopted village has a good track record. It was nominated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize five times in its 32-year history, but has received no support from successive Israeli governments.

I haven't heard from Bob for some time now, but I think about him every Christmas. I used to send Christmas cards to him, just for yucks. He knew right away whom they were from, and I think he got a kick out of his Christian buddy from the Bones bluegrass band sending Jesus cards to "Bob Dylan" in a kibbutz.

( For more information, contact American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam at 4201 Church Road, Suite 13, Mt. Laurel, N.J. 08054, call them at 856-235-6200, e-mail them at [afnswas@oasisofpeace.org](mailto:afnswas@oasisofpeace.org) or visit the Web site at [www.oasisofpeace.org](http://www.oasisofpeace.org). Tony Nauroth is local desk editor for The Express Times)