

CRIBB<S>NOTE

Jerry Leggett has traveled nearly 50,000 miles and made 175 stops around the United States this year. The ordained minister in the United Church of Christ is singing songs of peace and recording stories of people he meets. According to his Web site, peacebubble.org, he has videotaped 5,420 interviews. He launched his “sing out for peace at noon” campaign on the beach in Carlsbad, California, earlier this year. With a vintage tear-drop trailer he calls the “Mellow Yellow Peace Bubble,” Jerry believes peace is possible.

While traveling through Arizona, he picked up a companion, Patsy Ferrell, a professionally-trained therapist and visual artist, who helps to document the tour by photographing faces and places along the way.

The national tour began as a simple idea. Jerry is known in San Diego County as the “Seawall Singer” because he spent many days with his guitar belting out original and familiar songs to passersby along Carlsbad’s beachfront. He began to imagine another world where people actually lived violence-free. Music is a tonic that inspires dreams of peace.

He doesn’t preach a traditional message of “stop the war” or “troops out of Iraq.” Instead, the words of his songs tell real stories about real people in real places. He evokes verbal images of transformation and a new creation. The genius of his efforts is realized among the listeners and storytellers who gather around to hear his impromptu concerts.

The magic of music spreads a glorious message of human potential to recover so much of what has been lost because of apathy, broken hearts, cynicism, depression, and xenophobia. Jerry Leggett believes there is hope in every encounter. Each stop presents a vital tie in the expanding web of interpersonal dependency. His “sing out at noon for peace” tour provides a pause in the middle of busy days with a melodious refrain to carry hearts and minds to a higher level of consciousness. Peace is in the air.

There is great power in performance that is dedicated to high ideals. Performances for peace empower quiet voices to bellow eloquent expressions of a world made possible for children to play unafraid and elders to walk without fear. Audiences are challenged to step into sacred space where life in its various forms is respected and protected. Peace is no longer an abstract wish beyond the grasp of reality. Jerry and Patsy have given peace a face, a voice, a stream of testimonies.

As we celebrate the anticipated birth of Christ, it is appropriate for each of us to assess and consider our gifts and abilities to do what we can where we are to bring peace into the world. Jesus comes as ‘peacemaker,’ a living example of what we are capable of accomplishing to end the nightmare of human destruction.

Thank you, Jerry and Patsy, for making your lives a model of prioritizing what is true and important during these days of saturated disappointment. Life is worth so much more, and everybody deserves to live in peace. Perhaps singing is a good start, and sharing stories will bring us closer to achieving our prayer for peace on earth.