



**HIGHER  
GROUND  
AUSTRALIA**

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## HIGHER GROUND NEWSLETTER – February 2019

### Welcome

It's already nearing the end of February, and 2019 seems to be going at a cracking pace already. I sincerely hope you all had a very happy New Year and are back in the swing of things. Chinese New Year was celebrated last week and the festivities for the Year of the Pig are continuing into this week as well. I mention the Chinese horoscope year because this is my year! I was born in the Year of the Pig, and I am delighted with these attributes: *they are social butterflies with friends from all walks of life. They have a lot of support in both work and life. They have fortunate lives and can find happiness. They are successful later in life.*

Whoo Hoo – there is hope for me yet. Welcome to 2019 and I hope that you enjoy the year ahead. Please don't hesitate to send me links to John Denver-related stories [hga.vic@gmail.com](mailto:hga.vic@gmail.com) for inclusion into this newsletter.

### My Special Tribute to Pat Feldmeier July 8, 1952 \* February 23, 2019

*On Sunday evening, Australian Eastern Summer Time, I heard the news that my good friend, Pat Feldmeier had passed away. Most of you have probably met Pat or know her from the various newsgroups and Facebook pages on the internet.*

My heart is shattered into a million pieces. My friend, Pat Feldmeier died last week. It was sudden and so very unexpected, and I'm finding it very hard to believe that I will not see her again. I can't remember when I first 'met' Pat, but it was sometime after the death of John Denver, when I joined the 'Forever John Denver' newsgroup. Along with a few other ladies, we found common ground, and became firm friends, although at that time we had not yet met in person.

In 2009, I finally met Pat in Aspen. She had attended with her beloved, but ailing husband, Dennie, so our meetings that time were brief, but I think we knew then that our friendship would be lifelong. And it was.

In 2012, Pat bravely invited me to stay at her house before the Aspen in October tribute. Whilst we sat in her back garden eating homemade pizza and drinking beers, she outlined what she had planned for the days ahead. I had no idea what was in store, but needless to say, I was

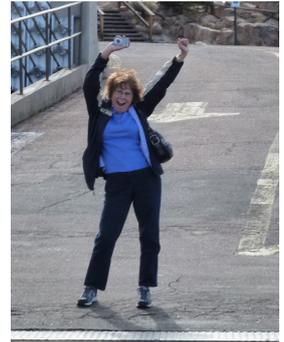
exhausted! Her zest for life was infectious, and her ability to pack as much as possible into a day was remarkable. She must have liked my

company because she invited me back in 2015 and again in 2017, and we were in the process of planning to spend the first week of July this year together. With Pat, I explored the Colorado I would not have otherwise discovered, nor would I have enjoyed it without her effervescent company.

We had enjoyed beers (it had to be beer) in the bar of some of the best hotels in Colorado: the Stanley, The Brown's Palace, The Broadmoor, and the Jerome, to name a few. I have been chased by a bighorn sheep (Pat forgot to tell me not to look at them in the eye, even through the lens of a camera), have chased ghosts at the Stanley Hotel, we've distracted moose hunters in the Rocky Mountain National Park, and patted wolves. We have descended Royal Gorge in a weird train, and travelled over the same in a cable car. We've had

afternoon tea in the ritzy Brown's Palace Hotel, eaten Rocky Mountain oysters at the Buckhorn Exchange, and Aussie pies at the local pie shop. But I would never have

met Pat, if it were not for our mutual love of the music of John Denver. Pat would somehow find a site, an exhibition or something related to John Denver every time I visited. She showed me the permanent exhibition at the Red Rocks Auditorium before we stood together on the stage and 'sang' the chorus of Rocky Mountain High. There were some snickers from other tourists, but we didn't care. We visited the Trading Post. We followed the meandering pavers with the words '*There is a river that runs from the mountains, that one river is all rivers, all rivers are that one*' from the song, *Amazon*, which is at the Lone Tree Mall in Park



Meadows. We found references to John at the museum in Denver, and we listened to the resident pianist play his music whilst enjoying afternoon tea. We interviewed a person strongly connected to John Denver during my visit in 2017, a discussion I will never forget, and an experience that could never have happened without Pat.

But I am not unique.

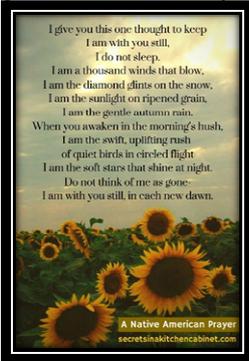
Everyone who stayed with Pat was given the 'Pat Treatment'. She enjoyed talking to people. She loved to show her friends everything that Colorado has to offer, and she did it with a sense of fun and laughter. When I think of Colorado, Pat is the first person who comes to mind.

I am devastated; deeply shocked. My life is now missing a very significant person, but I do have memories and photos, and I shall never forget this wonderful, exuberant, fun-loving woman. Pat was fearless and she will be so very, very missed.

Cheers!



On behalf of us all, I would like to extend our deepest condolences to Pat's sons Jeff and Brian, to her daughter-in-law, Ilene, and her two beautiful grandchildren, Brayden and Peyton.



### **2019 Tribute Weekend**

I will start looking for a suitable venue for our 2019 John Denver tribute weekend fairly soon. I'm hoping to have something booked by the end of March. We decided at our AGM last year that we would celebrate the life and music of John Denver in my state of Victoria, and we'll be looking for a venue in the Ballarat region.

### **Annual Fundraiser**

Let me know if you have any ideas for a fundraiser that will raise mega-bucks for our annual donation to Higher Ground Raptors. Peggy's



work with raptor rehabilitation is so very important for continued conservation of our raptor species. All ideas will be discussed and agreed upon.

[www.highergroundraptors.com](http://www.highergroundraptors.com) and <https://www.facebook.com/HigherGroundRaptors>.

### **Higher Ground Australia Website**

Our web address is <https://www.hgavic.com/>. I'm working on some changes, so please check it out from time to time. Please contact me on [hga.vic@gmail.com](mailto:hga.vic@gmail.com) with your comments, and I thank those who have sent me valuable feedback recently.

### **Remodeled Aspen home John Denver built goes on the market for \$11 million**

Rick Carroll Aspen Times December 27 2018

A major remodel of the house John Denver built in 1972 was unveiled to the public Thursday during an open house held days after the property was put on the market for \$11 million.

As Denver's chart-topping, mellow hits from the 1970s played softly in the background, married couple and brokers Jim and Anita Bineau showed off the home previously owned by one of the Aspen area's most famous residents.

"People talk about it and they refer to it as the John Denver house pretty consistently," Jim Bineau said, adding that the celebrity appeal "adds some pizzazz, but look, it's priced right in the market so people are asking first, does it have the views, does it have the floor plan, does it have the style? That's first and foremost."

Denver built the house during the pinnacle of his fame — it was one of the first structures to be erected in the gated community located between Aspen and Woody Creek.

The 7,735-square-foot home underwent a remodel in 1985 and swapped ownership twice after Denver died at the age of 53, when a private aircraft he was piloting crashed into Monterey Bay near Pacific Grove, California, in October 1997.

The current owners of the 570 Johnson Drive home, Denis and Kelly O'Donovan, "literally took the house beyond the studs," Jim Bineau said, and "added a lot of glass, a lot of windows."

The remodel is a blend of the original home with modern elements. The home still has its original kitchen cabinets and bar, for instance, but they were repurposed to give them a modern feel.

"The new owner will enjoy the modernity of new construction married with the satisfaction of owning the home of one of Aspen's most notable icons," glow marketing materials for the property. Because it has no historic designations, the home could have been razed and replaced.

"They could have (demolished) it, but they really wanted to preserve what they could," said Jim Bineau, who works for Coldwell Banker Mason Morse. "They were really excited that it was John Denver's house. It had meaning to them, and they preserved all of it that they could."

In its current, updated form, the home has five bedrooms, five baths and two half-baths, along with office space, a workout room, three wet bars and other features.

"The house had great bones," Anita Bineau said. "They just wanted it open for today's buyer." The O'Donovans bought the home for \$2.75 million from New York-based entity DBZ Trust in December 2016, before it underwent the remodel. Survivors of the Denver estate sold the main house for \$2.38 million to DBZ Trust in February 1999. DBZ Trust still owns the 2,228-square-foot guesthouse, which it bought for \$1.3 million in February 1999.

The main home went on the market Sunday. The listing price translates to \$1,422.11 per square foot.

"A lot of people are interested in it because it was John Denver's home," Anita Bineau said. "I know the sellers were very interested in John Denver and thought it would be interesting to redo John Denver's home to make it more livable."

<https://www.aspentimes.com/news/local/remodeled-aspen-home-that-john-denver-built-goes-on-market-for-11-million/>



*JF: When this article was published on the various Facebook group pages, I was appalled at some of the toxic comments directed at the owners of the newly renovated home. I realise that the 'faceless' nature of social media provides an outlet for outrage, but perhaps we all should read our posts prior to hitting the send button. Not all comments were negative, and thank you, Rory Young, for your calm perspective. Perhaps the mediators of the various Facebook groups should review and delete the comments that step over the 'common decency' line. Disappointingly, in at least one group, the mediator joined in on the toxic criticism. John's legacy is not a house; it is his music. His music is what binds us together, but negative comments, such as those posted on Facebook recently, will eventually destroy the respect we have, up until recently, had for each other. The messages John left in his lyrics are about peace,*

*love, and respect for each other and for the environment. **Respect.***

*In John's own words....*

*Yes there still is the time to turn around*

*And make all hatred cease*

*And give another name to living*

*And we can call it peace*

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... from one well-known house to another! I'm sure many of us have hung out on the road above Kevin Costner's house. So, here is the opportunity of a lifetime to see or even stay in his Aspen home.

### **Kevin Costner's mountain retreat in Aspen is available to rent**

KRISTINA FEBRUARY 5, 2019

**If you've ever wanted to live like a movie star, now's your chance.**

Kevin Costner, of *Dances with Wolves* fame, has a mountain retreat available in Aspen to rent, so you can have your own private mountainside getaway. But we should note that it won't be cheap — it'll cost you \$30,000 per night.

Just minutes away from downtown Aspen, the mountain retreat offers guests seclusion and privacy. It is located at 47200 Highway 82 in Aspen.

The retreat, which boasts an impressive 160 acres of land, can comfortably sleep anywhere from 27-34 overnight guests in the three homes on the property — the primary residence alone has six bedrooms and more than 5,800 square feet of space. There is also an event venue for all of your entertaining needs.

During the colder months, you can go sledding, ice skating, and even dog sledding with spectacular views of the Continental Divide.

In the warm season, relive *Field of Dreams* on the property's baseball diamond, go fishing or paddleboarding on one of two lakes, and finish the day relaxing at the riverfront beach fire pits.

The mountain retreat is listed with Aspen Resort Luxury Rentals and Coldwell Banker Mason Morse.

<https://colorado.ourcommunitynow.com/2019/02/05/kevin-costners-mountain-retreat-in-aspen-is-available-to-rent/>

### **Singing Skies and Dancing Waters**

(Reflections on God & Nature by Chuck Summers & Rob Sheppard)

While being driven around the North Cascades last week my traveling companion, Michael Boone, played for me some of his favorite music. At one point he played an old John Denver song I don't remember hearing before. I immediately fell in love with it. I liked the melody a lot but it was the words that really affected me. By all appearances the song seems to be written with God in mind and how Denver at one point in his

life came to experience God “in singing skies and dancing waters, laughing children growing old, and in the heart and in the spirit, and in the truth when it is told.”

In the middle of the song he seems to allude to a time when he did not feel God’s presence and how he came to sense it once again. Here are the words: “My life became shady, and I grew afraid, and I needed to find my way home. I just couldn’t see you, I thought that I’d lost you; I never felt so much alone. Are you still with me? Somehow in reason, I lost sight of seasons; I’m growin’ out, growin’ in. Sometimes in evenings, when daylight was needed I thought I’d never see you again. Are you still with me? Are you still with me?” It is here that God answers him: “I’m with you in singing skies and dancing waters, laughing children growing old; and in the heart and in the spirit, and in the truth when it is told.”

At the end of the song Denver looks to the future and sings, “If my faith should falter and I should forsake you, and find myself turning away, will you still be there? Will you still be there?” Once again God answers him, “I’ll be there in singing skies and dancing waters, laughing children growing old. And in the heart and in the spirit and in the truth when it is told.”

I love the way the song is put together. It is a very honest reminder that things we learn at one point in life may be forgotten and the lesson needs to be repeated. It also seems to be an admission of the struggle that is universal in the faith journey. We believe something now but will we believe it tomorrow? Will we need to learn all over again, and come to accept once more, truths from the past?

I appreciate John Denver’s reminder that among the places God can be found is in “singing skies and dancing waters.” That has certainly been my experience. I have felt God’s presence in the beauty of His Creation innumerable times. There have, however, also been times in my life when God has not seemed near. I bet that is true for you as well. When those lonely and painful times come it is nice to be reminded that God is present in very visible and visceral ways through nature. And if, for some reason, we worry about whether God will be there for us down the road it might not be a bad idea to pull up this song and hear God say once again, “I’ll be there in singing skies and dancing waters, laughing children growing old. And in the heart and in the spirit and in the truth when it is told.”

Thank you, John Denver!

–Chuck

<http://www.seeingcreation.com/2013/nature-photography/singing-skies-and-dancing-waters/>  
*Im glad that there are people out there who take the time to share with readers their own interpretation of John’s songs. This one was*

*accompanied by some wonderful photos taken in Washington State. Click the link above to view the photos.*

### **FROM THE ARCHIVES**

### **33 Years Ago: John Denver Single-Handedly Humiliated Congress for the World to see**

Rockpasta website



(Mark Weiss, Getty Images)

### **Congress Wasn’t Ready For This!**

1985 was a truly interesting time for music, specifically rock music. Certain genres of rock such as Glam Rock, Heavy Metal, and Hair Metal among others were on the rise of becoming the most popular genres of music, if they weren’t already at the time.

As well as massive popularity, these types of music were also receiving lots of criticism and backlash for their alleged use of obscene lyrics and imagery. Eventually, this would lead to the creation of the PMRC.

The PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) was a group founded by Tipper Gore that was designed to provide censorship and/or warning of offensive material in regards to music albums that had things that parents would find offensive such as profanity, obscene images, lyrics, descriptions of sexual and/or violent matters, etc.

In 1985, several hearings were held to discuss the possibility of certain albums being required to have a ‘Parental Advisory’ sticker placed on the cover. Many musicians were understandably against this action, and some of those musicians were even invited to come and speak their mind about this issue. Three stand out in particular. Dee Snider of Twisted Sister, Frank Zappa, and maybe most notably, John Denver.

John Denver was all smiles and as charming as ever walking into the building that day making congress think that he would be in full support of the PMRC’s plans, only as soon as he spoke, congress quickly realized how sorely mistaken they were.

John gave arguably the sharpest testimony out of anyone who testified. He was eloquent and blunt. Words can only do his testimony so much justice. I’ll just let you watch for yourself in the two videos below.

*Please click the link below for the story, pictures, and the two videos.*

<https://rockpasta.com/33-years-ago-john-denver-single-handedly-humiliated-congress-for-the-whole-world-to-see/?a=DE&var=JohnDenverPMRC->

[CR&utm\\_campaign=johndenverpmrc&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_term=author-de-posted-by-de-original-fbvhn-cr&utm\\_content=johndenver](https://www.facebook.com/johndenverpmrc)

### **Mark Cormican**

Mark Cormican has released his 2019 concert schedule, starting on the 9<sup>th</sup> March in Colorado. Check his website for more information.

<http://markcormican.com/schedule/>

### **Jim Curry**

Jim and Anne Curry have released their 2019 concert schedule, starting on the 9<sup>th</sup> March in California.

Check out their website for their concert schedule:

<https://www.jimcurrymusic.com/future-concerts/>

### **Back Home Again**

A tribute to John Denver.

*Tom Becker is a former member of the Legendary Folk Group, The New Christy Minstrels, and has gone on to appear with Grammy Winners and Music Legends including Ray Charles, Jerry Lee Lewis, Willie Nelson, Gregg Allman and Jerry Jeff Walker.*

Tom Becker has released his 2019 concert schedule, which can be accessed by clicking the link below.

<http://www.johndenvertribute.net/schedule.htm>

Tom's next tribute show will be on November 11 and 12 in Sarasota, Florida. Click the link for details and tickets. <https://thepopsorchestra.org/>

### **Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon**

Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon have released their 2019/20120 concert schedule, starting from March 21 in Illinois. All concert information can be found on their website;

<https://bouldercanyonband.com/concert-schedule>

### **Chris Westfall**

Chris Westfall has released his event listings for his forthcoming concerts in the Northern Spring and Summer. To check out whether he is playing at a venue near you, please click the link to his website.

<http://www.chriswestfall.com/inConcert.php>

### **Rick Worrall**

Canadian artist, Rick Worrall, together with Lee Holdridge and local symphony orchestras present *Rocky Mountain High: An Evening of John Denver.*

Concerts will be held in Victoria BC, Nanaimo BC, in May and Hamilton ON, and Toronto ON in June. Click the link for information about tickets.

<http://rockymountainhighconcert.com/concerts/>

For more information about tribute artists around the globe, check out our website;

[www.hgavic.com](http://www.hgavic.com)

This month, I've selected the lyrics *Perhaps Love* in loving memory of Pat Feldmeier.



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This newsletter is only emailed to those people who have individually contacted HGA and expressed a wish to receive it. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you no longer wish to receive the HGA newsletter.

## Perhaps Love (John Denver)

*Perhaps love is like a resting place, a shelter from the storm  
It exists to give you comfort, it is there to keep you warm  
And in those times of trouble when you are most alone  
The memory of love will bring you home*

*Perhaps love is like a window, perhaps an open door  
It invites you to come closer, it wants to show you more  
And even if you lose yourself And don't know what to do  
The memory of love will see you through*

*Oh, love to some is like a cloud  
To some as strong as steel  
For some a way of living  
For some a way to feel  
And some say love is holding on  
And some say letting go  
And some say love is everything  
And some say they don't know*



*Perhaps love is like the ocean, full of conflict, full of pain  
Like a fire when it's cold outside or thunder when it rains  
If I should live forever and all my dreams come true  
My memories of love will be of you*

*And some say love is holding on  
And some say letting go  
And some say love is everything  
And some say they don't know*



*Perhaps love is like the ocean  
Full of conflict, full of pain  
Like a fire when it's cold outside  
Or thunder when it rains  
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